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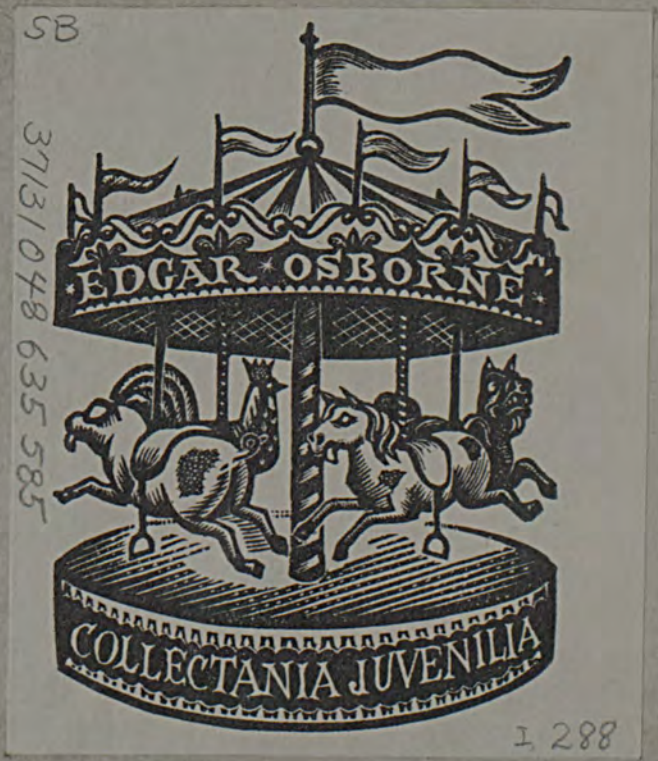

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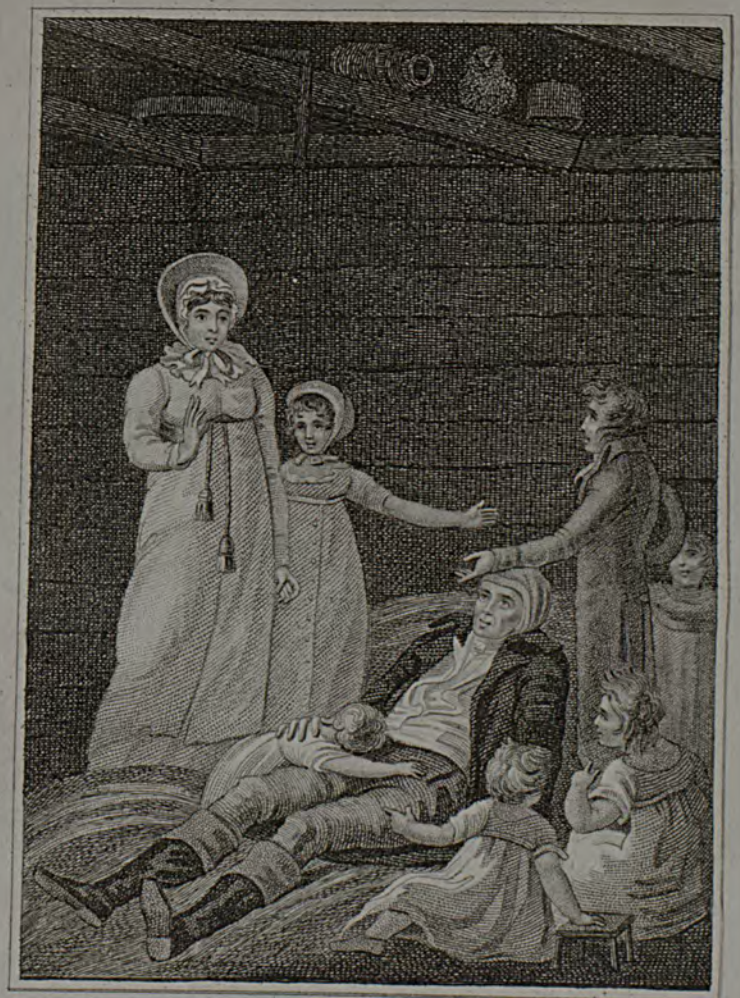
THE

CALENDAR;

OR,

MONTHLY RECREATIONS

FRONTISPIECE.



J. Kennerley, sc.

The wretched Father of these unfortunate children was extended upon a truss of straw.

p. 106.

Pub. June 30, 1807, by J. Harris, corner of St. Paul's.

THE

CALENDAR;

OR,

MONTHLY RECREATIONS:

CHIEFLY CONSISTING OF

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN AN AUNT AND HER NIECES,

DESIGNED

TO INSPIRE THE JUVENILE MIND

WITH A LOVE OF VIRTUE,

AND OF THE STUDY OF NATURE.

By MRS. PILKINGTON.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. HARRIS, SUCCESSOR TO E. NEWBERRY,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1807.

Printed by J. D. Dewick,
Aldersgate-street.

INTRODUCTION,

ADDRESSED TO THE YOUNG READER.

An uncultivated mind has been compared to a barren field or wilderness, where weeds and thistles promiscuously shoot: for the imagination of man is so active, that if it be not directed towards some *virtuous*, it will be employed in some *vicious* pursuit.

Time, at every period of life, is a valuable possession, but it is of peculiar importance to youth; for as we increase in years, the cares and anxieties of the world press so heavily upon us, that a small portion of it only can be devoted

to mental improvement. Two motives, doubtless, inspire us with a fondness for reading, namely, the improvement, and the entertainment of the mind; yet, from the natural thoughtlessness of youth, the former seldom acquires an influence, unless the latter be skilfully combined.

To improve the rising age, to blend instruction with entertainment, and to adorn Religion and Morality in their most attractive garb, has been my favourite employment for a number of years. The natural history of the year, by the celebrated Dr. Aikin, first suggested the idea of the following work; and though not a single line is copied from that judicious performance, yet the *instructive* part of my *Calendar* is to be ascribed to that gentleman. Though I consider plagiarism as a theft of the meanest nature, yet readily

do I acknowledge my obligations to Dr. Aikin for having inspired the thought of familiarizing his natural character, and reducing it (if I may be allowed the expression) to a school-book. To render it more attractive to my young readers, I shall present it to the world in the form of family Conversations between two Nieces and their Aunt, interspersing those Dialogues with stories, not inaptly introduced.

M. P.

June 11, 1807.

THE CALENDAR.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

JANUARY.

THE usual salutation having passed between Mrs. Manderville and her niece Louisa, upon the return of the year, the former addressed the latter in the following words:—"You are a happy girl, my dear Louisa, in having a mamma whose improved understanding is not only capable of pointing out the advantage you ought to make of these hours which so fleetly fly; but whose natural sweetness of disposition blends *instruction* with *delight*; and who, instead of making the moral lessons which she teaches appear laborious, invites you to improvement by decorating it in a pleasing garb.

"But alas! in how different a situation has your cousin Eliza been placed! her mind has

been wholly uncultivated, and her manners unimproved. Her childish caprices have all been encouraged; and I do not believe she could even read the story of Tom Thumb."

"Surely, then, she must be extremely *stupid*, aunt," rejoined Louisa.

"By no means *naturally* so, my dear; but her mother unfortunately was not a woman of education, and she indulged Eliza to a fault. Three years have elapsed since she lost this indulgent parent. My brother, you know, has married again; and his lady, I find, punishes the poor child with severity for failings which rather demand *pity* than *reproach*. Failings of the *heart* and faults of the *head* are totally different; and, as I believe Eliza possesses none of the former kind, I have requested my brother to let her pass a twelvemonth under my care; and I am in hourly expectation of her arrival, as I wished my important office to commence with the new year.

"I have invited you to meet Eliza for two purposes; first, that your example might become a pattern for this poor untutored child; and next, as your ages are nearly similar, that she might not only find in you a pleasing companion, but an attached friend. Her ignorance, I fear, will in many instances astonish you; but

be careful, my sweet girl, never to pique yourself upon the superiority you possess; for, had Eliza enjoyed the same advantages, I am persuaded she would have been equally as intelligent as yourself. Though you will have many opportunities, therefore, of giving her information, yet do not wound her *feelings* by pointing out her *defects*."

Louisa was prevented from replying to this judicious council by a loud rap at the street door, and Mrs. Manderville quitted the apartment to receive her expected guest.

Eliza Rushbrook at this period had just completed her twelfth year; and she might justly be styled the *child of nature*, for she was wholly unacquainted with art. Her face was not actually handsome, but there was that open sweetness in her countenance, that interests at the first glance; and is far preferable to *beauty*, because it is the index of an *ingenuous mind*.—She flew up the steps, rushed into the extended arms of Mrs. Manderville, and burst into a flood of tears!

"My dear Eliza," said the amiable mistress of the mansion, "I fear you have taken this long journey in obedience to your father's commands, and that these tears are marks of regret

and sorrow, at the bare prospect of passing a twelvemonth with your aunt."

"No; indeed, indeed, aunt," replied Eliza, "and I am sure I do not know what made me cry; but my heart was so full—and I began to fear we should never reach the cottage, so that when I *saw you* I could not refrain from tears."

"Amiable girl!" said Mrs. Manderville, mentally: then directing her eyes towards the carriage, "but who has accompanied you, my dear?"

"Only James, aunt," replied Eliza, "for though papa wished Mrs. Baldock to attend me, she could not be spared."

Though Mrs. Manderville did not choose to make any remark upon this intelligence, yet she thought it singular that a child of twelve years should be suffered to travel, without any female guardian, seventy miles; and particularly as she could not perform the journey without sleeping upon the road; however, honest James had supplied the place of a duenna, and Eliza reached her destined habitation safe and well.

Though the cousins were total strangers to each other, yet as each was endowed with an affectionate heart, a short space of time made them as intimate as if they had been acquainted

for years.—In the age of these relations there was only eleven months difference, the advantage was on Louisa's side; but she possessed those which were infinitely superior, for she was blest with a mother whose highest gratification consisted in cultivating her mind, and therefore no comparison, in point of intelligence, could be made between the two girls.

As Eliza had slept at an inn only sixteen miles distant from the *cottage* (which was the appellation Mrs. Manderville had given to her simple, though elegant, retreat); she arrived just as that lady was going to breakfast, though James had intreated her to take that refreshing meal at the inn. Although near three years had elapsed since she had seen this amiable relation, yet the impression which had been made upon her youthful imagination had not been effaced; and, so impatient was she to arrive at the end of her journey, that she actually would not allow herself time to eat.

Breakfast being ended, Mrs. Manderville asked her young visitors whether they were inclined to avail themselves of the beauty of the day; for it was one of those picturesque mornings which inspire the mind with pleasure, even at that season of the year. The branches of the trees were incrusted with icicles, which had the

lustrous appearance of diamonds, from the rays of the sun, whilst the tender plants were shielded from the inclemency of the weather by a covering of snow, about six inches thick.

"Admire, my dear children," said Mrs. Manderville, "the beneficent hand of an All-gracious God! behold the beauty of the surrounding prospect! see the translucent drops which have been crystalized by the coldness of the air! Could we but preserve their present appearance, would they not, in point of *beauty*, equal the gems which Golconda's mines produce?"

"And look, aunt," exclaimed Louisa, "at those sparkling little spangles that seem mixed amongst the snow!"

Eliza, for some moments, attentively surveyed the scene around her; then, turning to Mrs. Manderville, said, "I never thought the winter beautiful before; and mamma cannot bear to be in the country after Christmas is turned."

"Different people have different *tastes*, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Manderville, not choosing to condemn that of a person for whom she wished to inspire her niece with respect; "but to an admirer of *nature* every season has its peculiar attractions, and every *month* a charm attached to itself."

"What did you say, aunt?" enquired Eliza, in a voice that proved she did not perfectly comprehend the meaning of Mrs. Manderville's words.

"I repeat, my love," rejoined that lady, "that the Great Creator of the Universe has not only made a diversity in the *seasons*, but given variety to every month in the year; each of which he has wisely and benevolently intended should bring forth different fruits."

"But there is *no fruit* growing *now* aunt," said Eliza.

Louisa, who comprehended her aunt's meaning, could not repress a smile.

"You have misapprehended me," continued her amiable relation mildly; "I wish you to understand that, though there are twelve months in the year, yet that *each* is designed by providence to produce some beneficial effects to mankind. Winter has been termed the repose of nature; at this period she seems in a totally inactive state. The trees are robbed of their beautiful foliage; the fields, instead of being clothed with verdure, are all arrayed in white; and, so far from the vegetable world flourishing, there are only a few of the most hardy plants which survive."

"My mamma had a very pretty book, aunt," said Louisa, "I think it was called the History of the Year, I am sure my cousin would like to read it; for it will tell her all the plants that flourish in the different months."

"No, cousin, I had rather hear my aunt *talk* about them;" replied the ingenuous Eliza, for I do not understand what I read; and when I come to a hard word then mamma is always angry, for I cannot make it out: then she calls me a *dunce*, and a stupid creature; but I never shall *love* reading as long as I live."

"Say not so, Eliza," rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "for that declaration really seems like a *dunce*; and as God has kindly given you a good understanding, it is a duty incumbent upon you to improve his gift; and I am inclined to believe that, before this day twelvemonth, you will acknowledge there is no gratification equal to that which is to be derived from an instructive and entertaining book.—No person can do a thing *well* if they do not take pleasure in it; I have furnished you with a little library of amusing and instructive books; but written in a style so plain and simple that a child of eight years old can comprehend the sense; and if you will read them to me with attention every morn-

ing, I, in return, will amuse you by giving you a description of every month; but you must endeavour to retain what I tell you, for ignorant people are always either *pitied* or *despised*."

Eliza thanked her aunt for her intended present, and promised to benefit by her instruction and advice; but the conversation was interrupted by a youthful voice exclaiming, "Aunt! aunt! do pray cross the avenue and see me skait."

"There is Henry, I declare!" said the delighted Louisa, whilst sisterly affection animated her face; and, in compliance with the request, Mrs. Manderville immediately entered an adjoining field, where Henry Danvers, and four or five of his young companions, were amusing themselves upon the ice.

Henry was about eighteen months older than his sister, and a very fine manly boy, although the small-pox (that enemy to beauty) had deeply marked his face. Henry, however, possessed charms which disease could not lessen, for his heart was *good*, and his temper peculiarly *sweet*, whilst his disposition was so gentle that he would not have injured a fly. Still he was not deficient in spirits; and, though he warmly resented an insult offerered any person he was

attached to, he easily forgave an offence to himself; and, with a mind so amiable, it is natural to suppose he was universally beloved. He was no stranger to his cousin Eliza, as, during the summer, he had passed a month at her father's house; therefore, unbuckling his skaites, he hastened to embrace her, having first offered the same attention to his aunt.—As he was a very active boy he excelled in skaiting; and whilst the young ladies were watching his graceful movements, Mrs. Manderville extended her walk, for, finding the cold rather penetrating, she was fearful of standing still.

Though the ice was several inches thick, yet at one end of the pond a hole had been made in it, as there happened to be rather a scarcity of water in that part of the world; but the intensity of the weather had killed several of the poor little fish. A boy about the age of Henry, who was not able to skait, had for some time been amusing himself at the edge of the hole, and curiosity induced Louisa to direct her steps there for the purpose of seeing how he was employed. He had collected, upon the edge of the bank, near a dozen of these lifeless little animals, who had fallen victims to the cold and the want of *air*; for, whilst the pond was completely in-

crusted over, none of course could penetrate through. This unfeeling boy had, however, caught a fish in which life was not extinguished, and he was amusing himself by pricking it with the point of a large pin.

"Oh fie, Master Hardy!" exclaimed Louisa, "cannot you find some better method of entertaining yourself than torturing that poor fish?"

"Mind your own concerns," replied the surly fellow, ending the poor animal's sufferings at the same moment by a violent kick. Henry glided by him at that instant, and distinctly heard the insult which his sister had received, when, darting quickly round, he aimed a blow at him which completely made him reel. "How dare you, sir," said he, "*insult my sister?* There, cruel coward, take *that* for your reward."

That cruelty and cowardice generally go together is certain; and George Hardy proved the truth of the remark, for, instead of making any resistance, he bawled out, "Mrs. Manderville! Mrs. Manderville! Master Danvers is *beating me*, ma'am!"

Mrs. Manderville rushed forward, alarmed at the appeal, and found Hardy sobbing like a child that had been whipped; when Henry, without attempting to justify the action, simply

related what had passed, adding, that though he detested fighting, he could not restrain his resentment at hearing his *sister* treated with such *disrespect*."

Though Mrs. Manderville was not displeased at this mark of spirit and affection in her nephew, yet she represented *fighting* as a most ungentleman-like method of resenting an affront; and intreated him in future not to allow the impulse of resentment to put him off his guard. But though I think my nephew has done wrong in *striking you*, Master Hardy," said she, "yet it is a punishment for your *cruelty* and *incivility*, which you certainly deserved, and I shall consider it my duty to inform your parents of an action that proves the native roughness of your disposition and the badness of your heart."—So saying, she informed her young companions that she thought it time to return. Henry was invited to accompany his sister to dinner, and the party arrived at the cottage in high spirits.

As the back door was the nearest entrance, the young people walked into the court yard, in which all the servants were assembled to view the pipes which the frost had burst; when Eliza, not knowing the cause of the accident, exclaimed, "Well, I am sure somebody must

have been in a violent *passion* to have broken those thick leaden pipes !"

"No; they are all very mild and good-tempered I assure you, cousin," replied Louisa; "but you know the water expanded when it froze, and I have seen the same thing happen at my mamma's house."

"How can that be?" enquired the incredulous Eliza.

"Oh, my aunt will explain the *cause* much better than I can, when she sees what has occurred."

At that moment Mrs. Manderville entered the yard, and though she never suffered her temper to be ruffled by trifles, yet she blamed Richard for not having attended to her commands, which were to lay manure at the foundation and cover the pipes with bands of hay. Eliza eagerly requested the explanation which Louisa had informed her Mrs. Manderville would give; but at that instant a party unexpectedly arrived at the cottage, for the purpose of staying two or three days, and therefore Eliza was under the necessity of restraining her curiosity until these, to her unwelcome, visitants took their leave.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

JANUARY.

THOUGH Eliza had been disappointed of her expected information, yet she was so gratified by the attention she received from Mrs. Manderville's guests, that, so far from wishing their departure, she could not refrain from tears when the moment arrived.—Accustomed, since the death of her too indulgent parent, always to be sent into the nursery when any visitors arrived, Eliza felt the kindness of her aunt's conduct with a double force; and, not only to be caressed by herself, but attended to by the company, completely won the grateful girl's heart.

To the sole use of her neices Mrs. Manderville had kindly appropriated two apartments; the one to sleep in, the other fitted up as a library, and play-room, and in the latter the young people spent no small portion of their time; for Louisa kindly offered to read her cousin all the books this juvenile library contained. Mr. Harris had not only furnished it

with all Mrs. Trimmer's and Mrs. Barbauld's writings, but those of every other author whose works were in repute; and as it was a style of reading to which Eliza had been wholly unaccustomed; she listened with a mixture of eagerness and delight, for Mrs. Rushbrook had injudiciously given books to her daughter-in-law which she could not comprehend, and if the poor child requested an *explanation*, she was certain of incurring animadversion and reproof.

"Aunt," said she, soon after the company had left the cottage, "I shall never say I do *not love reading* again; for Louisa has been kind enough to entertain me with a number of the prettiest books that ever were written, and I hope in a short time I shall be able to read them myself. How much, my dear aunt, am I obliged to you!" she continued, embracing Mrs. Manderville while she spoke.

This child certainly has a *grateful heart*, thought Mrs. Manderville, returning her embrace, and enquiring what books Louisa had been kind enough to read; and, upon having the question answered, applauded the judiciousness of that amiable girl's choice. Eliza, however, had not forgotten the promised explanation of the bursting of the pipes, and the party having formed a circle round the fire after

dinner, she requested her aunt to explain the cause.

"It is rather a philosophical question," replied Mrs. Manderville, "but I will endeavour to make it easily comprehended by my dear girl. Those who have minutely examined the component parts of ice inform us, that it is composed of particles formed into points, which, uniting together, become a mass; but of course, from their angular construction, take a larger space than *water* does; the *air*, likewise, which forms in these little crevices tends to augment the size of this solid mass, and you will invariably find, that if you cork a bottle full of water in intense weather, the bottle will consequently burst; not that the *weight* of it is increased by congealing, but it becomes too large for the bottle to contain, as you may imagine from the reasons I have assigned. In Quebec, a large city in North America, they have frequently filled cannon and bomb-shells with water and then closed them up; but in the space of a few hours these almost impenetrable bodies have burst from the expansion of the fluid, which had formed into a mass; conceive, then, the severity of that climate, and bless providence for having placed you in a country where the air is comparatively mild."

"Every thing I hear, and every thing I read of, aunt," said Henry, who entered at the moment Mrs. Manderville was making these remarks, "convinces me that Old England is the pleasantest country in the world."

"That was spoken like an *Englishman*, Henry," replied Mrs. Manderville, "and we doubtless enjoy advantages which few countries possess; notwithstanding which, our beneficent Creator inspires a similarity of feeling in the generality of his creature's breasts; and even the inhabitants of Greenland fancy their country the *paradise* of the world."

"You promised to entertain us, aunt," said the attentive Louisa with a description of the four seasons of the year."

"No, cousin," rejoined Eliza, "my aunt informed us she would tell us something about the different *months*."

Mrs. Manderville was too much pleased at finding her young companions solicitous to improve their minds to deny a request of that nature, and therefore commenced her instructive conversation in the following words:

"Though the movement of time is not exactly connected with the present subject of conversation, yet, as it is my intention to give a natural description of each *month* in the *year*,

I think it necessary to say that, during that period, the *world* which we inhabit makes a complete revolution round the *sun* in three hundred and sixty-five days and not quite six hours.

"Louisa's better informed understanding will comprehend this course; but I am sorry to say that my poor Eliza's education has been so much neglected, that I am fearful she will scarcely understand how the earth moves; but independant of its regular motion round that amazing luminary, the sun, it has one of its own: for example," continued she, "passing a knitting-needle through an apple, then holding it before the candle, and turning it round, you perceive, my dear children, the light is only reflected upon one half, and this specimen may give you an idea of the effect of the sun upon this terrestial globe, for, as that turns upon its own *axis*, it consequently produces day and night."

"But what is an *axis*, aunt?"

"I will call this knitting *needle* an axis," replied Mrs. Manderville, "as I have chosen to represent this apple as the earth: but it is a real, or imaginary, line, which passes through the globe we inhabit, and upon which it evidently turns, and produces, as I informed you, the difference of day and night. But to turn to a

subject more adapted to Eliza's comprehension. *January*, you know, is the first month in the year, and, though we have had convincing proofs of its severity, yet nature is not totally divested of her charms. The snow, with which the ground is at present covered, is highly beneficial to the tender plants, for it not only shields them from the frost, but possesses a nurturing and saline quality beyond that of keeping them warm. Mr. Philips has given a beautiful description of this feathery-falling vapour, and the effect produced by a sudden frost, a few lines of which I believe I can recollect.——

"E're yet the clouds let fall the treasur'd snow,
Or winds began through hazy skies to blow,
At ev'ning a keen eastern blast arose,
And the descending rain unsullied froze.
Soon as the silent shades of night withdrew,
The ruddy morn disclos'd at once to view;
The face of nature in a *rich disguise*,
And brighten'd every object to my eyes;
For every shrub and every blade of grass,
And every pointed thorn seem'd wrought in glass.
In pearls and rubies rich the hawthorns show,
While through the ice their crimson berries glow."

"Excuse me, aunt, for interrupting you," said Louisa, "but as I know hail is drops of rain frozen, how do you account for it when the weather is warm?"

"I am gratified by hearing you ask the question, my dearest girl," replied Mrs. Manderville, "because it convinces me that you make use of the understanding you possess. The higher parts of the atmosphere are always infinitely colder than that which we breathe; and the hail which strikes you as singular in warm weather, forms in those regions and descends to the earth: from its gravitating power it passes through those clouds which are suspended like a curtain over our heads, and, from the rapidity of its motion, avoids being dissolved by the more geneal atmosphere it passes through."

"I must acknowledge, aunt, I am very partial to winter," said Henry; "is there not something very cheerful in the look of this comfortable fire? And I know not why it should be so, yet people seem more hospitable at Christmas than at any other time of the year."

"Several reasons might be assigned for the hospitality displayed at Christmas," replied Mrs. Manderville; "It is, you know, the period on which the Saviour of mankind appeared; it is right that we should commemorate that auspicious moment, not only by *cheerful*, but *grateful*, hearts; and it is likewisé incumbent upon us to contribute to the happiness of our fellow-creatures in a peculiar manner at this

season of the year. You observed, my dear Henry, the cheerfulness and comfort which *we* derive from that blazing fire; but alas! how many human beings are at this moment shivering from the intensity of the cold, with no house to shelter, scarcely a thing to cover them, and feeling all the bitterness of want! Still, as I observed, to the rich and competent every season of the year possesses some delight; but I agree with you, Henry, in thinking that society seems more connected at this period than in summer time. If you view a farm yard you will perceive the animals herding together; and even the feathered tribe nestle under the hedges in perfect flocks: therefore, to live solitary at this season would, in my opinion, be acting in opposition to nature's impulsive law."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of old Stephen, who had grown grey in the service of the amiable Mrs. M. or rather in that of her father, with whom he had lived as gardener five-and-thirty years. Stephen, from his age and faithful services, was a privileged person in the family; he worked when he was able, and was a kind of head man; all the servants were expected to treat him with as much civility as they did the mistress of the house.

"I have got something here that will please the young misses, madam," said he, covering with both hands the bosom of his coat. "Poor little trembling thing! nobody shall hurt you, and so ye need not be afeard."

This apostrophe to the poor animal, who had thrown itself upon Stephen's protection, excited the curiosity of Mrs. Manderville's young guests, who eagerly crouded round the old gardener, intreating to see what he had got. Stephen, however, delighted in a long story, and he began by saying—"As how he was trenching the celery up, when he espied something which at first he took to be a cat; so I takes," continued he, "no notice of her, but just at that minute old Jowler comes into the garden, and smack he jumped over the bed of celery, just for all the world like a buck. Thinks I to myself, what's made the old rogue so frisky? when pop runs this poor little frightened creature right between my legs, and gave such a *squeek*, it almost startled me; but I catches it up in my arms, and a hard tustle I had with master Jowler, for I verily thought he would have torn the coat off my back."

When Stephen had described the manner in which the poor animal had come into his pos-

session, he very deliberately unbuttoned his coat, and displayed a *hare*, or rather a *leveret*, for it was not full grown. An exclamation of joy burst from the lips of the young party, and each intreated Stephen to bestow upon them the prize. "Madam must settle that," said the humane fellow; "but somehow or other I should like it to stay here; for that there *squeek* seemed to say, *Pray take care of me*; and I never shall forget it the longest day I live."

"Well, then, the hare is *your's*, Stephen." replied Mrs. Manderville, "but you must allow my nephew and nieces to visit it when they please. Let it be turned into the loft; and, though it is by nature so timid, I doubt not but it will become familiar in a short time."

The children all followed Stephen, who had some difficulty in preventing them from giving the animal too much food, who wisely observed the poor thing was almost starving, and if, permitted, would actually eat until it burst.

The unexpected appearance of the timid stranger afforded subject of conversation when Mrs. Manderville's guests returned.

"The poor animal," said she, "was driven into the garden by hunger; for the few vegetables which are able to withstand the severity of the winter are neraly covered with snow."

"I thought, aunt," rejoined Louisa, "that all vegetables, except those which were cultivated in the gardens, died at the beginning of winter, and like the trees revived again in the spring."

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Manderville, "the Great Creator of the Universe has formed some plants of so hard a texture, that they will stand the most inclement season of the year; and where this is not the case, myriads of the feathered tribes must perish merely from want of food. The groundsel, of which they are particularly fond, is now in high perfection; the purple berries of the wild hawthorn likewise afford a luxurious treat; and you, yesterday morning, presented me with some branches of the laurestina in perfect beauty and high bloom. The yew tree near the summer-house has not been stripped of its verdure; and the laurel which Henry planted is as flourishing as it was in spring; not to omit the humble box, which borders your bed of tulips, and the ivy, which sluggishly creeps upon the wall."

"I was very stupid, indeed, to have forgotten what I *see daily*."

"It was not stupidity," said Mrs. Manderville, "but *want* of *thought*; and we are so formed by nature that the most beautiful objects

if they become familiarized, in great measure lose their charms."

"George Hardy always sets his bird-traps with *hawthorn berries* instead of bread crumbs," said Henry, addressing his aunt.

"George Hardy is an unfeeling boy, and I only wish it were possible he could be caught in the trap he sets for that harmless race. Hunger, and the severity of the season impels those poor little creatures to conquer that timidity which is natural to their state, and to seek support and sustenance from the benevolence of mankind; and, when they fly to us for *protection*, is there not something shocking in the idea of depriving them of life?"

"But sparrows, aunt," said Eliza, "do a great deal of mischief; and papa gives two-pence a dozen to the gardener's son for all that he kills."

"They may be injurious, my dear Eliza," said Mrs. Manderville, "but I would rather give two-pence to the boy who *preserved* the *life* of *one*; and, though I allow that humanity may be carried to a *weakness*, yet wanton cruelty to the animal race I consider as a *crime*. It is not only sparrows, however, which assemble in bodies for the purpose, as it seems, of soliciting charity from our hands;

yellow-hammers, chaffinches, and the robin red-breast, all petition us to supply their wants. Snipes, woodcocks, wild-ducks, and other water fowl, are, from the marshes which they are accustomed to inhabit being frozen, forced to seek food near the more rapid streams; and even the sea-gulls are often seen in the more inland counties, forced thither by the intensity of the cold.

"Though agriculture is now suspended, yet the industrious husbandman finds sufficient employ; the cattle, unable to procure a supply for the wants of nature, demand his attention and care; and if the snow drift, the shepherd must be peculiarly watchful, or his bleating charge will inevitably be lost."

"Oh, aunt!" exclaimed Henry, "do you not remember what happened last winter? You know farmer Hawkins had three sheep buried in the snow, and though they had not any thing to eat for five days, yet they were not dead when they were found."

"That I cannot believe, cousin Henry," said Eliza.

"You are not aware, I am persuaded, Eliza," rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "that you have made a very *rude speech*. Henry's assertion is strictly true, and many other circumstances are equally

so, which it is impossible for a child of your age to comprehend. The bear, the dormouse, and the marmot, for example, live *months* instead of days without food; but, previous to the cold setting in, they are, if I may use the expression, actually cased in a coat of fat, and this supplies the want of nutriment; and, during the inclemency of the season, they remain in a torpid state."

Eliza listened to this account with a mixture of doubt and astonishment; and after assuring her cousin she did not mean to be rude, enquired whether the sheep which had been buried were likewise very fat.

"I have reason to believe they were so," replied Mrs. Manderville, smiling, "for a boy was driving them to the butcher's when they fell into a ditch; and as he happened to be at that moment conversing with one of his young companions, he did not perceive the accident occur. The water in the ditch, as you may imagine, was completely frozen, and the cavity was filled with snow, but as it had merely drifted without being frozen, a certain portion of air was able to pass through, otherwise the poor animals certainly could not have lived. You shall walk with me to farmer Hawkins's to-morrow, and see these extraordinary sheep, for after this acci-

dent the humane farmer resolved not to take away their lives; and Stephen informed me yesterday that one of them had twin lambs."

"Lambs already, aunt! is it not very early?" enquired Louisa.

"It certainly is so, my dear;" replied Mrs. Manderville, "but at the latter end of this month, or the beginning of February, many hundreds will be yeaned, though, as the weather will then become cold, they will require the greatest care and attention, and of course must be kept within doors."

Eliza, who within the last few minutes had gaped frequently, roused herself at the idea of having young lambs to feed.

"You are almost asleep, I perceive, my dear girl," said Mrs. Manderville, "and I fear you are tired of the first month."

"No, indeed, aunt, I know all you have told me, about the trees being green and the birds coming to be fed, and the *boar's* sleeping all the winter covered up in a bag of fat."

"But *what* trees are green?" enquired the laughing Louisa.

"Oh that I have forgot," replied the artless girl.

"You did not forget to turn the *bear* into a *boar*," rejoined her teazing companion, who was

checked in her observations by a look from her aunt.

"I will not trespass much farther upon your patience, Eliza," continued her amiable relation, "but merely observe that whilst the severity of the frost continues, the farmer can have but little out-of-doors work done; yet you recollect we saw several carts of manure drawing to the fields this morning, which will be blended with the earth when the land is thawed."

"And we saw farmer Dawson's men mending the hedges, aunt," said Henry, "and some of Mr. Clavering's labourers repairing the roads."

"I do not mean you to understand, my dear, that industry has no occupation at this season of the year; but the barn becomes the great scene of action during this and the succeeding months; for it is as necessary to thrash the corn as it is to gather it, and the exercise of a flail is one of the best antidotes against the cold. I cannot, however, conclude my observations upon the month of January without endeavouring to impress upon your youthful minds that though charity is a duty incumbent upon us at *every season*, yet at *this* it ought, in a peculiar manner, to be displayed. The common necessaries of life generally rise in proportion to their

consumption; coals, for example, increase in price at this time of the year; the rich are enabled to lay in a stock at the lowest markets; but a bushel or a sack of coals is the utmost that can be purchased by the poor. Where much is given we are told much will be required of us; we are likewise told that the widow's mite was an acceptable boon; therefore, we are all bound to be charitable according to our situation, and whatever we bestow to give it with a willing heart."

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

FEBRUARY.

THE friends who had passed a few days, at the beginning of the year, with Mrs. Manderville, had obtained a promise that she would spend the ensuing week at their house, and the two young ladies were likewise invited to accompany their amiable relation to Roe-buck Park.

This elegant mansion belonged to a gentleman of the name of Lainsborough, and originally derived its appellation from the immense quantity of deer with which the park was stocked; and, from its being situated within a short dis-

tance of New Forest, it is supposed that those animals had strayed into the park. Eliza, who had never beheld any of these elegant agile creatures, was delighted to see them bound over the verdant lawn, for the snow was dissolved before they commenced their journey, and the grass appeared almost as beautiful as it does in spring.

Mr. and Mrs. Lainsborough, though blest with the smiles of fortune, had been doomed to suffer a calamity of the most distressing kind; for an epidemical disease had swept off five lovely children within the space of six weeks. Though they submissively bowed to the ordination of providence, yet this was a misfortune which neither religion nor philosophy could easily overcome; and the iron hand of death having rendered them childless, they adopted two neices, who in some measure supplied their loss. Ten years had elapsed since this melancholy catastrophe; all hope of a future heir to Roe-buck Park had been given up, when Mrs. Lainsborough presented the object of her affection with a beautiful little girl.

If ever an apology can be made for parental indulgence being carried to an excess, Mr. and Mrs. Lainsborough certainly had a right to claim it, for all their happiness was centered in this child.

At the time of Mrs. Manderville's making her visit, Emily wanted a few days of completing her eighth year, and preparations were making for a grand fête. All the neighbouring families who had children, within ten miles, were invited; for Emily was to be queen of the day, and, as it was merely intended to be a juvenile entertainment, it was to be a public breakfast instead of an evening gala. At eleven o'clock the different carriages began to make their appearance, immense fires were blazing at each end of a large hall, which, notwithstanding the severity of the season, was adorned with wreaths of laurel and exotic flowers. At the upper end of the room a chair was elevated, over which was placed a bust inimitably executed, and so strong a likeness of Emily, that had it been dressed in her apparel, it might have been taken for the child. This bust was supported by two large figures, the one representing *learning* and its various emblems; the other, *virtue*, and her reward; the design of each was not only tastefully fancied, but produced an admirable effect.

Mr. Lainsborough, as I observed, was a gentleman of large fortune, and the benevolence of his heart was equal to his power of relieving distress; he therefore invited all the poor children in the parish to participate in the joy of his more

affluent little guests; and tables were spread in the servants' hall and the housekeeper's apartment, to regale them with the remnants of the feast; in addition to which, four large plum-puddings were prepared for them, and two sir-loins of beef.

This was, indeed, a day of joy and festivity; neither of Mrs. Manderville's young companions had ever witnessed such a scene before; but scarcely had the company assembled when Louisa suddenly disappeared. Emily, who had displayed great affection for her visitor from the moment of her arrival at the park, actually became uneasy, and flew up stairs in search of her guest. Louisa's mind was so completely intent upon her employment, that she did not hear her young friend enter the room, who, perceiving her at her aunt's writing-desk, crept on tip-toe behind the chair, and perceived, written in large characters, "Lines upon the *Birth-day of a Young Friend.*"

I will not attempt to say that Emily was authorised in the theft she committed; but, stretching her arm over her friend's shoulder, she caught hold of the prize, exclaiming, "How good you are, my dearest Louisa! but *this I must* and *will show papa*!" And away she flew, followed by the youthful author, who in

vain implored her to return the lines. Mr. Lainsborough, whose anxious eyes had followed every motion of his darling daughter, was impatiently waiting her return down stairs, and, seeing her rapidly pursued by the diffident Louisa, exclaimed, "Shall I stop the little thief?"

"Oh! pray sir, do;" replied the supplicating poet, "for I would not have it seen for ten thousand pounds. Indeed, Emily," continued she, in breathless agitation, "I did not think you could have acted so ungenerous a part."

Emily, however, in spite of this accusation, refused to relinquish her prize, and, archly opening the paper, displayed to her father the title which it bore.

"Oh you sly girl!" said Mr. Lainsborough, "in *this* instance I must take my Emily's part, and not suffer those talents to be concealed in a napkin which ought to be exposed." So saying, he hastened to the young party, and informed Mrs. Manderville in what manner her niece had been employed.

Though Mrs. Manderville knew Louisa was remarkably fond of poetry, yet she had not the slightest idea she possessed any natural taste for the art, and she intreated Mr. L. not to expose the production, until she saw whether it were

deserving of being read. He was, however, no less callous to that lady's intreaties than he had been to those of the amiable Louisa's, at the same time promising not to give them to the company unless they would do credit to the author's taste. He then retired to a window, followed by the impatient little groupe, who unanimously intreated him to indulge them with a sight of Miss Danver's poetic taste.

"Very good—very fair!" exclaimed Mr. Lainsborough, as he came to the close of every verse; "but your impatience, Emily, has deprived the company of a pleasure, as the lines are not brought to a close." So saying, he turned to the impatient party and read the following stanzas:

* LINES UPON THE BIRTH DAY OF A YOUNG FRIEND.

Bless'd, dear Amelia, be this day,
And may it oft appear;
Accept, thou of an humble lay,
On this returning year.

Glad would I paint the joy I feel,
Although I fear my verse
Will but imperfectly reveal
What I would fain rehearse.

* These lines are the production of a young lady just entered into her twelfth year, on an occasion similar to that described.

Fain would I tell my youthful friend
That, as her years increase,
I wish that *happiness* may blend
Her charms with inward peace!

I wish her mind may never know
Sorrow's afflicting dart;
I wish that innocence may glow
Warm in her youthful heart!

I wish her ever to appear
Her parent's *boast* and *pride*;
I wish, and hope, that ev'ry year
Virtue may be her guide!

I wish her life may be prolong'd
Above the common age;
I wish * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *

Though many flattering compliments were paid to the youthful poetess, it was with the greatest difficulty that she could be persuaded to come down stairs; and, upon Mrs. Manderville's remonstrating upon the folly of excluding herself from the company, she said, "I am so fearful they should think me presumptuous, aunt; but indeed, it was only the thought of the moment; and I am sure Emily has *cured me* of ever writing poetry again."

"No, no, my love," replied Mrs. Manderville, "a passion for poetry is not so easily cured;

and the specimen we have had of your abilities is, I assure you, much to the credit of a little girl; and I shall expect a complimentary copy of verses upon *my* birth-day, which, if I live, will happen on the tenth of May."

The timid Louisa now joined her young companions, and received as many civil speeches as the queen of the day. During breakfast the party were entertained with a band of music, and the table was spread with every delicacy the season could produce. As soon as the repast was ended, which was near three o'clock, the refuse of the treat was placed in large trays and carried to the party in the servants' hall, where a scene of no less joy and festivity presented itself than had been displayed by Emily's more polished guests.

Mrs. Lainsborough soon afterwards quitted the company, for the purpose of seeing whether her humble visitors had every thing they required; and, upon her joining the party, Emily flew towards her, exclaiming, "I am sure you have been crying, my dear, dear mamma!"

"Be *silent*, my angel," said the fond parent, tenderly embracing the affectionate child. Mr. Lainsborough's anxiety, however, had been raised by the child's declaration, and he likewise discerned traces of sorrow upon his wife's face.

Upon being solicited to explain the cause of her emotion upon a day sacred to happiness and delight; Mrs. Lainsborough informed her solicitous husband that her tears had flowed from a mixture of commisseration and joy.

"You remember," said she, "my dear, that poor Betty Dawson and myself lay in at the same time; and you must likewise recollect that the child's godmother took it to live with her when it was three years old."

"I do, my love," replied the attached husband, "and I likewise remember it was one of the loveliest children I ever saw."

"Well," continued Mrs. Lainsborough, "that godmother is recently dead, and made no provision for this unfortunate child. Unfortunate, indeed! for, within the last twelve months, it caught the small pox; and so virulent was the disease, that poor little Betsy has scarcely a glimmering of sight. It was only yesterday that she was brought home to her disconsolate parents, and, hearing of the *fête* which was to be given at the park, she implored them to let her partake of it, as she has not forgotten that she was born on the same day with our child. The mother's distress deeply affected me; whilst my heart felt grateful to heaven for having shielded my Emily from such a calamitous

fate; I have, however, promised the poor woman to make a *subscription* for this unfortunate little girl."

Louisa and Eliza were the only part of Emily's company who had heard this affecting tale; they instantly drew out their purses, and presented Mrs. Lainsborough with their contents; whilst Emily intreated her mamma's permission to give Betsy two guineas which her uncle had presented her with a few hours before.

Mr. L. immediately related poor Betsy's simple history to the company, and at the same time acquainted them with the promise his lady had made the mother; and, to the honour of the humanity of the party assembled, in less than five minutes he collected eight-and-twenty pounds. Every lady and gentleman present gave half a guinea; some of the children offered shillings, others half-a-crown, according to their dispositions, or perhaps according to the weight of their purse.

"But before we make these honest poor people happy," said Mr. Lainsborough, "by presenting them with the generous donation of our sympathizing friends, I have a proposal to make to Mrs. L. and Emily; and, if it meet with their approbation, all this money shall be returned." All the little party eagerly crouded

round the master of the mansion, and the impatience of Emily's disposition was strikingly displayed while, pulling her father by the coat, she exclaimed repeatedly, "Do pray, papa, tell us what proposal you mean to make?"

"Suppose, then, we were to have a fresh christening; and Miss Danvers and Emily become poor Betsy's god-mammas; and suppose Emily, by way of giving you an opportunity of fulfilling this important duty, that the poor blind child were in *future* to *live* at the *park*."

Emily, with a bound of joy and exultation, sprang into her father's arms, and, clasping him round the neck, repeatedly embraced him, calling him "her *dear*—her *kind*—her *best* of *papas*."

"But what says mamma to this proposal?" quired Mr. Lainsborough.

"I say, my dear Charles, that it is worthy of yourself; and our benevolent friends have now only to reclaim their gifts again."

Though each of the company praised and admired the noble conduct of their entertainers, yet they peremptorily refused to take back their gifts; for, as Betty Dawson's husband was an honest and industrious labourer, it was determined that the sum should be laid out in a cow and pigs.

Scarcely was this plan decided, when the musicians returned, and immediately struck up the lively tune of Sir David Hunter Blair. The young gentlemen immediately began to select their partners. Emily, as the mistress of the entertainment, was (to make use of the common expression) lengaged ten deep with suitors for her hand; but neither Emily nor Mrs. Manderville's neices were to be found; and their names were re-echoed through every part of the house.

This, of course, was a breach of politeness which neither mamma nor aunt approved; and the impatience of the young party was displayed in whispers and vexatious remarks. At length they appeared, leading in the delighted Betsy, whom they had dressed in some of Emily's clothes, and who kept modestly curtseying to all the party as they conducted her up the room.

The mother of this *now fortunate child* was so completely overcome with transports at hearing the glad tidings which Emily had told, that the poor woman actually fell into an hysteric fit; and she laughed and cried by turns so violently, that Mrs. Lainsborough was summoned into the servants' hall. The soothing sounds of that amiable woman's voice, soon composed

the poor creature's feelings, and it was with the utmost difficulty she was prevented from falling upon her knees. In simple and unstudied strains of gratitude, however, she poured forth the effusions of her delighted heart. Of the intended boon of charity, however, she was still an entire stranger, as Emily had merely informed her that Betsey was in future to live at the park; and, upon returning to the company, it struck Mrs. Lainsborough that some other poor families in the village ought to share in her friends' gift. A council, therefore, was immediately summoned; and, as the contribution had originally been made for the support of the afflicted Betsy, Mrs. Lainsborough's amendment was universally approved; for, as the child had not only found an asylum, but a protector, the motive which inspired benevolence was of course dissolved; and, instead of buying a cow and pig for honest Thomas Dawson, it was decreed that the money should be divided amongst the parents of all the children who had received an invitation to the park: therefore, instead of rendering *one family* completely happy, three guineas were given to *nine* labouring men's wives, with positive directions to lay it out either in a young calf or pigs; and those who chose to make the former puchase, had the promise of daily

receiving, from Mr. Lainsborough's dairy, two quarts of skim-milk.

Thus was the birth-day of Emily Lainsborough celebrated; and, if the prayers of the poor can avail, long will she live to be a blessing to her parents; for, from this little anecdote of her disposition, my young readers will allow she is an amiable child.

When Mrs. Lainsborough paid a visit to her friend, Mrs. Manderville, Emily was staying with her grandmamma, but as the young people were inclined to form a strong attachment to each other, a second visit to the cottage was proposed, and it was finally settled that the party should meet again in May.

"The Miss Lumleys, Mr. Lainsborough's nieces, whom he had adopted as his daughters, after the irreparable loss he had sustained, assisted their aunt in the pleasing employment of improving Emily's mind; but at the time of the *fête* at Roe-buck Park, they were at Portsmouth, for the purpose of spending the last moments with a beloved brother who had received a lucrative appointment in the east. The absence of these young ladies induced Mrs. Manderville to lenghten her visit much beyond the intended time, and, though a fortnight was the period fixed for her return to the cottage, she did not

arrive until the middle of February. Their journey was attended with some inconvenience, for, as part of the country through which they travelled was surrounded by hills, the melted snow had as it were inundated the valleys, and, descending into the river, had occasioned it to overflow its bed.

Eliza, terrified at the expanse of waters that surrounded her, repeatedly expressed a wish that she had never visited Roe-buck Park.

"Have you so soon forgotten the happiness you enjoyed there?" enquired Mrs. Manderville. "These little obstructions, Eliza, are emblematic of the difficulties you must expect to encounter in life; if every thing went on smooth, if our desires were all gratified, if we did not experience a mixture of pleasure and pain, the former sensation, depend upon it, would be robbed of half its charms; for it is by this striking contrast that we are taught to set a just value upon the blessings we enjoy. Instead of pursuing the straight road, we must make a circuit, but, protected by the hands of a kind providence, we shall, I trust, safely arrive at our journey's end; and this obstruction affords me an opportunity of expatiating upon one of the inconveniences which attend the present month. This inundation, I need scarcely tell

you, is occasioned by the sudden snow, and is a circumstance which frequently happens at this season of the year.

"I would rather, however, my dearest Eliza, point out the benefits which we are likely to enjoy from the increasing power of the sun, which, even at this early period, begins to reanimate vegetation, by dissolving the sap which sustains the *trees*; and, though it is only those of the most porous kind which feel its influence, yet in them the sap has evidently made a progress to rise. The elder, for example, discloses its budding beauties; the lilac, in southern aspects, begins to expound its forward leaves. The catkins of the hazel, if you were to take the trouble of examining the hedges, are now discernible; and the currant and gooseberry trees will, unless the weather become rigorous, put forth their buds by the latter end of the month. But the forwardness of the vegetable tribe of course depends upon the mildness of the season; for I remember, in the middle of March, ninety-five, scarcely a snow-drop reared its drooping head above the earth, although, in general, those elegant, yet scentless flowers announce the approach of spring a month before that time."

"Oh aunt!" exclaimed Louisa, "do you remember those pretty lines you wrote upon

Miss C—— when she brought you the first snow-drops that we had seen blown ?"

"No, my dear ;" replied Mrs. Manderville, "but I recollect Mrs. Barbauld's beautiful description of that elegant little flower ; and there is something so truly poetic in the third and fourth lines, that a person must be totally devoid of taste who does not acknowledge the very superior merit they possess."——

"Already now the snow-drop dares appear,
The first pale blossom of th' unripen'd year ;
As Flora's breath, by some transforming power,
Had chang'd an icicle into a flower.
Its name and hue the senseless plant retains,
And winter lingers in its icy veins."

"They are very pretty, to be sure, aunt," rejoined Louisa," but I like those as well which you gave Miss C—— ; besides, you know you wrote them with a pencil upon one of the leaves of Henry's book, whilst he was talking and playing a hundred monkey tricks ; and I must repeat them to Eliza, for she knows what a sweet young woman Miss C—— is.—

"Sweet snow-drop, earliest herald of the spring,
Thy modest charms, thy native grace I sing ;
For in thy pendant beauties I can trace,
An emblem of my lov'd Louisa's face.
Whose native diffidence, whose polish'd mind,
To charms transcendent, yet appeareth blind :

Like thee, sweet flower, she shuns the ardent gaze;
Like thee, her native modesty displays.
Her's is the spring of life—that spring appears
The promis'd harvest of her riper years."

"Your approbation of that spontaneous production, my dear girl," said Mrs. Manderville, "is a stronger proof of your *affection* for the author than your *poetical taste*; and your partiality to the amiable being to whom I addressed them, increases their merit in your esteem: but we will drop poetics for the present, and revert to the characteristic features which distinguish the present month.

"Though the vegetable creation begin to display symptoms of reanimation in proportion to the mildness of the season and the suspension of frosts; yet we generally find the fruits of the earth more abundant when the cold has continued with some degree of severity through this month; for if the budding leaves happen to be expanded, they are likely to be nipped by the bleak winds of March. I need not observe, my dear Eliza, that the days are now materially lengthened; and though the rays of the sun may not appear perceptible, yet they evidently warm the ground. You will soon see the little moles again begin to throw up their hillocks, which, in other words, are nests for their young: these

are lined with moss for the preservation of the little strangers, and they feed them upon beetles, worms, and the roots of different plants."

"Papa buys all the moles, aunt, that are to be found in the parish," said Eliza, "to line a pelisse for mamma."

"He had better present it to the judge when he comes the circuit, I think," rejoined Louisa; "for a *robe* of *mole's* skins would be very *valuable*, I am sure."

Louisa made this assertion in so sarcastic an accent, that Eliza easily perceived she meant it as ridicule.

"Oh, cousin, I hope," she replied, "you do not imagine that I am telling an untruth; for, upon my word and honour, papa said mamma's pelisse should be lined with *mole-skins*."

"I do not doubt it, my love," said Mrs. Manderville, "but I have known many people, Eliza, who are more *witty* than *wise*; and others who, to show the *superiority* of their understandings, will frequently make very *rude remarks*. Your father, however, my dear, was merely joking; he does not purchase the dead moles for the sake of preserving their *skins*, but from knowing the depredations which they commit in the gardens and fields. The hillocks which they raise not only obstruct the progress

of the scythe, but the grass, within a certain circumference, is generally poor; and these little laborious creatures are likewise accused of letting out the water in canals and dams by working a passage through their sides. In a garden they are no less detrimental, by undermining the choicest roots of flowers; therefore, farmers, as well as gentlemen, make a point of offering a reward for their *skins*. I have often, however, been astonished that they have not been converted to some use, though some author (whose *name* I cannot at this moment remember) informs us they have been prepared for gentlemen's hats, yet the only purpose I ever saw them converted to, was to make purses for the labouring men, although, from the fineness of their texture, I dare say they would answer the purpose of beaver skins."

As Mrs. Manderville closed her remarks upon these apparently insignificant depredators, she turned her head towards Louisa, whose countenance was bathed in tears, and, enquiring into the cause of this unexpected emotion, found it proceeded from the fear of having offended her aunt.

"You have not *offended* me, Louisa," said Mrs. Manderville, "but I must ever disapprove *satirical remarks*. Your cousin had merely be-

lieved her father's assertion, without reflecting upon the *probability* or *improbability* of her mother's coat being lined with the skins of moles; and to ridicule her for not doubting a declaration of her parent's, was evidently wrong."

Louisa not only felt the truth of her aunt's observation, but promised never to be guilty of a similar offence; and, having embraced her cousin and begged her pardon, Mrs. Manderville pursued her remarks.—

"I have informed, you, my dear girls, that as the rays of the sun become more ardent, the sap, which had congealed from the coldness of the season, progressively begins to rise."

"Is the sap in the trunk of the tree, ma'am?" enquired Louisa.

"No, my love; it is absorbed by a number of small vessels which compose the inner bark, which extend to the most minute fibres at the root of the trees: hence the water which nurtures them blends with this glutinous liquid, and rises to the extremity of each branch."

"But how do you *know* that the sap *rises*, aunt?"

"Very easily;" replied Mrs. Manderville, "for it is common in the early part of spring to

tap the birch trees. This tapping, as it is denominated, is merely making an incision in the bark, from which will frequently run more than a quart of sweet liquid, which acquires hardness and consistency by being exposed to the sun. In fruit trees, particularly plums, where the bark has received an injury, you will perceive this sap ousing out, and forming pieces of gum as big as a walnut, though I have frequently seen it much larger.

"By the latter end of this month the farmer's out-door business commences; he plows up his fallows, sows beans, peas, rye, and spring wheat; sets early potatoes, and plants those sorts of trees that require a moist soil, such as alders, poplars, and willows; which would not be likely to take root if the ground were dry. But, to take leave of the vegetable, and return to the animal creation, tradition has asserted that the feathered songsters pair on Valentine Day; but this certainly is one of those fabulous stories which can never obtain credit with a rational or reflecting mind.

"I am of opinion that the pairing of birds depends as much upon the mildness of the season, as the early budding of trees. Although the beginning of April is the time when the

woods and groves begin to resound to the notes of love, and their feathered inhabitants are busily employed in making their nests. The raven is allowed to be the first amongst the airy tribe that makes preparation for its future offspring; it frequently has laid its eggs, and began to sit upon them by the latter end of the month; but the works of nature are not confined to any restricted period, it is sufficient for us to know that they ultimately tend to our good."

As Mrs. Manderville made this remark, the children espied the cottage, and old Stephen seated upon a style.

"The worthy creature," said Mrs. M. "is impatiently watching our arrival, I am persuaded: for he is always apprehensive if I happen to be beyond my time."

The rattling of the wheels soon roused his attention, and he sprang forward with the agility of a boy of fifteen.

"Heaven be praised!" he exclaimed, not allowing Richard time to let down the steps of the carriage, "but I've been in a sad *quandary* ever since yesterday at this time; for we all expected you to *dinner*, madam; and then I heard *as how* the waters were sadly out. God knows, I've been like a fish out of water, watching

every minute to see the coach; but as ye be all safe and well, I don't value what I've gone through no more than a spade of dirt."

"How is the hare, Stephen?" enquired Louisa.

"Don't *ax* nothing at all about it, Miss," he replied, walking away apparently out of humour, though, in fact, to hide the emotion of a too susceptible heart.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

FEBRUARY.

"WHAT can Stephen mean, aunt?" enquired the two children, eagerly.

"He means, my dear girls, that some accident has happened to the poor *hare*; and I intreat you not to ask any more questions about it, for I am persuaded he is sensibly hurt at her death."

"Poor dear little hare!" exclaimed Eliza, bursting into a flood of tears.

"Suppress your tears, my dear child," said Mrs. Manderville, "for you had not known the poor animal long enough to be really attached; besides, had you lost a *friend* (the choicest of

human blessings), you could but have deplored that misfortune with *tears*.

Mrs. Danvers and her son Henry entered the parlour at that moment; Louisa flew into her mother's extended arms; and Eliza, who had never seen that lady before, drew out her handkerchief and hastily wiped away her tears. A happier group, or a more domestic one, never was assembled; Louisa and Eliza related to the attentive Henry the amusements of Roe-buck Park; whilst he, in return, entertained them with the incidents which had occurred during their absence; and the unfortunate hare made a conspicuous figure in the tale which was told.

The poor little animal, it seems, had became so domesticated, that it would follow Stephen if he did but call *puss*, and he had accustomed it to walk in the garden with him, using the precaution of tying a string round its leg. Previous to his giving his little favourite these airings, Stephen had always locked up Jowler; but unluckily some person had opened the stable door, and Jowler rushed into the garden at the moment puss and her companion were passing through the gate, and before Stephen had time to prevent his attacking her, the poor sufferer had received a deadly bite.

"And did he kill her upon the spot?" enquired Louisa.

"Oh no," replied Henry, "she lived until the next day; and would you believe it? old Stephen sat up with her for the purpose of fomenting her poor neck, which Jowler tore so shockingly, that I was really glad when she was out of her pain. He made a deal box to bury her in, and I tried to write some lines, though mamma was kind enough to help me out a little, for I could not make them all rhyme; but pray come and see them, for I have stuck them up just by the grave."

Away flew both the young ladies, eager to see a specimen of Henry's *poetic powers*, although he again repeated that he had received no *slight* assistance from his mamma.

AN EPITAPH UPON A HARE,

WHICH WAS MERCILESSLY KILLED BY A HOUSE-DOG.

Inclos'd within a box of deal
Poor puss's bones are laid,
A victim she to Jowler's jaws,
Who cruelly display'd

The natural enmity which dogs
To timid hares all feel.
Jowler, sure, had a heart of *stone*,
Of *iron*, or of *steel*.

Else never had he clos'd a life,
So harmless as this hare's,
A life which Stephen had preserv'd,
And which he now declares

Ten golden guineas he would give
The victim to recal;
But puss's fate a lesson proves
To Stephen and to all.

For death oft strikes his iron dart
E're we suppose him near;
And, whilst health glows within our veins,
The tyrant may appear.

Then let our lives as harmless be
As this poor timid hare,
For death, like Jowler, may approach,
Nor youth nor beauty spare.

Henry was highly complimented both by his sister and his cousin; and, though the latter was not endowed with a poetic taste, she declared it was the prettiest epitaph she had ever heard.

"Mamma wrote the last verse, I am persuaded," said Louisa, "because she always draws some *moral* from every thing she reads and hears."

"If, as you grow up, my dear Louisa," said Henry, "you should become like her, I shall, indeed, be proud that I am your brother; for I am sure there are not many such women, and

my dear father used to say she was the very *best* in the *world*."

"And was your father as kind and as good to you?" enquired Eliza, with a sigh that proved she could not help drawing a comparison between her cousin's parents and her own.

"Oh, *he was indeed!*" replied both the children, each shedding a filial tear at the recollection of their loss.

Mrs. Manderville was so completely beloved in the neighbourhood, that her return to the cottage was known in less that half an hour: the poor flocked to make personal enquiries, and the more affluent either called or sent cards. Mr. Hardy was amongst the number of those who personally congratulated his neighbour, which he did for the purpose of inviting the young ladies to his house, as on that evening George was to have a party; and though Mrs. Manderville endeavoured to excuse her nieces, he would *not* be *refused*. Though from the trait which has been given of George Hardy's behaviour, my young readers will be convinced he was not an amiable boy, yet few children wish to refuse an invitation where they expect to meet a party of their own age, and this was the case with Louisa and Eliza, who were de-

lighted at finding Mr. Hardy's intreaties prevailed.

The party consisted of about five-and-twenty young ladies and gentlemen; and after having played a variety of games, *hide* and *seek* was the one fixed upon, and it was determined that *two* should have the privilege to hide. George and Eliza were at length destined to secrete a snuff-box which had been given them to hide, and, beckoning her into the drawing-room, they were debating where to conceal it for a long time: when, espying a large China jar which stood upon the mantle place he proposed putting the box in.

"Oh do not touch those jars, for fear of an accident!" exclaimed Eliza.

"Fiddle of an accident;" replied the daring boy, "I will get upon a chair, and do you take it, for they will never think we could reach it down."

The too easily persuaded girl obeyed the order, but unfortunately let it slip, and, though it did not actually drop out of her hand, she struck it against the side of the chimney-piece, and not only cracked it, but chipped a large piece out. A violent flood of tears was the consequence of this accident; even George's countenance betrayed symptoms of fear; but recover-

ing himself in a few moments he implored Eliza not to cry; only keep your *own counsel*," said he, " and no creature will know who broke it, and mamma will fancy it was one of the *maids*."

" No, no, that will be very wicked," rejoined Eliza, " to let the poor servants be blamed."

" You do not know what a passionate woman my mamma is," replied the artful fellow, " I am sure she would almost be the *death* of *me*, and as to *you*, my dear Miss Rushbrook, though you are a visitor, I would not be in your place for all the world."

Terrified by this account of Mrs. Hardy's violence of temper, Eliza consented to the plan George proposed; who, placing the jar in a situation so as the flaw could not be discovered, concealed the snuff-box in a different part of the room; and, again imploring Eliza to look cheerful, gave the accustomed signal in a loud tone of voice.

The impatient group rushed into the apartment, declaring they had kept them a shameful time; when Mrs. Hardy, who had left them the greater part of the evening to their own enjoyment, asked her son why he had brought his young companions into that room? " You had three apartments," said she, " my dear, to play

in, and I am fearful lest some accident should happen, either to the *mirrors* or my *Indian jars*."

As Mrs. Hardy made this declaration, her accurate eye discovered that the broken one did not stand exactly in its proper place, and, taking it up for the purpose of arranging it in the accustomed position, the fatal fracture unfortunately met her eye.

"Gracious powers!" she exclaimed, "my beautiful vase is broken! Do you know any thing of this accident, George?"

"No indeed, indeed, mamma; Miss Rushbrook can tell you I never even went near the mantle-piece."

Conscious guilt overspread Eliza's countenance; Mrs. Hardy, however, happened to be too intently examining the flaw to observe the crimson glow which suffused her features, though, in an authoritative tone, she demanded whether her son spoke the truth.

"Yes, ma'am," faultered out the trembling Eliza.

The bell was violently rang, and the servants separately summoned, who of course denied any knowledge of the act; and Betty the housemaid declared, upon her sacred honour, that the jar was whole that very afternoon. Suspicion instantly fell upon the right person, for Betty had

lived five years with Mrs. Hardy, and had never been detected in an untruth; but George verified a trite observation, that *one* story leads to *ten*; for, alarmed at the calmness of Betty's declaration, he resolved to throw the blame upon the poor girl.

"Nay, Betty," said he, "I am persuaded that I heard the jar fall, though to be sure at the moment I did not think what it was; and just afterwards I saw you run out of the room as *pale* as death."

"God forgive you, Master Hardy," replied Betty; "but it is not the first time, sir, you have contrived to have us poor servants blamed for *your faults*; however, if my mistress does not choose to believe me, I am determined to quit my place."

"Do you not suppose I will believe my *own child* in preference to any servant?" said the indignant mistress of the house; "you are very welcome to quit your place to-morrow, but I fancy you will heartily repent. George," continued she, turning to this undaunted fellow, "can you say upon your *honour* you heard my *vase broke*?"—"I heard something break, mamma, upon my word and honour, but I did not see it you know; but Betty ran down stairs

soon afterwards as white as the frill of my shirt: and pray what should have frightened her if she had not broke the vase?"

"What indeed, my dear boy? I am sorry I suspected you; but come, young ladies and gentlemen do not let this accident interrupt your sport; I must not suffer you, however, to remain in this apartment." So saying, she locked the door.

To poor Eliza there was an end of all amusement; it was with the utmost difficulty she could refrain from tears; and, taking an opportunity of speaking unobserved to Master Hardy, she enquired how he could have been so wicked as to accuse the innocent maid?

Oh, she is the most *ill-tempered creature* that ever lived," said he, "my dear Miss Rushbrook; she has told a hundred stories of me; and I am quite delighted to think I have got her out of her place."

At this instant the footman announced Mrs. Manderville's servant: Eliza was delighted at hearing the sound, and, though her cousin kept talking all the way home of the unfortunate accident, she did not make any reply.

"Eliza's dejected countenance did not escape Mrs. Manderville's observation, and she anxi-

ously enquired whether she were ill; but, instead of answering the question she burst into a flood of tears.

Louisa was no less astonished than her aunt at this extraordinary appearance; as, during the early part of the evening, her cousin had been in the highest glee, and as to the vase she was confirmed in the opinion that it had been broken by the maid.

Previous to her nieces' retiring to their chamber, Mrs. Manderville had made a point of hearing them say their prayers; but when Eliza began to articulate she was almost choaked with grief, and, hastily rising from her kneeling posture, she exclaimed, "Indeed, indeed, aunt, I dare not pray to God!"

Petrified and alarmed at this declaration, the amiable Mrs. Manderville endeavoured to soothe her mind, and implored her to acknowledge the fault which she so penitently deplored.

For a length of time Eliza could not assume courage; but, assured of her aunt's forgiveness, she related every thing that had occurred, declaring that she could not bear the idea of the poor innocent maid suffering for her fault.

In the mildest terms possible, Mrs. Manderville pointed out the error she had committed in

acting contrary to the innate rectitude of her mind, and suffering the persuasions of an artful boy to induce her to corroborate an untruth. "The sorrow and contrition you have displayed, Eliza," said that amiable woman, "convince me that you not only *see*, but *feel* your fault; and therefore I shall not expatiate upon it any farther than to observe that *cruelty* and *injustice* were added to the *crime*. The poor girl, who has been accused of an action which you in part committed, has no other means of supporting her existence but by the labour of her hands; and who do you suppose would hire a servant charged with one of the most despicable of failings, a *deviation* from *truth*? Fortunately, however, the remorse of a guilty conscience prevented you from conniving at so base an act. Dry up your tears; I shall never again mention a subject, which I rejoice at perceiving gives you so much concern; to-morrow morning I will call upon Mrs. Hardy, and explain the circumstance exactly as it occurred. All intercourse with a boy of so depraved a disposition from this moment must be at an end; for though I was always convinced of the danger of *bad example*, I was not aware that it could have produced such an alarming effect."

Eliza was, in the true sense of the word, a repentant sinner; repeatedly did she ask her cousin whether she thought her aunt could forgive her offence.

"Yes, I am certain she will," replied Louisa, "and so, my dear Eliza, I hope will *God*; for, whenever I am in fault, mamma always tells me it is *his forgiveness* I ought to *beg*."

This hint was sufficient for Eliza, who again began saying her prayers, and, her mind having been calmed by this act of supplication, she fell into a profound sleep.

Not so Mrs. Manderville, whose amiable disposition led her to sympathize in the anguish Mr. and Mrs. Hardy must inevitably feel when they were made acquainted with the depravity of their only child. The first idea which struck her was to soften his conduct as much as possible, by throwing an equal degree of obloquy upon her niece; but, upon more mature reflection, she thought it a duty to make them acquainted with the full extent of his crime; as she was convinced *severe punishment* was the only chance of reclaiming a boy so *hardened* in *iniquity* as George. Early, therefore, in the morning she directed her steps towards the priory, attended by Richard, who carried a basket containing a pair of elegant porcelain jars. Mrs. Hardy

happened to be walking in the garden, and expressed her surprise at seeing her at such an unusual hour.

"I am an early visitor, I acknowledge, said Mrs. Manderville, "and an *unwelcome* one I fear I shall prove; but in this world, my dear madam, we are sometimes called upon to perform painful duties, and unfortunately such an one has fallen to my lot."

She then related every circumstance which had happened the preceding evening, and concluded by intreating Mrs. Hardy to accept the vases as a compensation for the one which her niece had broken.

None but a parent can form an idea of poor Mrs. Hardy's feeling, whilst listening to a recital which actually chilled her blood; and, clasping her hands together with unspeakable anguish, "Would to heaven," said she, "I had died before I gave him birth! Oh Mrs. Manderville, you are a happy woman in having no children to torture, to agonize your breast!

Mrs. Manderville mingled her tears with those of this afflicted parent, and offered every argument that reason could suggest to assuage the poignancy of her grief: He is *young*, my dear madam, recollect," said she, "and therefore

cannot be *hardened* in iniquity; but I would advise you immediately to send him to school: some dispositions actually require *coercion*, and Master Hardy's tutor is infinitely too mild, not that I approve of *severity*, but a preceptor ought always to inspire his pupil with respect: a sentiment which your son certainly does not feel towards Mr. Dupree, at least he does not testify it by his *manners* and *address*.

Having performed a painful though necessary duty, Mrs. Manderville returned home, and heard that Eliza was so ill with a violent headach that she was unable to rise; a circumstance which though it gave her uneasiness, yet proved the susceptibility of the child's heart and confirmed her in the opinion that she would never again be guilty of a similar fault.

Mrs. Hardy prudently followed her friend's advice, and in less than a week George was sent to a public school; but what other punishment he received for his shameful behaviour I cannot inform my young readers, though it must have been *severe*, if it were proportioned to that which he deserved.

A relation of Mrs. Manderville's about this period arrived from the East Indies, and passed a week at her house. Each of the little girls derived much gratification from his society, and ea-

gerly listened to his account of the customs and manners which prevailed in that part of the globe.—One evening when Mr. Flemming had been describing the intense heat of that climate, and the different periods of the year in which their winter months occurred, Eliza, upon his quitting the parlour, said, "I have heard all travellers will *stretch a little*, aunt, and I am certain Mr. Flemming has been telling a *fib*.

"It is an illiberal remark, which is, I allow, often made upon travellers, Eliza;" replied Mrs. Manderville, "but a very *improper one* from the lips of a little girl; however, pray tell me your reason for supposing Mr. Flemming deviated from truth."

Eliza appeared rather confounded, but perceiving a smile upon her aunt's face, she proceeded by saying, "*Winter* must be *winter*, all over the world."

"You have not travelled very far in the road of information, my dear child, I fancy, or you would have known that at *this* very *period* some parts of the world are enjoying all the beauties of *spring*, whilst in others the summer has attained its full perfection; and, in a different spot, the harvest is ready for the labourer to carry home, or the granaries are perhaps groaning under the weight of their abundant crops.

You must remember, my dear girl, that the country we inhabit, in point of the immensity of the universe, is no more than a grain of sand; and if you recollected what I told you concerning the earth's motion round that luminary which enlightens us, you must know that the seasons must *vary* in different parts of the world, in proportion to that part being nearer to, or farther removed from that enlivening orb. We are not to suppose *ourselves* the peculiar favourites of Heaven, or imagine that the seasons are adapted to our particular use; no, Eliza, no; far more extensive is our great Creator's beneficence; his kindness extends to the farthest extremities of the poles! The scattered inhabitants who dwell in the burning sands of Arabia, and the unlettered Greenlanders, who reside in the most northern points of the globe, are as much the objects of a Divine Providence's protection, as Europe's most *polished* and enlightened sons. Nature has implanted in the bosom of each individual, an attachment to the country in which he was born, and this *instinctive* attachment, if I may be permitted to make use of such an expression, is a kind, a beneficial dispensation of God; for were it otherwise, some parts of the globe would be *deserted*, and others *over-stocked*.

The re-entrance of Mr. Flemming put an end to this conversation. Mrs. Manderville immediately made him acquainted with Eliza's remark; when, taking her upon his knee, he very good humouredly told her she must never believe more than *half* of what she heard, "For example," continued he, "if any person were to tell you that you were *pretty*, only believe that you are neither actually *ugly* nor *deformed*."

"Never mention *beauty* to little girls, my good friend, I intreat you;" said Mrs. Manderville, "for they are all apt enough to be vain; but it is only for the improvement of the mind, and the goodness of the heart that they can become truly estimable in the opinion of the virtuous, the respectable, and the wise."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

MARCH.

As the weather had been remarkably cold previous to Christmas, it was unusually mild at the commencement of this month. The throstle began to tune his melodious pipe, the naked wood which sheltered Mrs. Manderville's cottage

from the rude blasts of Boreas, resounded with the cooing notes of the ring-dove; and the pheasants, with which it abounded, already separated in pairs. The poultry-yard, which the amiable mistress of this elegant retreat used to term her *hobby horse*, at this season occupied a greater portion of her time, for the ducks and geese began to lay, and the hens became anxious to recommence their maternal cares.

As nearly a fortnight had elapsed without rain, the industrious farmer again had recourse to the plough, and to sow his fields alternately, with barley and oats.—Each morning, when the weather permitted, it was Mrs. Manderville's custom to accompany her nieces in their rambles into the adjoining fields, and these walks were not only beneficial to their constitution, but always proved instructive to their minds; for every blade of grass, and every opening bud which expanded, afforded their monitress an opportunity of pointing out the wonderful works of God.

Eliza who had never been accustomed to hear similar observations, listened to them with a mixture of improvement and delight; and having one day attentively observed the husbandman scatter the seeds for a future harvest, she said "How pretty it is aunt to see the corn sown! but how astonishing it is that such a

little grain of barley should produce so large a bunch!"

"All the works of omnipotence, Eliza, are calculated to excite astonishment;" replied Mrs. Manderville, "but with an attentive and religious observer of them, they will produce a much more necessary effect; for they will imperceptibly inspire a mixture of adoration and gratitude towards that great Being who so beneficently studies the happiness of the creatures he has formed; and whilst our hearts glow with these sensations we can never wilfully act in opposition to his divine laws.

"The greatest philosophers of past ages have been no less astonished, my dear Eliza, than you are, at the wonderful production of a single ear of corn; and its reanimated appearance, after being buried in the bosom of the earth, has been considered as emblematic of our resurection from the tomb.

'If it were possible, aunt," said Louisa "I should like to see all the changes an ear of corn passes through, before it shoots out of the ground."

I can satisfy your curiosity in this respect I believe, my dear Louisa; for those who were fond of studying the works of nature have examined the seed in its varying forms, and from their communications I am enabled to

give you a satisfactory account. As soon as the earth has supplied the grain of corn with a sufficient degree of moisture to expand it, the outer coat naturally bursts; a number of small fibres then suddenly spring from it and shoot into the ground. When these fibres, which are the root, have acquired some degree of vigour, a very slender stem bursts from the upper part and forces a passage through the clods of earth. At first I scarcely need tell you it has the appearance of a blade of grass, but you soon perceive the stem furnished with a variety of little leaves, which inclose each ear of corn, and these you know are armed with points for the purpose of defending it from the birds."

"I think, if I were a man, aunt, I should like, above all things, to be a *farmer*," said Eliza "for the pleasure of seeing the seeds grow which I had *sown*."

"There are a great many seeds grow which are never sown by the husbandman, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "and many trees in a flourishing condition which were originally planted by the birds."

Birds plant trees!" exclaimed Mrs. Manderville's astonished auditors, in an incredulous tone of voice.

"Yes, birds plants trees; and the *raven* is particularly expert in this kind of work: yet do not suppose they do this from the same motive as a gardener, but instinct teaches them to lay by a store of food: for this purpose they make a hole with their bills, and bury the nut, or acorn, which, if not scratched up again, naturally takes root. I must now explain to you by what means a variety of seeds are sown without the hand of industry: these are of so light a nature as to be carried forward by the wind, and fall promiscuously in different soils."

Whilst Mrs. Manderville was making these intelligent observations, she was interrupted by Eliza's intreating her to look at the number of birds which were assembled in the field.

"Those are rooks, which have been attracted by the contents of Seeder's basket," said Mrs. Manderville, "and the whole tribe of them are considered as a nest of thieves."

At this moment they were accosted by farmer Hawkins, who invited the party to rest themselves at the farm and take a *mouthful* of *somewhat* after their long walk.

Eliza, whose curiosity had been excited, enquired why he did not shoot these nasty great birds; "If you do not," said she, "I am certain they will eat up all the corn."

"No fear of that, Miss," replied the humane farmer, "they are kindly welcome to a part; for they eat up all the grubs, and a nest of nasty little insects, which, but for them, would destroy a whole field of corn. Besides, thinks I to myself, what right have I to take away the lives of *them there* poor creatures, which was *sartinly* sent for some use; and they *sure* enough was never intended to be *eaten*, for I'd as soon have a bit of an old shoe."

Mrs. Manderville warmly applauded the benevolence of the honest farmer's feelings, and, in compliance with his intreaties, accompanied him home; where a table was instantly spread with brown bread and fresh churned butter, rendered more inviting by a large cold ham. The worthy Mrs. Hawkins highly gratified her young visitors by showing them her dairy, her poultry-yard, and young lambs; inviting them to accompany her to an adjoining meadow, where near two hundred of these innocent little creatures were bleating by the side of their dams. The poultry-yard was likewise a grand treat to Eliza, as three or four early broods of chickens were already hatched, and between twenty and thirty hens were sitting upon their eggs. Curiosity induced Eliza to peep into the kitchen, when a boy about fourteen accosted

her with, "How do Miss Gilpin? I say Miss, give me a penny, I wants to buy myself a sweetheart."

As the poor fellow expressed this want, he burst into a violent fit of laughter, in which he was joined by Eliza, who, running towards her aunt, intreated her to follow her and see one of the funniest boys she ever beheld.

"It is poor silly Richard, ma'am," said Louisa, "but indeed, Eliza, you should not laugh at him."

"Why, he laughed himself, and made such droll faces that you could scarcely help it, though you look so grave just now."

"I hope Louisa has too much sensibility to laugh at the greatest misfortune that can befal a fellow-creature," replied Mrs. Manderville. "That poor boy, Eliza, you must have perceived is an *idiot*; he is a distant relation of the worthy Mr. Hawkins, who treats him with as much kindness as if he were his son."

"The unfortunate, though harmless, boy, now came into the parlour, and again repeated his want of a penny to buy a sweetheart.

"There, Richard," said Mrs. Hawkins, taking a gingerbread cake from the cupboard. "there is one for you, go into the kitchen my good boy," and he went jumping off, making a

variety of gestures which proved the deplorable state to which he was reduced. The sympathizing Louisa followed him, and, putting sixpence into his hand, begged him to buy a sweetheart the first time he went out, but, instead of seeming grateful for the present, he threw it into the fire, saying it was only a *bit* of *tin*.

Eliza's risibility was again roused by this action, and her laughter reaching Mrs. Manderville's ears, she arose to take her leave, apprehensive that this inconsiderate conduct would give pain to the worthy woman, whose humanity she so much admired. Displeased at what she considered a want both of delicacy and feeling, Mrs. Manderville assured Eliza she should never again visit the farm ; and, upon arriving at the cottage, she desired her to go to her own apartment, and not appear in her presence until she were called.

This was the first time Eliza had completely offended her respectable relation, whom she loved beyond any other being in the world ; and she obeyed the mandate in silent sorrow, whilst she trembled with apprehension lest she should be sent home. Louisa said every thing in her power to calm her agitation, but Eliza's terrors were not to be subdued ; in vain she was told that the most likely means of softening her aunt's

displeasure was to perfect herself in the task she was accustomed to learn. Though she took up the book in compliance with her cousin's intreaties, the next moment she threw it upon the ground, at the same time sobbing, and exclaiming, "*I know*, by my aunt's *looks*, that I shall be sent home! Oh dear, what will become of me? Oh dear, how unfortunate I am!"

These piteous appeals to the sympathizing Louisa, drew tears from her eyes, and she offered to undertake the kind office of a petitioner, and represent Eliza's humility and contrition to her aunt.

"Oh no, no! you must not name me to her; she thinks me a wicked, an unfeeling girl. Oh, Louisa! Louisa! what will become of me? You don't know how unhappy I used to be at home!"

As the penitent Eliza was bewailing her misfortunes, and sobbing between every sentence as if her heart would break, Mrs. Manderville had occasion to go to her own apartment, and accidentally overheard her sorrowful complaints; and, opening the door, she mildly censured the weeping girl for giving vent to such violent paroxysms of grief. "*Violent passions* and *violent feelings* soon become exhausted," said she,

"but unfortunately they seldom make a deep impression upon the mind; and I should have been much better pleased to see you endeavouring to regain my favour by attention to your studies than to have heard you bewailing my displeasure with such unnecessary marks of grief."

Eliza's expressions of regret, however, soon obtained her forgiveness. With avidity she then applied to her books, to which she had now become so extremely partial that she scarcely ever was without one in her hand.

A few days after this memorable visit to farmer Hawkins's, the young ladies were one morning taking their accustomed walk in the fields, when they perceived a bird which they took to be a young partridge, limping over the plowed lands, and, though unable to accomplish its purpose, making frequent attempts to fly. Eliza tripped after it with the rapidity of a lapwing, and at length the affrighted flutterer became her prize; but, finding her hands besmeared with the crimson current, which still dropped from its wounded shoulder, she screamed and threw it down upon the ground. Louisa instantly picked up the wounded little sufferer, and, presenting it to her aunt, eagerly demanded whether she thought it would recover, and whether it were a singing or an eating bird.

Though the upper joint of the wing was lacerated by the sportsman's deadly weapon, yet, as the bone was not broken, Mrs. Manderville gave her opinion that the bird would survive. "It is a woodcock," said she, "and those birds you know are a great delicacy, I think I will have it for my *supper to-night.*"

"No, dear aunt, no; do pray let me keep it; you do not know how happy I shall feel if it should but get well."

"Enjoy your happiness, my dear child, and exert your humanity, for, believe me, Eliza, I was merely in jest; yet, if the little wanderer should recover, I fear it would be ungrateful for your kindness, and leave its nurse the moment it is able to use its wings; for, at the close of this month, birds of this species return to their native countries, which are Sweeden, Norway, and the more northern parts of the globe. The fieldfare and the red-wing thrush likewise *migrate* about this period; but the annual flights of these little creatures depends upon the mildness or backwardness of spring; they come hither to avoid the inclemency of their native climate, but regularly return as soon as the weather becomes more genial and mild."

"Do not woodcocks breed in this country, aunt?" enquired Louisa.

"Comparatively very *few*, my dear; and it is supposed those few either do not feel their strength equal to so long a journey, or perhaps have been wounded, like the poor little creature in Eliza's arms. The gannets, or Soland geese, likewise in this month take their flight to Scotland; and there is an insulated rock in the Frith of Forth called the Bass, which is a favourite spot; and thither they flock in such immense numbers, that it is actually covered with their nests. *Instinct* supplies the want of reasoning faculties in the feathered tribe, my dear children, and proves the attentive care of providence over every living creature that he formed; for how wonderful is it that at certain periods they should regularly take their flight, and as regularly return. If the Great Parent of the Universe so benevolently provides for the support of the feathered creation, how much more reason have we to place an unbounded reliance upon his protecting care, who are not only blessed with reasoning faculties, but are formed in the likeness of his *person*, according to the sacred writer's account."

As Mrs. Manderville made this observation she passed a humble cottage, where five or six bee-hives were ranged upon a bench.

"There is another symptom of the approach of spring," said she: "Do you not perceive, Eliza, that the bees are venturing out of their hives? attracted, probably, by the scent of that bed of violets, which, from the forwardness of the season, already perfumes the air. The mezereon is likewise now in high perfection; the golden crocusses, though not fragrant, enliven the borders where they grow, whilst those of the purple kind if they were not common, would be admired for the richness of their colour and the beauty of their dye. The primroses now begin to peep from under the hedges; and the frogs, which during winter had laid in a torpid state, emerge from the bottom of the ponds and pools, reanimated by the sun's enlivening influence. The bat likewise, about this time, makes its reappearance; whilst the viper (the only venomous reptile we are annoyed with), uncoils from its winter's sleep, and begins to search for its favourite nourishment, which is field mice.

"Beautiful as this day is, we have reason to expect a change of weather, as it is the vernal equinox; which means that at this period the days and nights are of equal length all over the globe. The autumnal equinox takes place at the latter end of September, and each is generally

accompanied by high winds and storms. Though spring commences in *March*, yet it may rather be considered as the herald of that inviting season, for, though the weather has been peculiarly mild this month, yet, in all probability, we shall have slight frosts and cold winds; and, had not the insects which infest our gardens been destroyed by the intense cold we had at, and before, Christmas, in the ensuing summer you would have had but a small portion of fruit: at present, however, the prospect is very favourable; the earth is in the highest state of perfection for the reception of her fruits, and we have only to hope that the Almighty will prosper the labours of the husbandman, and that sensations of gratitude will animate his bosom when he reaps and when he sows."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

APRIL.

ELIZA had spent between three and four months in the society of her amiable relation; and, during that period, had only received one

letter from her papa: although, in compliance with her aunt's injunctions, she had regularly written twice to him in the course of every month; not only for the purpose of enquiring after the health of the family, but describing to him the manner in which she spent her time. Writing had always been this little girl's favourite amusement; for the curate of the village where her father resided had undertaken to teach her that art, as a return for a variety of attentions he had himself received from Mr. Rushbrook when a boy; and his manners were so kind and gentle, that the hour she passed under his instruction, was the happiest in the day.

Though it was rather extraordinary that a child should write more than tolerable, who, if desired to it, could scarcely spell her name, yet this actually happened to the little heroine of my story; and, therefore, it is probable her father did not give her credit for the improvement she regularly informed him she had made. Of geography, upon her arrival at the cottage, she was so totally ignorant, that she did not even know the names of the four quarters of the globe; and upon her cousin's one day asking her why England was called an island? she said, "Because it begins with the letter *I*."

This mark of ignorance in orthography, as well as geography, is only mentioned to prove how much attention she must have paid to the instruction of her aunt; for, by the middle of the month of April, she not only knew the situation of every country, but could measure its distance from any given spot, either upon a large globe, with which Mrs. Manderville had presented her, or upon a map of the world.

She was one morning busily occupied in this improving employment, when a carriage and four drove up to the house; Eliza immediately flew to the window, but, in the space of a few seconds, threw herself into a chair, exclaiming, "Oh, Louisa! mamma is come for me! and I shall now be obliged to leave my dear, dear aunt!"

A death-like paleness overspread her countenance as she expressed her fears.

Louisa first endeavoured to quiet her apprehensions, and then went to the window to take a view of her aunt.

A gentleman and a female servant were assisting a lady out of the carriage, who, from the fashionable style of her dress, had not the least appearance of an invalid, though, from the debility she seemed to feel, it was evident she was most seriously ill.

As Louisa Danvers was a total stranger to Mrs. Rushbrook's person, she concluded her cousin must have mistaken the lady's face, particularly as neither Mrs. Manderville nor Eliza had even heard of her being ill.

A hasty summons down stairs, however, soon convinced them it was the identical Mrs. Rushbrook, who had unexpectedly visited their aunt; and, though Eliza had never been treated with tenderness by her mother, yet, upon beholding her stretched almost lifeless upon a sofa, she burst into tears.

Mrs. Rushbrook was one of those fashionable females who sacrificed that choicest of blessings, *health*, to modern hours; and, naturally possessing a delicate constitution, she was unable to support that constant round of pleasure in which she had engaged; and, having caught a violent cold from entering into company immediately after her confinement, the physicians apprehended a *rapid decline*. By their advice she was then on her road to Devonshire, where the air is allowed to be peculiarly salutary in pulmonary complaints; and it was Mr. Rushbrook's intention to take his daughter with him, that she might be a companion to his poor sick wife. This was melancholy intelligence to Eliza, yet the amiable girl considered it a duty

incumbent upon her not to repine; her mother-in-law was ill—her attentions might become useful: and she was to be accompanied by her little brother, whom she had never seen. In about two hours after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, the phæton which conveyed Eliza's new relation and his nurse appeared in sight, and she flew into the court to embrace the little fellow, who was only two months old; it therefore excited Mrs. Manderville's astonishment that such an infant should have been suffered to travel in an open chaise.

Little Manderville (for so he was called) in a great measure reconciled Eliza to her destined journey, though her heart sickened whenever she reflected upon the moment of separation from her beloved aunt, although the event proved that providence had ordained that this dreaded separation should not take place. Mrs. Rushbrook, on the day after her arrival at the cottage, complained of an unusual pain in her side; her breathing became alarmingly short—her cough much more troublesome, and a physician of eminence was immediately called in. Indisposition had materially softened the asperity of her manner towards Eliza; and she appeared to derive gratification from the filial attention which she

received; in short, she would scarcely suffer her daughter-in-law, to be out of her sight.

Eliza was so much delighted by this alteration of conduct, that when she heard the physician express fears for his patient's life, her grief was as unfeigned and violent, as if she had been likely to lose the tenderest and the kindest of friends.

Mr. Rushbrook's disposition was the reverse of his daughter's, for few circumstances were capable of touching his heart; and never were brother and sister so completely opposite, as Mr. R. and Mrs. M. Yet he was by no means an unamiable character, but one of those even-minded beings who take the world as it goes. His not answering Eliza's letters had not proceeded from want of affection, but from a natural indolence of temper, and apathy of mind. Not six months had elapsed after the death of his first wife, before he married again; and upon hearing the melancholy intelligence that he was likely once more to become a widower, he calmly replied, "God's will be done."

That the physician's fears were too well founded was proved in a very short period; for a rapid inflammation which baffled his skill, had taken place upon the lungs, and in less than a week after the unfortunate Mrs. Rushbrook's ar-

rival at the cottage, she breathed her last sigh in her husband's arms. Perfectly sensible of her approaching dissolution, she called the disconsolate Eliza to her bed-side, and embracing her with maternal affection, besought her to love and cherish her darling boy. "I fear," said she, "Eliza, you will *hate* my *memory*; I know I was not so kind to you as I ought to have been; yet surely I never was *cruel* to you, tell me at this *awful moment* if I were so, my dear girl?"

"Oh no, no, my dear mamma;" sobbed out the weeping Eliza, bathing her mother's burning hands with tears; "I used, I am persuaded to give you a great deal of trouble; but pray do not *talk*, do not *think*, about *death*."

"I *feel it approaching*;" rejoined the expiring sufferer, "and young as you are, Eliza, I can *rely* upon *your word*; then promise me, my dear child, that you will be *kind* to your brother; there is, you know, a great difference in your years, and you will soon be old enough in a great measure, to supply my loss."

"I will love him with all my *heart* and *soul* fervently!" exclaimed Eliza, "and nobody, if I can help it, shall ever treat him unkindly; indeed, indeed, mamma, you may believe me,

and if *I* do not *love him*, I hope God will *never love me!*"

A more sacred assurance it was impossible for any child of Eliza's age to have given, and it seemed to act as a cordial to the dying Mrs. Rushbrook's heart, who, once more embracing her, fell into a gentle dose; but alas! when she awoke, the powers of articulation were for ever gone; and though she lived until the following morning, she was insensible to every thing that occurred.

The cottage, of course, became a house of mourning, for there was something peculiarly melancholy in a young woman's being cut off in her prime; and the unfortunate Mrs. Rushbrook had not reached the age of twenty-five. Mr. Rushbrook remained his sister's guest about a fortnight, after the death of his wife, and then informed her it was his intention to go abroad for a few months, as he had a particular friend in Portugal, and he thought his spirits would be renovated by change of scene.

Though Mrs. Manderville thought there was a want of paternal affection in this resolution, and was well aware that the feelings of her brother were not so acute as to require a change of scene, yet she raised no objections to his

proposal, but kindly offered to supply the loss of a mother to his little boy. Towards Eliza she had felt such an increasing attachment, that, previous to the melancholy and unexpected event which had happened, she had indulged the idea of adopting her as her child, and by it, of course, this resolution was not only strengthened, but confirmed. The largest room in the cottage was now converted into a nursery, and little Manderville established in his new abode. Towards the end of the month, Mr. Rushbrook took leave of his amiable sister, and Louisa and Eliza returned to their accustomed employ; the former however did not reside wholly at the cottage, for her mamma's house was only divided from Mrs. Manderville's by a small field, and it was at the particular request of the latter, that Mrs. Danver's consented to be part of the day separated from her beloved child. To inspire Eliza with *emulation*, was the motive which induced that amiable woman to instruct both her nieces at the same time, as she was well aware that Louisa enjoyed the advantage of a most judicious preceptress in her mamma.

On the morning after Mr. Rushbrook's departure, Mrs. Manderville observed to her young pupils, that the month was nearly expired,

"though in fact," said she, "the *last*, had more the appearance of *April*, but that we should have blustering boisterous weather you will recollect I foresaw."

"How could you *foresee* it aunt?" enquired Eliza.

"Perhaps *foreseeing* was an *improper* term; but I formed my opinion of the *future*, from recollecting the *past*; and I have always observed that whenever March is serene, and genial, the ensuing month is bleak and cold.---Changeableness of weather, notwithstanding, is peculiarly characteristic of this month; showers and sunshine generally succeed each other with the same variation of heat and cold. In the early part of it, this versatility is attributed to the influence of the equinoctial gales, which, I I think I informed you invariably produce storms."

As Mrs. Manderville was speaking, she observed a swallow skim lightly through the air.

"If it were possible," said she, "that I could have been ignorant of the season, that winter wanderer would convince me that Spring was returned, for during the cold weather they always migrate to a warmer climate, but regularly return before the end of this month.

Of this singular bird there are four species, each is remarkable for the shortness of their legs, and the extent of their wings; the one which I observed this moment is the chimney swallow, it has a twittering note, the tail is forked, and the feathers on its bosom are red. This bird revisits us rather sooner than the rest of the species. The second in arrival is known by the appellation of the *house martin*, which forms its nest under the eaves of houses, or at the edges of our windows; this little domestic creature is distinguished by its white breast and black back. The next is known by the name of the *sand martin*, which is the smallest of the whole race, and in Spain they call them *mountain butterflies*; these birds reside chiefly in high sandy banks near rivers, and large pools; in these banks they scoop holes to the depth of nearly two feet, and there deposit their eggs. As the sand martin is the *smallest*, so the *swift* is the largest of this genus, and derives its name from its very rapid flight: it returns to us the last of the whole species, and soars in the air to an inconceivable height; although of a morning and evening they generally approach nearer the earth and flit about with the rapidity of lightning, uttering a shrill inharmonious note.—As these birds live chiefly upon insects, it is

one of the wise dispensations of Providence that they should not return to our clime until a sufficient number are restored to a state of animation to supply them with the means of preserving life; but that they should take leave of us at certain periods, and return again with the same regularity, of course is one of those extraordinary phenomena for which all the boasted reasoning of man is not able to account; that their bodies are so framed as *not* to be able to support the *coldness* of our *winters,* is the only rational motive we can assign; yet that creatures not endowed with the use of intellect, should be able to direct their course through such an immense space without compass to guide, or provision to sustain them, is a striking proof that the most insignificant of creatures are under the Almighty's care; and as the sacred writer beautifully observes, "Not a sparrow falls from the house top without his knowledge and permission; and the fields are clothed with verdure in obedience to his word.

"But to return to those birds which may be said to act as a natural calendar, and mark the arrival of this changeable month; the wry-neck, a small bird of passage which feeds upon those ants and insects which harbour in the bark of trees, regularly arrives a few days before the

cuckoo, whose note, though monotonous, never fails to please, as we hail it as the harbinger of those blessings which Providence bountifully prepares for the comfort of mankind. The ring-ouzle, the redstart, the yellow-wren, the white-throat, the grashopper-lark, and the willow-wren, arrive in succession, from the beginning to the latter end of the month; and a variety of insects now display symptoms of returning life. Amongst these are the dragon fly, one of the most elegant of the tribe of insects: and the horse-ant, the snake, the large bat, and the shell-snails, likewise quit their winter retreats.

"This animating principle not only extends to the inhabitants of the earth and air, but likewise influences those which reside in the deep. Those who have passed the greater part of the inclement season in holes at the sides or bottoms of the rivers, again are seen sporting through the pellucid stream, and the angler prepares for their destruction, about the latter end of the month. The gardens begin to put on a promising appearance; the hyacinth already erects its beauteous head, and the imperial crown flower extends its starry leaves; whilst the rich tints of the auricula are just opening to the admiring eye. Had this month been equally mild with

March, several trees would have been in blossom, the buds of which, you must now perceive are ready to expand; the black-thorn is the forwardest of the wild vegetable creation, and the almond and apricot the earliest of the cultivated kind; the peach, nectarine, cherry, and plum, succeed them in rotation; but unless the season be peculiarly mild, they seldom blossom until May.

"The industrious farmer is still busily occupied in sowing different kinds of grain, and the soft showers which generally fall in the month of April, may be considered as rich manure descending from the skies. The cuckoo flower, begins to adorn the meadows, and the humble daisy expands its starry leaves; while the wood-anemone, the primrose, and wood-sorrel, adorn the hedges, and the crow-foot and marygold appear in marshy lands. Thus, my dear children, you perceive that each month has its peculiar attraction, and the several succeeding ones, will present us with a variety of fruits and flowers; but had these blessings not been bestowed in succession upon us, we should have been overpowered with sweets, and overstocked with the fruits of the earth. By this variety in nature's production, our eye and our palates are at once delighted and regaled; ought we not

then to prove our thankfulness to the great Author of such unspeakable blessings, by gratefulness of heart and purity of lives?

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

MAY.

THE nursery now occupied no small portion of Mrs. Manderville's time and attention, but her anxious care was pleasingly repaid by the perfect health and lively appearance of her little charge, who actually seemed to increase in beauty and strength every day. Though this amiable woman had never been called upon to fulfil the maternal duties, yet she was perfectly acquainted with the management children required from their birth; and being convinced that *air* laid the surest foundation for a strong constitution, the little Manderville almost lived in the garden and fields. The different studies which the young ladies were engaged in, prevented them from regularly accompanying the little boy in his walks; but after the hours devoted to study, Mrs. Manderville had frequently observed that Eliza preferred staying in her

room, a circumstance which called forth her astonishment, as she seemed perfectly to doat upon her little brother. Mrs. Manderville had frequently asked Louisa the reason why her cousin discontinued the practice of walking, but always received an indirect reply, and one morning, having put the same question to her without any better success, she informed her that an evasive answer was a mark of being extremely *ill-bred*, "nay, I may go farther," said that amiable woman, "for it is an indirect deviation from *truth*."

Louisa's blushes were called forth by this declaration, and she hesitatingly replied, "I believe, Eliza, is going to become an *author*, aunt; for ever since little Manderville arrived, she has employed herself in writing down every thing you have told her respecting the different months; but I was only joking aunt, when I said she was going to become an *author*, though she pleases herself with the thought of teaching her brother to read, and as she is fearful of forgetting your instructive lessons, she notes them down every day that she may be able to *communicate all* you have kindly taught us."

"Amiable girl!" rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "but why did she object to my *knowing* in what manner she passed her time?"

"I believe, aunt," replied Louisa, "she intends to shew you her performance when it is done; and I fear I have been guilty of a *breach* of *confidence*, but I could not bear the idea of your thinking I was acting *sly*; neither did I know that an *evasion*, ever had an appearance of *untruth*."

"I will not betray your confidence, my dear Louisa, rely upon it;" said Mrs. Manderville, "but there are a sufficient number of hours in the day for your cousin to write, without infringing upon those in which she has been accustomed to enjoy the benefit of air and exercise; I intreat, therefore, that you will advise her not to omit her morning's walk."

Louisa promised to obey her aunt's injunction, at the same time informing her that her cousin had nearly completed the last month, and, as that was the case, intreated Mrs. Manderville not to insist upon her making any remarks upon the discontinuation of her morning walks, lest she should suspect that she had betrayed a *secret*, which she had been desired to conceal.

"Although by what you term a *breach* of *confidence*, you have raised your cousin in my opinion, my love," said Mrs. Manderville, "yet I admire the delicacy of your feelings in point of *keeping* your *word*; for persons who

accustom themselves to break through a promise, however triffling in its nature, will not be likely to act more honourably in the more weighty concerns of life; therefore it is peculiarly necessary that young people should be taught to consider their *word*, as sacred as their *bond*."

Mrs. Manderville was prevented from pursuing her observations by the cry of "Stop thief!" which issued from the voices of the village baker, and two or three men who followed in his train, who were pursuing a lad that was flying from them, and who had jumped over a hedge into an adjoining field.

As the passion, or rather *sensation*, of sympathy, is natural to all humane dispositions, when Louisa beheld the flying fugitive, she clasped her hands together and exclaimed, "I hope he will escape!" but alas! the hope was unavailing, for the enraged baker in a few seconds overtook the exhausted victim of his rage, and catching him with fury by the collar, declared he would have *justice*, if it were to be obtained by *law*.

"But you are taking the *law* into your *own hands*, Mr. Callous;" said Mrs. Manderville, perceiving how rudely he grasped the unfortunate youth. "What has he done to call forth

your resentment? Suppose for once, you allow me to act as justice of the peace."

"I don't care who acts as *justice* of *peace*, Madam," said the enraged Callous, (which was the baker's name) "provided as how this sneaking rascal is but committed to goal; for you must know I have suspected his tricks a matter of a fortnight, but never was lucky enough to *nab* him till to day. Ah, you villain!" continued he, giving him a violent shake by the collar, "I'll *teach* you to *spend* a *penny*, and *steal* a *groat*!"

Upon enquiring into the particulars of the case, Mrs. Manderville discovered that the culprit had for several preceding days been to the baker's shop, under pretence of buying a *penny loaf*, and had watched an opportunity of slipping two or three under his coat. The fact having been proved, the mild administratrix of justice enquired what the trembling culprit had to say in his defence, who bursting into tears, gave such a description of domestic calamities as would have affected a heart of flint; the purport of which was, that his poor father was sick and almost starving, and that his mother was recently dead, and that he had four little sisters who actually had not a morsel of bread to eat.

"It is all a *fudge*, Madam!" exclaimed the inhuman Callous, "four starving children is a hackneyed tale; but I'll make the rascal know I am not to be tricked so easily—old birds are not to be caught with chaff."

It was in vain this amiable woman represented that unless we shew *mercy* to others, we could not expect to *receive* it *ourselves*, for until she offered him a two pound note as a compensation for his losses, he vowed the poor lad should spend at least six months in gaol; but at length prudently reflecting that he could not gain any thing by punishing the delinquent, but on the contrary, must involve himself in expence, he said that to oblige so good a customer, the sneaking rogue might go and be hanged, which he dare to say, would be the consequence of his not being punished as he deserved."——

The two pound note having been paid, and the baker departed, the grateful boy fell upon his knees; and, in terms the most affecting, besought providence to pour down blessings on his deliverer's head.

There was something in the youth's manner, so completely prepossessing, that Mrs. Manderville had at the first, been persuaded he was not *hardened* in *guilt*; therefore she thought it

necessary to do something more than rescue him from the baker's resentment, lest *distress* should compel him to *repeat* the *crime*. Upon enquiring where his father lived, she was informed that *Manchester* was the place of his nativity, and that he had been a weaver by trade; but that business being dead, he had conveyed his family to London, in the hope of obtaining employ. *Unknown*, and *unrecommended*, he was unable to procure subsistence—the few pounds he was master of were very soon spent; —necessity compelled him to return to his parish, and he was pursuing his journey thither, when his wife was taken ill. The fever which terminated this poor woman's misfortunes and existence, had been occasioned by bodily fatigue, but the publican at whose house she died pretended to believe it infectious, and therefore insisted upon the widower's removing without delay, though the fact was, he was much more fearful of payment than of his family's catching an infectious disease.

Though there was an artless simplicity in this poor lad's description of his domestic misfortunes, yet before Mrs. Manderville extended her charity farther, she thought it necessary to convince herself it was no fabulous tale; she therefore told the boy (whose name was John Wil-

kins) that she was inclined to pay a visit to his father, and desired him to become pilot, and conduct her to the spot.——

When poor Wilkins was thus compelled to quit his quarters, the whole of his property only amounted to a few pence; his mind was depressed by sorrow, his body weakened by infirmity, and exhausted by fatigue, he laid himself under a hedge. His elder son John, who was about fifteen, intreated him to apply to the overseers, but this proposal was rejected, either from principle, or from pride. The unfortunate man had not remained many minutes extended, when a neighbouring farmer happened to pass by, and like the good Samaritan kindly stopped to enquire into his distress; and informed him he was welcome to sleep in his barn, where plenty of clean straw would supply the place of a feather bed, and that his wife would give his children plenty of skim-milk. This humane offer was gratefully accepted, and in this barn the industrious weaver had remained ten days, when the amiable Mrs. Manderville accidentally met his son. The poor boy with tears in his eyes, besought his deliverer not to inform his father of the circumstance which had occurred, "for indeed, indeed, Madam," said he, "I am *sartin* it would quite break his poor heart;

but if you will believe me, I begged all the way from the barn to the baker's house, and I only got one penny—and my poor little sisters were crying for bread—God I hope will forgive me—but I could not have helped taking the loaves if I had known I should have been *hanged*. Farmer Dobson to be sure has been very kind to us, but he has seven children to find in bread, and I hear, *as how* he is likely to get into trouble, for he is not able to pay his rent; so how Madam could I go to *ax* him for any thing more than a little skim-milk."

This was the conversation which passed between Mrs. Manderville and John Wilkins in their way to the barn, where she beheld a striking picture of poverty and distress. A little girl about four years of age sprang forward to meet her brother, exclaiming "Jack, have you brought us any bread? for I am so very, very hungry, that I could eat any thing.

Mrs. Manderville fortunately happened to have some sponge biscuits in her pocket, which her little nephew already began to suck; these she gave the child, who might actually be said to *devour them*, for she forced a whole one into her mouth. This was a sight truly affecting, and the humane Louisa burst into tears, and intreated her aunt to allow her to request some

victuals from the farmer's wife. The other three children appeared no less disappointed at seeing their brother return without food, and informed him that since his absence, their father had been much worse.

Such a scene of real distress Mrs. Manderville had never before witnessed—the wretched father of these unfortunate children was extended upon a truss of straw, from which as she approached, he in vain endeavoured to raise his debilitated frame. I shall not attempt to describe the conversation which took place between the benevolent Mrs. Manderville and the being who excited the liveliest emotions of commisseration in her heart; but merely say, that poor Wilkins had reason to bless the hour which brought him to that spot. He was not only removed from the barn to a place of greater comfort, but supplied with all the necessaries his situation required, and when restored to the blessing of health, his benefactress set a subscription on foot for him, by which he was made rich enough to establish himself in his business in a neighbouring town, and by merely weaving stockings, was enabled to support his little girls.

Though Mrs. Manderville's income was not large, yet she always laid by a certain portion of

it, for acts of beneficence, and not a year passed without her performing similar acts to that which I have described; a year, did I say?—every *day* bore testimony of the benevolent feelings of her mind, and were I to attempt to *describe* her various *charities*, I should have little space left for the continuance of my *Calendar*. I must just observe, however, that both Louisa and Eliza took an active part in poor Wilkins's distress, for under the direction of their aunt, they actually clothed his children who, might literally have been compared to a *bundle* of *rags*. This humane employment interested them so deeply, that their studies were omitted for several days, and Mrs. Manderville, perceiving they derived the highest gratification from it, told them that when their task was completed, they must make up for lost time by attending to their improvement with additional zeal.

Poor John, who had so narrowly escaped from the horrors of a prison, was at Mrs. Manderville's request taken into farmer Hawkins's employ; for as the farmer, to use his own phrase, was but a *stick* of a *penman*, he was very glad to have a lad capable of keeping his accompts; and thus were the whole family restored to competence through the benevolent exertions of the humane Mrs. M.

Eliza, having taken the advantage of a very retentive memory, which had enabled her to note down the particular marks which distinguished the preceding months, began to feel impatient for her aunt's description of the most beautiful one in the whole year, when the hedges were adorned with the most lively blossoms, and the fields, which had appeared barren, put on a verdant appearance from the springing corn, when a variety of flowers began to display their opening beauties, and a universal concert of the most enchanting music echoed through the air.

"If," said Mrs. Manderville, "an admirer of nature be able to discover beauties through every period of the varying year, how much more forcibly must his admiration be excited by this enlivening, this heart-gratifying scene! The most minute plant and flower now displays some concealed charm and attraction; some beauty which the painter's utmost skill in vain attempts to imitate; for, however perfect in his art, and however delicate in his colouring, yet simple nature triumphs over his labour and his pains! Can the artist, my dear girls, represent beauties equal to those which meet our enraptured senses? Could he delineate all the richness of that hawthorn bush, or the vermillion glow of those apple trees? Or, allowing for a moment that his imitation equal-

ed the beauty of the trees he copied; yet, where is their fragrance—their reviving, and delightful scent? Yet this beautitul scene, which now enchants our senses, may be compared to the instability of human joys; the fairest prospects of life are often suddenly withered, as those trees would be if they were affected by a blight."

"Pray, aunt, what is the occasion of a blight?" enquired Louisa.

"There are three different causes to be assigned; the first occurs very early, and is occasioned by the dry coldness of north-east winds, which completely destroys the opening blossoms of those trees which bloom before this month; the expanded buds become parched, change their native colour, and, in a few days, drop from the trees. The other two blights are occasioned by insects, which, during this month in particular, affect the apple and pear trees; whole fields of young corn likewise frequently suffer from their baneful influence: and many are of opinion that these destructive insects are conveyed by a north-east wind; for these trees which are sheltered from it generally escape the blight.

The vegetable creation now appears in its highest beauty, and the foliage of the greater number of trees is usually completed by the end

of the month: it begins with the aquatic kind; for example, the *willow*, the *poplar*, and the *alder*, and proceeds regularly to the lime, the sycamore, the horse-chesnut, and the oak; but the beech, the ash, the walnut, and the mulberry, are seldom clothed with verdure until June.

"I need not tell you that May-day is a universal gala with the peasants: it is considered by them as the harbinger of plenty and the herald of festive joy; and, even in the metropolis, the lower class of people celebrate its annual return. A benevolent woman of the name of Montague, on whom fortune had shed her enlivening rays, always made a point of celebrating this festival (if I may use the expression), by giving an entertainment to all the chimney-sweepers in the neighbourhood upon that day; and they were regaled with roast beef, plum-pudding, and porter, in a garden which inclosed her elegant mansion, in Portman-square. Upon the death of this amiable woman the practice was discontinued; and a lady of my acquaintance wrote a few extempore lines, which she denominated the Chimney-sweeper's Lamentation, upon the death of their benefactress, and the loss of their roast beef; and, as they contain an elegant compliment to the memory of Mrs.

Montague, if I can recollect them I will repeat them to my dear girls——

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER'S LAMENTATION.

" Alas ! our patroness is gone !
And we no more, I fear,
Shall have our stomachs fill'd with *beef*,
Plum-pudding, and *strong beer* !

No more shall our black sooty face
Appear in Portman-square,
Or crowd in throngs around her gates,
To have our *May-day* fare !

Her spirit mounted to the skies,
Yet still her gen'rous breast
Felt for the suff'rings of our race,
And wish'd our *wrongs* redress'd.

To the Omnipotent she told
The hardships we endur'd,
Who in his mercy kindly said,
Those hardships should be cur'd

Benevolence was sent to earth,
In * philanthropic guise ;
And men were taught to clean those pipes,
Through which the smoak must rise,

Without compelling little boys,
Who scarce had left the breast,
To mount through tubes, which terrify,
Through funnels which infest

* Alluding to the humane invention of sweeping chimnies by a machine, which reflects so much honour upon the Philanthropic Society.

Their trembling hearts with grief and fear;
For let me only ask,
Is there a man, however stout,
Who would not dread the task?

"Then bless'd forever be the name
Of *Montague*!" they cried,
We lost our kindest friend on earth
When that dear woman died!

"For she it was, we have been told,
Who, studying human joys,
Declar'd that chimnies might be swept
Without the aid of boys."

"I think I know the lady who wrote those lines, aunt," said Louisa.

"Probably you may, my dear;" replied Mrs. M. "but listen, I beseech you, to that delightful harmony which springs from the adjoining wood; those notes may justly be denominated the genuine songs of love; for, whilst the female bird is nurturing its embrio offspring by the warmth of her bosom, the male, perched upon a branch near her, sings to make the hours pass more swiftly away. In March they generally begin to construct their curious habitations, in which a mixture of skill and comfort are displayed; and, as soon as they have completed this curious abode for their future offspring, each deposits a certain number of eggs. The male

bird not only sings to his mate during the period of sitting, but supplies her with food; or, if she prefer seeking it herself, fills her place during her excursions, as the young would be destroyed if the eggs were suffered to become cold. The latest birds of passage, such as the fern-owl, the fly-catcher, and the sedge-bird, arrive the beginning of this month, whilst those which returned in March or February are either nurturing their young or daily expecting their shells to break. The care and attention which they pay to their helpless little progeny, is an admirable lesson to the unthinking part of the world; for if instinct teach creatures that are not endowed with intellectual faculties, solicitude: how much more must be expected from beings whom providence has blessed both with sentiment and sense! There are, however, but few parents who are inattentive to the welfare and happiness of their children; I wish I could reverse the observation, and say there were but few children who forget the debt of gratitude they owe the authors of their birth; but to the disgrace of human nature there are too many who forget their duty, and, instead of being a comfort to the authors of their existence, bring their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Yet it seems as if the Almighty set a mark upon these

unnatural and despicable characters similar to that which he fixed upon *Cain*; for I never knew any who ever thrived in their worldly undertakings, or who was not universally hated and despised. Yet I need not, I am persuaded, expatiate upon filial duties to either of you, my beloved girls, and therefore I will return to the subject which gave rise to these remarks.

"The greater part of the feathered creation, as I told you, are hatched during this month, and a variety of insects may likewise be added to my former catalogue: these are the May-chaffer (the favourite food upon which the fern-owl lives), the forest-fly, a perfect pest to every species of cattle; and a group of moths and butterflies: the glow-worm, also, that luminous insect, which has given rise to many fabulous stories, makes its first appearance during this month, but, what is peculiarly extraordinary, it is only the female which emits a light; but, as if to compensate for the want of brilliancy, the bodies of the males are furnished with wings, an advantage which those of the feminine species do not possess.

"If the season be warm towards the close of the month, the bee-hives send forth their early swarms; these chiefly consist of the young ones, though a few of the old ones generally mix

with the group. Those who make a profit of the labours of this industrious insect, are under the necessity of watching the period when they begin to swarm; for, if another dwelling were not provided for them they would take up their abode in the hollow trunk of a tree, for they merely quit their hives from finding them overstocked.

"On Old May-day the poorer inhabitants of the different villages which compose each county, are entitled to what is termed *common-right*: that is, they have the privilege of turning their cattle upon the common, though the bill which has passed for the inclosure of these lands has greatly infringed upon this right. Though sowing is now nearly brought to a conclusion, yet the farmer finds sufficient occupation in his fields in plucking up those weeds, which, if allowed to propagate, would completely check the growth of the springing corn. It is, likewise, necessary to pay attention to the pastures as well as to the plowed lands; for the yellow crowfoot, or buttercups, are extremely obnoxious to the cows, although it has been erroneously supposed those animals are partial to them, and that they give the butter that fine yellow tint it regularly acquires in this month; though, in fact, the alteration of colour is occasioned by the

nutritious quality of the young grass, which, by making the milk richer, gives a yellow hue to the cream. Hemlock and flex are equally disagreeable to the palates of those useful animals, who contribute so largely to the health and comfort of mankind, and, if carefully extirpated from all pasture lands, would amply repay the farmer the expence which must necessarily be incurred.—But I perceive a carriage approaching," continued Mrs. Manderville, "let us hasten to receive our unexpected guests; for, though I cannot distinguish the livery, the party is going to the cottage I have not the slightest doubt.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

JUNE.

Mrs. Manderville was perfectly right in her opinion that the party she had an indistinct glance of, intended making a visit to the cottage; for Eliza, whose curiosity had been excited, bounded forward, and, before she had reached the garden gate, returned, exclaiming, "Aunt, aunt! Emily Lainsborough and Betsey Dawson are

in the parlour! and, would you believe it, poor Betsey can see as well as ever she did?"

My young readers may probably have been disappointed at not finding the family at Roebuck Park pass the preceding month with their cottage friend; but the truth is, Mrs. Manderville had received an apology from Mrs. Lainsborough, which had completely reconciled her to the delay, as that lady informed her a celebrated oculist from London had given his opinion that couching would restore her little *protegéé's* sight; and that the benevolent Mrs. Lainsborough was going to take a lodging in the metropolis for the space of six weeks; but, on their return they would pass a short time at the cottage, as they would all be in high spirits if the operation should succeed. The intelligence, therefore, which the little girls eagerly communicated excited pleasure without calling forth surprise.

With real joy did Mrs. Manderville congratulate their friends upon the success of their benevolent journey, though she was astonished at observing that not the slightest appearance of inflammation appeared in Betsey's eyes. Though the poor child must have been delighted at the restoration of sight, yet it struck Mrs. Lainsborough that her spirits were unusually depressed;

for, though invited to join in the amusements of her young companions, she always preferred being alone, and would sometimes sigh so deeply, that her benefactress feared she had some internal disease: the same idea had likewise struck Mrs. Manderville, who observed that Betsey's disposition was totally changed, for, whilst in a state of darkness, her mind always appeared enlightened by good humour, and she entered into all childish sports with as much gaiety as if she could have discerned every thing that passed. Emily's partiality for this girl had ripened into a strong attachment, and she was rendered unhappy by seeing her always so grave: it was in vain that she demanded the occasion of it, for the reply always was, "There is nothing the matter with me, indeed, Miss." Mrs. Manderville, however, one morning met her accidentally walking alone in the garden; the recent traces of tears were still visible upon her cheeks, when, taking her tenderly by the hand, she said, "My dear Betsey, I cannot part with you until I find out the cause of your grief; you have been weeping, I perceive, without reflecting upon the injury it may do your eyes."

Poor Betsey, who was unable to make any reply, for she actually sobbed violently, at length articulated, "I am a very wicked girl,

ma'am, and I am sure God will never love me; and, indeed, indeed, I quite hate myself."

This declaration increased Mrs. Manderville's astonishment; but at length, by persuasive arguments, she discovered the cause of the poor child's distress; which proceeded from the fear that she should be sent home to her parents as soon as her benefactress returned to the park; "And, though I know it is very wicked, ma'am," said the artless young creature, "yet I can hardly help wishing I was *blind again*; for I love Miss *Emily* so *very dearly*, that I cannot bear the thought of going away."

Never was joy equal to that of this poor child's upon hearing from Mrs. Manderville, that her benefactress had no intention of sending her home; and she wept as much for joy as she had done from apprehension; but besought her not to inform Mrs. Lainsborough how wicked she had been.

Though that amiable woman pointed out that she had certainly been ungrateful to Providence for so lightly prizing the greatest blessing a human creature can enjoy, yet she did it in terms of the greatest mildness, knowing her sorrow had not proceeded from unthankfulness of heart, but from personal attachment, and a wish of

enjoying a continuance of those comforts she had found at the park.

From the moment this conversation passed, Betsey Dawson became a new creature; and, upon finding that her services might be useful to her *young mistress* (as she called Emily), she became impatient to improve herself in work, and could scarcely be prevented from breaking through the positive injunctions of Mr. Ware, who had desired that for the space of *six months* she should neither be permitted to *work* nor *read*.

Emily Lainsborough and her humble friend had not been many days at the cottage, when, in one of their morning rambles, the whole party unexpectedly met George Hardy.

"Here *I am*, Miss Rushbrook," said he, addressing her, "and no thanks either, to your *tell-tale* of an aunt."

Tell-tale of an *aunt* was an expression so impertinent, that Eliza did not condescend to make him any reply; when, seizing her familiarly by the arm, he demanded *why* she did not speak to an old acquaintance? particularly one who had been punished for her fault. "For *you* broke the jar," continued he, "though I was sent to school for it; but I knew how to creep up the

the sleeve of my mamma; and so I pretended to be so very miserable at our separation, that she could not bear the thought of breaking my heart, and here I am again; and I do not believe that twenty such advisers as Mrs. Manderville would induce my mamma to part from me again."

As George Hardy made this declaration, he laughed heartily, and then began entertaining the party with a description of the pranks usually played at a public school; but, finding little attention paid to his conversation, he took leave of his companions, saying he was going in pursuit of a blackbird's nest. Louisa no sooner heard that this was his intention, than she besought him to spare the harmless brood, representing the distress the parent bird would suffer at being thus unjustly deprived of her young.

"You would make a famous methodist parson, I think, Miss Danvers," said the unfeeling boy, "for you make it out that taking a bird's nest really is a *crime*; and those fellows tell their congregations that every kind of *amusement* is a *vice*."

"I shall always think cruelty a *crime*, Master Hardy," replied Louisa, "though I am sure it would be lost time to *preach* the contrary doctrine to you; so good-morning to you; but I wish I could make the poor blackbird acquainted with your design."—As Louisa said this, she

turned into an avenue which led to her aunt's house, when this provoking boy rushed by her, and, running about the distance of twenty yards, mounted a tree upon Mrs. Manderville's premises, for the purpose of showing her what depredations he dared to commit.

"I wish the branches would break!" said the exasperated Eliza.

Scarcely had this wish escaped her lips, when crack went a bough.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed the terrified depredator; fortunately catching at an extended branch.

The branch, which in all probability had preserved his existence, was at least eighteen feet from the ground, but it extended so far from the body of the tree, that he hung suspended by it, and in the most piteous accents implored the young ladies to fly for help; "For I cannot," said he, "support the weight of my body two minutes, and if I fall I shall certainly be killed!"

In a neighbouring field, fortunately, some labouring men were working, the screams of the affrighted party roused them from their employ; they flew towards the spot, and one of them providentially arrived at the very moment George let go his hold. Though this poor man was not able to prevent him from receiving a slight injury, yet he broke the fall; for he

caught him by the flap of the coat as he was in the act of descending, and his hands came first to the ground, and, from the violence of the jerk the countryman gave him, his thumb was dislocated, and his wrist violently sprained.

Terror, for some moments, deprived him of the power of utterance; and a faintness, which was the effect of fright, gave such a death-like appearance to his countenance, that even the countrymen began to entertain fears for his life. Some water from a neighbouring brook, however, soon restored him to recollection, the colour returned to his cheeks and lips, and he soon became sensible of the injury which had been done to his thumb and wrist.

"You will repent not having followed Miss Danvers's advice, I think," said Emily.

"Oh, do not reproach him now he suffers so much pain," rejoined that amiable girl." "Shall we go home with you, Master Hardy? or shall the man attend you, who was so good as to preserve your life? For, if he had not come at the very minute, I am certain you must have been killed.

I cannot pretend to say whether this artful boy meant to give his parents a false account of the accident, but certain it is that he would not

suffer either party to accompany him home, though he had the civility to thank Louisa for the proposal, and gratitude enough to give the countryman half-a-crown. The servant, however, who had attended the young ladies in their morning ramble, told them she thought it would be proper she should accompany Master Hardy home, as they were within sight of the cottage, and he had near half a mile to walk; and, in spite of his remonstrance, she declared her resolution of seeing him to the gate of his father's house.

Though the lives of the young blackbirds were preserved by this accident, yet George Hardy in consequence of it, had nearly lost his own; for, as robbing bird's nests had been strictly forbidden by both his parents, he did not make them acquainted with his fall, and persuaded Mrs. Manderville's servant to leave him before she came in sight of the house. Though during the remainder of the day he suffered absolute torture from his wrist and thumb, he had resolution enough not to complain of either, to prevent any questions being asked; for he was well aware that if he invented a story it would inevitably be found out; and the broken jar was too recent in his remembrance to be easily forgotten.

Both Louisa and Eliza were too ingenuous in their dispositions ever to conceal the slightest circumstance from their aunt, and as soon as they entered the cottage they eagerly related the accident which had occurred.

"Sincerely do I pity Mr. and Mrs. Hardy," said Mrs. Manderville, "parental partiality blinds them to the failings of that artful boy, who, from his conversation, exults in the idea of being able to deceive them, and well may he say, 'he *knows how to creep up his mamma's sleeve.*"

Having been made acquainted with the accident, Mrs. Manderville thought it necessary to call and enquire how Master Hardy did the following day: but judge of her astonishment at finding neither of his parents knew such a circumstance had occurred. They informed her he was ill in bed, and extremely feverish, but he had never complained either of his thumb or his arm. His appearing indisposed had been sufficient to induce his mother to send for the apothecary, who arrived a few minutes after Mrs. Manderville called, and who, upon visiting his patient, unceremoniously desired to see both his hands. The artful boy twice displayed the one that was uninjured.

"No, no, young gentleman," said Mr. Calvert, "that will not do," and at the same time turning down the bed-clothes, perceived that every finger upon the affected hand was swelled to an enormous size; and from the pain which he suffered, or the revolution his blood had gone through, a fever succeeded which threatened his life. A good constitution, however, united to the skill of the surgeon and the care of his parents, restored the health of this unamiable boy, who, so far from proving a blessing to his attached parents, was a constant source of anxiety and fear.

Though during Mrs. Lainsborough's stay at the cottage Louisa and Eliza did not so regularly attend to their daily tasks, yet Mrs. Manderville did not suffer them totally to neglect their improvement; justly considering that habits of idleness were much more easily contracted than broken through, and Emily always accompanied her young companions when they repeated their lessons to, and received instruction from their aunt.

This little girl, who, though naturally of an amiable, was of an indolent disposition, was inspired with a spirit of emulation by seeing how much pleasure her young friends seemed to

derive from the cultivation of their minds; and Mrs. Lainsborough was completely delighted at perceiving the effect of example upon her darling girl, and intreated Mrs. Manderville to make a second visit to Roebuck Park; this request was made from personal attachment, as well as from reflecting upon the advantage her daughter would receive.

The pain which each of the young party would have felt from separation, was materially lessened by the prospect of their meeting again in September, a period when Mrs. Manderville had resolved to wean her little nephew; as she had discovered some unpleasant traits in the character of his wet-nurse, yet as her milk perfectly agreed with him, she did not think it right to deprive him of it until he was six months old.

As Louisa passed the greater part of her time at the cottage, her mamma thought it an excellent opportunity to visit an estate she had in the north, which she was resolved to dispose of, as the tenant was very irregular in the payment of his rent. Happy as the amiable girl was under the protection of Mrs. Manderville, yet her spirits were depressed at the bare idea of being so far distant from her mamma, and when the moment of separation arrived, her grief was

so violent that she actually fell into an hysteric fit. From this she was soon recovered by the kind exertions of her relation, who mildly condemned her for giving way to such immoderate grief. "Though I admire your attachment," said she, "my dear girl, for your exemplary mother, yet remember it is possible for it to be carried to a blameable extent; as grief when indulged to an excess, must inevitably prove injurious to the health; and by this violent affliction, you will excite apprehension in the bosom of your affectionate mother, lest you should become seriously ill."

By this representation, and a variety of similar ones, Louisa was convinced of the necessity of conquering her grief, and the idea of keeping up a regular correspondence with her excellent parent, reconciled her to an absence of six weeks; during which period she determined to pay the utmost attention to the improvement of her mind; and as her mamma was fond of works of taste and ingenuity, those hours which were not devoted to study were occupied in a pair of fire-screens, bordered with a wreath of embroidery, whilst the centre was formed of an interesting landscape; and, what was likely to render them doubly valuable to Mrs. Danvers, they were not executed under a master's eye,

but the scenes were copied from nature, and represented prospects which were daily presented to her sight.

The month of June was now far advanced and Mrs. Manderville had designedly avoided expatiating upon its different flowers and fruits, for the purpose of exciting greater curiosity in the mind of her niece, who one morning when that lady had been pointing out the beauty of the expanding rose-buds, immediately repeated the four following lines—

"Now genial suns and gentle breezes reign,
And summers fairest splendors deck the plain;
Exulting Flora views her new-born rose,
And all the ground with short-liv'd beauty glows."

"Very appropriately repeated, my dear Eliza," observed Mrs. Manderville, "which is more than can be said of half the stanzas which are dragged in head and shoulders by way of proving that the repeaters of them, like parrots, have learnt them by rote, and though they wish to convince their hearers of their extensive reading, it only proves the barrenness of their own thoughts; for unless quotations be introduced judiciously, they lessen the relater of them in every sensible person's esteem, although when appropriately selected, they are a compliment to

the author, and prove the repeater of them well read."

"Then it is not *right*, aunt, to repeat poetry in conversation, I suppose?" said Louisa.

"I do not mean you to understand that it is actually *wrong*, my dear, yet there is a lady of our acquaintance who never can converse five minutes, without making some quotation either from Swift or Pope; but if either were alive, she would run the risk of being satirized, for what is not only considered *vanity*, but barrenness of thought; and it is peculiarly necessary that *young people* should avoid even the appearance of *vanity*, which is disgusting in those of riper years—but we will not suffer our attention to be diverted from that beautiful flower which gave rise to these remarks, and which seldom discloses its vermillion until the beginning, and sometimes the middle of the month.

The tulip, whose varying colours excite admiration, I need not tell you, preceeds the rose; that flower has not inaptly been compared to a beautiful female who possesses outward attractions, but is devoid of the sweets of a cultivated mind; for though pleasing to the eye, it is destitute of fragrance, and, on that account, is far inferior to the rose. Is it not, my dear girls, an extraordinary circumstance that

though millions of those beautiful flowers blow annually, there are not two alike? How wonderful appears the skill of the great Artist who formed them, for the minutest examiner of them could never discover a resemblance in their tints. It is not only the garden which now presents an enlivening and fragrant prospect, but even the hedges and the fields are clothed with beauty, and from them we exhale a rich perfume; the white blossoms of the hawthorn are succeeded by the wild-honeysuckle, interspersed with the night-shade, and the dog-rose."

"But neither of the latter are *fragrant*, I believe aunt," said Louisa—

"No, my dear girl; yet they add to the beauty of the surrounding scene, but from the blossoms of the bean there arises so fine an odour, that the fields may be compared to a rich garden of sweets. The clover is likewise extremely fragrant, though the purple is allowed to be more so than the white; and had not the cold winds in April checked the forwardness of vegetation, we should have now been enjoying the fragrance of the new mown grass, which, in the southern parts of this country, is generally began to be mown the beginning or end of the month."

The sound of "Madam, will ye be pleased to walk in Brook Meadow?" at this moment saluted Mrs. Manderville's ears, and turning round, she beheld farmer Hawkins in one of his fields which bordered her garden.

The young ladies eagerly enquired what was to be seen in Brook Meadow? and were informed that the sheep-shearing had just begun; and as Mrs. Manderville always derived pleasure from contributing to the enjoyment of others, she immediately opened a small wicket which led into the farmer's verdant mead.

Upon observing that the process of sheep-shearing was rather late that season, the honest farmer replied, "I never fixes *no* time for it Madam; for my poor father always used to say, *as how* God was the best judge; and that when it pleased him to put the elder trees in blossom, the weather was then warm enough for the poor things to bear the loss of their coats."

"It is both a *pious*, and a *rational idea*, Mr. Hawkins," rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "and Mr. Dyer, the author of a celebrated poem called the Fleece, has either availed himself of your *father's judgment*, or his own observation convinced him that it was the proper time."

"I h'an't much time for reading, Madam,

that's for *sartin*, but I should like to know what that there Mr. Dyer says about the *elder-trees*."

"He says," continued his obliging companion, "If verdant elder spreads her silver flowers; if humble daisies yield to yellow crowsfoot, and luxurious grass, gay shearing time approaches."

"Well done, Master Dyer!" exclaimed the farmer, "that fellow, Madam, had some *sense* in his head, and if he was to come to my sheep-shearing, I'd give him a can of the best ale he ever drank."

"Oh, he has been at a great many sheep-shearings, Mr. Hawkins, I do not doubt," said Louisa, "for in that very poem my aunt has been speaking of, he says,

"Near a clear river gently drive the flock,
And plunge them, one by one, into the flood:
Plung'd in the flood, not long the struggler sinks
With his white flakes, that glisten through the tide
The sturdy rustic in the middle wave,
Awaits to seize him rising; one arm bears
His lifted head above the limpid stream,
While the full clammy fleece the other laves
Around, laborious with repeated toil,
And then resigns him to the sunny bank,
Where bleating loud, he shakes his dripping locks.

"Lord bless your pretty tongue, Miss," said the delighted Hawkins, tapping Louisa on the cheek, "but as for the matter of their *shaking* their *locks*, why there I think Master Dyer was out of his reckoning; because, *as how*, ye see, when the poor things are rightly sheared, they have none left for to shake; but come along Miss, come along, for I can hear the rogues plunging in the water as plain as I can hear *that there* blackbird over my head."

Mrs. M. desired the children to trip on with the farmer, whom she perceived was impatient to be with his men, saying that she would call upon Mrs. Hawkins, and enquire after her health."

Several of that worthy woman's humble neighbours were assembled for the purpose of celebrating this rural fete; and a dresser that might have vied with the snow in whiteness, was nearly covered with hot plum-cakes, as it was a hospitable custom to give one to each of the labouring men, to take home to their children, after they had been regaled with an excellent dinner, and as much ale as they chose to drink.

To Eliza, who had never seen the process of sheep-shearing, it was a scene which excited a mixture of pleasure and pain; she was alarmed

at seeing the poor animals thrown into the water, and from their bleating, she could scarcely be persuaded that the shearers had not wounded their skin; but when disencumbered of their heavy load, she saw them frisking about the adjoining meadow, she was highly amused.—The joyful countenance of the shearers formed a striking contrast with the plaintive bleating of the sheep; and a song which the shepherd sang, whilst occupied in the employment, to the tune of "Oh the roast beef of Old England," delighted Eliza so much, that she requested him to repeat it over three or four times; and away she skipped towards the farmer's, singing the following ditty in the true ballad style—

Souse them in; old Sol is shining,
Come my lads give me the shears;
Why this bleating, and this whining?
Why ye harmless rogues these fears?

Don't ye know that I'm your shepherd?
'Tending you both night and day,
Can ye think that Simon Lepherd
E're would hurt ye, then I say?

But as how, I wants your jackets,
For to keep my old bones warm;
Come poor dears make no more rackets,
I will never do ye harm,

And, long may sheep-shearing flourish,
Long may I your jackets trim;
Now be off—there's grass to nourish,
Fill your bellies to the brim.

We'll fill our's, when this job's over
Then we'll drink our master's health,
This day we will live in clover,
Wool, you know, makes England's wealth.

"Your memory is very retentive this morning, Eliza," said Mrs. Manderville, "but pray do you know the meaning of the last line?"

"Not exactly Ma'am," replied Eliza.

"It means then, that *wool* is one of our staple commodities, or an article in which we trade; and Mr. Guthrie, in his geographical account of this island, informs us, that twelve millions of fleeces are shorn every year. Since that interesting work was published, so much attention has been paid to the propagation of sheep, that I am inclined to think, at the present period, a much larger number are annually shorn; allowing, however, that he is correct in his calculation, and that each fleece only produced the inappropriate value of two shillings; yet that would amount to one million two hundred thousand pounds a year, therefore you perceive that the sagacious shepherd was perfectly right in saying that *wool* constituted his coun-

try's wealth. The different counties in England produce different species of this valuable commodity; it is the finest, and most valuable, in the southern and western parts; and of course it is from the wool of animals bred in those quarters of the kingdom, that we have our beautiful superfine broad cloth. The Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Leicestershire breeds are no less useful, for articles of inferior quality, and though the wool does not produce so high a price, yet it answers the purpose for second cloths, hosiery, and blankets, better than the fine short fleeces would."

Upon the party taking leave of the hospitable Mrs. Hawkins, she insisted upon each accepting one of what she termed her *homely cakes*; and upon returning through Brook-meadow, Mrs. Manderville reminded her nieces it would be necessary to give the shearers something to drink their healths.

"No surely, aunt, that will be unnecessary," said Eliza, "for they have got such large jorums of ale, that I think they will be tipsey, so we had better give them the money another day."

Though Mrs. Manderville allowed the justness of the observation, yet she informed Eliza, that old customs were not easily broken through,

and that after having amused herself by seeing the process, the men would expect to be rewarded with half a crown; for though a shilling a-piece would be sufficient for two little girls to give them," yet continued she," I remember the advice Lord Chesterfield gave his son, which was, that if he thought it right to make a present of two shillings, always to add sixpence to it, as half a crown would be thought *handsome*, and two shillings considered *mean*.

As the sheep-shearing had occupied so large a portion of the morning, Mrs. Manderville proposed that her nieces' studies should be deferred until the afternoon, which was generally devoted to recreation, and learning their tasks for the ensuing day; and as the sun was not too powerful, she determined to extend her walk for the purpose of paying her compliments to a lady of the name of Cranbourn, who had recently purchased a beautiful villa in her neighbourhood. The distance to this lady's house was about a mile and a quarter, through a sloping valley and verdant meads. The mansion was surrounded by a beautiful lawn, comprising about six acres, which, as the tenement had been near a twelvemonth unoccupied, had not from that period been kept in order, and a party of hay-makers were busily occupied in levelling,

and turning over, the new mown grass. This was a scene far more delightful to the young people than the sheep-shearing, and Eliza perceiving a rake lying upon the grass, seized it with avidity, and began joining the hay-makers at their work, until checked by her aunt, who represented the impropriety of joining in such an occupation upon the grounds of a total stranger; who with some degree of severity observed, that she was as ignorant of the rules of politeness as the girls who were working upon the lawn.

At this unexpected reproof, the susceptible Eliza burst into a flood of tears, and, as an apology, reminded her aunt that she had promised her the indulgence of making hay when she cut her own grass.

"True," replied Mrs. Manderville, "but though there would be no impropriety in your doing so, upon my premises, yet it is both a mark of ill-breeding and a liberty, on another person's grounds."

At this moment they were joined by Mrs. and Miss Cranbourn, the former, a lady about forty, and the latter a girl of fifteen, the striking features in whose character appeared to be vanity and pride; but as at a future period she will be more intimately introduced to the ac-

quaintance of my young readers, I shall merely inform them, that during this first ceremonial visit, nothing particularly interesting occurred.

As Mrs. Manderville was aware that the most insignificant of nature's productions afforded scope for the improvement of the youthful mind, she plucked several blades of different grass, and displayed to her young companions their minute petals and their flowers.

"Does grass flower, aunt?" enquired Louisa.

"Most assuredly it does," replied Mrs. Manderville, "as regularly as corn, which in fact is only a larger species of cultivated grass. Plants of this kind are all distinguished by long slender pointed leaves, a jointed stalk, and a flowering head, either in the form of a close spike, like wheat, or more slenderly hung together in a similar form to oats. This head, as it is termed, consists of numerous husky flowers, each of which contains a seed; and the bamboo, the sugar-cane, and the reed, all belong to this species, although they are the largest of the kind. In England, or I might have said Europe, our principal kinds of corn are wheat, rye, barley, and oats; but the grain which the Asiatics chiefly cultivate is rice; whilst in Africa and America, their favourite food is maize or Indian corn.

"The best judges of pasture land commence their hay-harvest just as the grass comes into ear, but before the seeds are thoroughly ripened, otherwise it loses its nutritious juice; and since farming has been studied as a science, the lands yield much more abundant crops. I need scarcely observe, that the increasing warmth of the weather calls forth fresh species of insects into life. The grasshopper's chirping note during this month first strikes us; and the poor cattle have reason to dread the reappearance of their tormenting foe the gad-fly, which deposits its eggs in their back, which from the warmth of their situation, soon become animated, and sometimes actually eat holes to the very bone.

Towards the latter end of this month, the harmonic concert of the woods and groves ceases, or is but faintly heard; and the delicate fish called mackerel, are considered in their most perfect state.

A variety of juicy fruits now offer a rich regale to our palates: currants, gooseberries, strawberries, and cherries, are not only gratifying to our appetites, but conducive to our health. The former, in particular, assuage the thirst which heat produces, and act medicinally in feverish complaints. How grateful then, my dear children, ought we to be to Providence for merci-

fully ordaining that those fruits should arrive at perfection at a period when they were most likely to produce *two* beneficial effects, and not only gratify our appetites, but prove advantageous to our health. The grape, which is allowed to be equally salubrious with the currant, is now coming into flower; another mark of our great Creator's benevolent attention to his creatures' wants; for, as I before observed, if all these bounties were heaped upon us without succession, they would cloy our palates without producing a beneficial effect. The fields are now decorated with a variety of wild flowers, such as the corn-poppy, the viper-bugloss, and the meadow-cranesbill; whilst the foxglove, the mallow, and a variety of thistles, appear in all their gaiety by road-sides and ditch banks.

Mrs. Manderville was interrupted in her judicious observations by the exact imitation of an owl, which appeared hooting over her head, and Louisa immediately remarked, there was something extraordinary in hearing that bird when the sun shone so very bright.

"You probably never saw a *blue owl*," said Mrs. Manderville, smiling, "and therefore you will behold a phenomenon if you raise your eyes to that elm tree."

"A *blue owl* ! aunt," repeated both the children, directing their eyes towards the spot, and, perceiving a boy in a sailor's jacket, jumping from the extended branches with as much ease as a bird would hop. Having kindly reminded him of his perilous situation, Mrs. Manderville observed that his appearance was very *apropos*; "For I was just going to tell you," said she "that the birds he so exactly imitated, do not make their appearance until June, when, as soon as the sun declines, they begin their nightly depredations upon the field and barn-mice; and, so expert are they in discovering the haunts of those little animals, that I have been informed a pair of owls will convey ten of them to their young in the space of an hour, and, when there is a brood to be provided for, the female bird is always assisted by the male.

"On the twenty-first of this month, occurs what is termed the *summer-solstice*, or, in other words, the longest day; and, in the most northern parts of our island, it scarcely can be termed night, for the twilight is perceptible from the *setting* to the *rising* of the sun."

"I used to count the days, aunt, until *midsummer*," said Louisa, "before my brother went to Westminster school; for, when he was at doctor Newcomb's, the holidays were at that time."

"You have a pleasure in *anticipation*," replied Mrs. Manderville, "and it is doubtful to me whether *real*, are equal to *anticipated* joys; I likewise long to see our dear Henry, who certainly is an amiable boy, but I hear the clock strike four, dinner will be waiting, so run forward, my dear children, and inform the servants I am near."

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

JULY.

Upon entering the cottage, a letter from Mrs. Danvers met the delighted Louisa's eye—she pressed the well known hand to her lips, and eagerly tearing open the *envelope*, perused the following specimen of maternal solicitude and regard.——

To Miss Danvers,

"Separated for the first time in my life, from my beloved Louisa, I cannot help feeling as if I had lost my *better half*; and such, my dear child, I trust you will prove, by imitating my *good qualities*, and endeavouring to avoid

my *faults*; for though *perfection* in human nature is not to be expected, yet you have a pattern of the excellence it may attain, in the conduct of your aunt.

"If a journey which hourly separated me farther from my beloved children could have produced pleasurable ideas, I certainly should have enjoyed them; for I was particularly fortunate in the company I met in the mail coach: but where the treasure is, there will the heart be also; and mine was divided between Westminster and Mrs. Manderville's hospitable abode. I reached D—— however last night, neither fatigued nor exhausted, though I had been seven and twenty hours shut up in a flying box, for the easy manner in which it was constructed, united to the excellence of the road over which we travelled, prevented me from feeling fatigued. The warm reception I met with from my friends was truly flattering, although *friends*, my dear Louisa, are by some, considered as *phenomena* in the present age. Yet I have always been of opinion, that friendship is not so rare, as the discontented part of mankind would endeavour to make us believe; and that the want of it arises from some misconduct in the persons who make the complaint.

"There is an urbanity in the manners of those who have mixed in polished society, which is frequently mistaken for personal attachment and esteem; and if those who form this erroneous opinion, expect to receive friendship from the parties, it is ten thousand to one but they are deceived: but this error in judgment is no proof of the non-existence of *real friendship*; it merely convinces us that *courtesy* and *personal attachment* are two very different things; our common acquaintance are entitled to the former, whilst the latter is reserved only for a chosen few.

"You are now of an age, my dear Louisa, to form those attachments which may produce an influence upon your future conduct in life, for much more depends than the generality of parents imagine, upon the friendships which are contracted by girls of your age. I have been led to make this observation from a few private anecdotes I have accidentally heard, since my absence, of our new neighbours, Mrs. and Miss C.; with the latter of whom I must caution you against entering into any habits of intimacy, for reasons which, upon my return, I shall explain to your aunt. Girls who have been educated either in the East or West-Indies, are

generally much forwarder in their ideas, than I should wish a child of mine to be; and I would rather see a perfect *Miss Hoyden*, than the manners of a woman aped by a girl just entering into her teens.

"I should not have entered upon this subject, had I not thought it probable that I shall not be able to return quite so soon as I wished; as some difficulties have arisen respecting my *right* to *sell* the *estate*, therefore I thought it better to caution you against entering into an intimacy, than to be under the necessity of breaking through it, after it was formed.

"I trust, my beloved Louisa, I need not point out to you the attention and respect which are due to your amiable aunt; for were she not so near a relation, she would be intitled to your warmest gratitude and esteem: let her precepts then be indelibly engraven upon your memory; let her example inspire you with a wish of imitating such exalted worth; and let her piety, which is so *pure* and *unostentatious*, instruct you in the duty which you owe to your God. I have proved the high opinion I entertain of her character by intrusting *you* (my choicest of earthly treasures) to her care; but let me conjure you not to give her any unnecessary trouble, for involuntarily undertaking the sole manage-

ment of your cousin's education, she has a very anxious charge. Do not suppose that I mean to infer, I think Eliza will be untractable; for I am persuaded she is an amiable and well disposed child, and one for whom I hope you will always feel a sisterly affection; and, as you are older and better informed, always give her *good advice.*

"I fear I shall not see my beloved Henry this vacation, a circumstance that gives me no small degree of mortification and concern; but in your affection, my dear Louisa, I trust he will find a compensation for his attached mother's loss. As you both increase in years, I trust I shall have the satisfaction of seeing your fraternal and sisterly attachment augment; for there are no *friendships* so sincere, as those where the ties of consanguinity construct them, and, if we do not find sincerity in such near connections, on whom are we to depend?

"I expect, and hope, that, during my absence, you will strictly attend to the improvement of your mind; every hour, nay, every minute, is now of the utmost consequence; for you are now to lay the foundation for that respectable figure which, I flatter myself, you will make in life. Never, my beloved girl, neglect your duty to your Maker; that is of far more consequence

than all the accomplishments you can acquire; for the one is essential to your *salvation*, whilst the other will only be a passport or recommendation into the polished world.

"I must unwillingly say *adieu*, my beloved Louisa; for Mr. Giffard's groom is waiting to convey my letter to the post. Offer to your aunt my best and kindest wishes; kiss Eliza and dear little Manderville for me; and assure yourself that I love you with a tenderness which no language can describe, and that

"I am your most affectionate mother,

"LOUISA DANVERS."

Repeatedly did the amiable Louisa peruse this specimen of maternal affection, and offered it to the inspection of her aunt.

"No, my love," said Mrs. Manderville, "I think a parent's correspondence ought always to be sacred, but treasure the contents of the letter in your heart; for I am persuaded it contains a moral code of instruction and advice."

The part, however, which alluded to Miss Cranbourn, Louisa intreated permission to read to her aunt, and expressed no small portion of female curiosity to know what her mamma meant.

"It is not necessary that your mamma should assign a reason for her caution, my love," said

Mrs. Manderville, "it is sufficient for you to obey her commands, and rather avoid than cultivate an intimacy with a young lady whose society she seems to fear might injure the purity of your mind. Politeness induced me to pay my compliments to Mrs. Cranbourn, as a stranger settling in our neighbourhood; but previous to your receipt of your mamma's letter, I had formed the resolution of not being upon intimate terms; for there is an ostentatious display of what I term *purse-pride* about her, which does not accord with my ideas."

A few days only elapsed before Mr. and Miss Cranbourn returned the visit; they were accompanied by a young officer, whose regiment happened to be quartered within the distance of a few miles, and, though, from the conversation which passed, Mrs. Manderville discovered that the young ensign had not been more than a week in the neighbourhood, yet Miss Cranbourn appeared as intimate with him as if she had known him several years.

Though, from the appellation given to Mrs. Manderville's house, my young readers will naturally imagine it was not a spacious mansion, yet the architecture of it was in so simple, yet so elegant a style, that Mrs. Cranbourn requested permission to see the different rooms, declaring

she was determined to have one wing of her more spacious habitation constructed upon a similar plan.

After expressing the highest approbation of all she saw, the garden next attracted her attention, and thither all the party strolled. The gardener happened to be mowing a lawn in the centre of it, which was environed by a border of beautiful flowers. Miss Cranbourn, who had familiarly seized the arm of Mr. Byfield (which was the young officer's name), drew Louisa on one side, and, taking an armful of the new-mown grass, exclaimed, "Let us have some fun with that beau Byfield! for he cannot bear the idea of having a particle of dust upon his fine red clothes." So saying, she threw the grass over him, desiring her companion to do the same, who, without reflecting upon the impropriety of it, obeyed the order she had received, and met with the reward she might have expected; for Mr. Byfield caught each in his arms, and, without any ceremony, stretched them both upon the lawn, and began covering them with the rubbish the gardener had swept into a heap.

Though Mrs. Manderville and her guest had strolled to the farther end of the garden, yet the attention of the former was roused by Miss

Cranbourn's screams, when, alarmed at a sound so unusual, "What can have happened, my dear madam?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, it is Julia's voice, she is *romping*, I suppose, with Byfield, and he is repaying her for some of her old tricks; so do not alarm yourself, I beg, madam, for my Julia is a sad wild girl, but as *innocent* as a *dove*, I assure you, and so I never interrupt their sport."

The shrieks, however, increased, and Mrs. Manderville distinctly heard Louisa's voice; when, springing forward, she said, "I cannot follow your example, madam, and must take the liberty of *spoiling sport*."

A *new*, though not very pleasing scene now presented itself: the three young ladies were racing round the lawn to avoid being again caught by Mr. Byfield, who was pelting them with the grass, and, to avoid being entrapped, each of them had repeatedly passed over the borders of flowers. The enraged countenance of old Stephen, who rested his arms upon his shovel, formed a striking contrast to that of the young party, who had incautiously destroyed his flowers. "The lord be good unto me!" he exclaimed, as Mrs. Manderville approached him, "why, one would think, madam, *as how* Bedlam was broke loose! not that I blames the

young captain there, for that there hoitying Miss began first, and I remembers the days when if a girl had *sarved* me so, I should have done worse mayhap than he did."

So completely was Louisa's and Eliza's attention engaged by endeavouring to avoid the grasp of the young *captain*, as Stephen called him, that they neither heard, nor perceived their aunt approach, and, until she presented herself before them, believed her at the farther end of the grounds. A sudden check was given to their gaiety by the gravity of her countenance. "Do not suppose," said she, addressing herself to her nieces, "I disapprove innocent mirth, but your screams actually terrified me, and I am astonished that you should degrade yourselves by hooting and hallooing like a huntsman after his hounds."

There was something so truly dignified in Mrs. Manderville's manner, as she made this observation, that even Miss Cranbourn seemed to feel its force.

"I was the original aggressor, ma'am," said she, "I assure you, and I beg your pardon for having excited alarm."

Mr. Byfield at this moment joined them, laughing so violently, that he was forced to hold his sides.

"They commenced the attack, I assure you, Mrs. Manderville, for I was walking as soberly as any sanctified priest, when those young ladies opened a battery upon me; it is true their shot did not penetrate very deep; but it is not in the nature of man to receive such a salutation, without standing upon the defensive."

"You have evidently placed yourself in an *offensive position*," replied Mrs. Manderville, "for my old gardener does not look very well pleased."——

"Pleased, Madam!" rejoined Stephen, "why only look at all *them there* flowers, all *spatted* into the ground just for all the world as if a bricklayer had taken a trowel of mortar and mixed them with the earth."

"Well, come, do not be angry, old *Crusty*," said Mr. Byfield, "there is half-a-crown for the extra trouble you will have; but mind you are not to scold the young ladies, though I vow I never set a foot upon your flowers."

By this mark of generosity, old Stephen's resentment was completely appeased; and he offered to fetch a brush for the young captain, declaring it was a pity to have such *fine clothes spoiled*; and whilst his coat was undergoing the necessary discipline Mrs. Manderville and her new acquaintance walked round the grounds.

As soon as the former was out of sight, Miss Cranbourn said to Louisa, "Why my dear Miss Danvers, that aunt of yours treats you just like a child! by heavens! you are now actually a *young woman*, and surely there can be no harm in an *innocent joke*. Thank God, my mamma never puts on such grave airs; not that I should care a fig about them if she did; for I should desire her to remember that she was once young herself. I perceive, my dear, you *want spirit*; a girl of your age ought to be permitted to amuse herself as she likes—I do exactly as I please, do I *not*, Byfield?"

"And pray who has a right to controul you," said Byfield, "we are free agents in this world, and if I were the King of England to-morrow, the first act of my sovereignty should be to abolish the authority of all *mothers* and *aunts*.—As to *aunts*," continued he, "they are a greater pest to society than *mothers*, and the greater number of them are a parcel of antiquated old maids, who never had a civil thing said to them by our sex, and therefore they are always envious of the compliments which their nieces receive."

Louisa was prevented from making any reply to the above observations, by the two elder ladies joining the groupe, when Mrs. Cran-

bourn informed her daughter it was growing late, and each took leave, expressing a hope that an intimacy would soon take place.

"Remember the advice I gave you, my dear," said Miss Cranbourn, as she lightly tripped into the carriage, which waited at the gate.

"What *advice* have you received, Louisa, from that apparently *amiable instructress?*" enquired Mrs. Manderville, in an ironical tone of voice, "for if it correspond with the impropriety of her *manners*, it will not be likely to prove very beneficial to your mind: but pray tell me what part of your conduct called forth the sagacious animadversion of that *forward girl?*"

A more embarrassing request could not have been made to Louisa, who replied, "indeed, aunt, I paid so little attention to what she said, that I could not repeat her conversation, and it really was what I never wish even to *think* of again."

"Then we will drop the subject, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "though I think it necessary slightly to revert to your conduct this morning, which, I am sorry to say, highly displeased me; as it proved how little attention you paid to your *mamma's advice*; for you were as completely intimate with Miss Cranbourn

as if you had been acquainted with her from the earliest age. Had you thrown the grass at your brother, or any of his intimate play-fellows, I should have considered it as a mere childish sport, but Mr. Byfield was a total stranger to you, and therefore ought to have been treated with more reserve; and I cannot help fearing he will think you a very forward girl."

Louisa burst into tears, but at the same time informed her protectress, that Miss Cranbourn had intreated her to throw the grass at Mr. B.

"Miss Cranbourn's conduct," replied Mrs. Manderville, "ought not to have been a precedent for yours: besides, she is on terms of much greater intimacy with Mr. Byfield than a total stranger can possibly be; and many things are allowable between persons who are familiarly connected, which would be highly improper to pass between those who are the mere acquaintance of a day. Recollect that you are no longer a child, my dear Louisa, and, from your appearance, a stranger would imagine you much older than you are; therefore it is necessary that you should act with circumspection, particularly before those who are strangers to the natural purity of your heart. Though I do not mean to censure or stigmatize young men in the army, yet there is a degree of levity attached

to their character, which demands the greatest precaution of manners in the conduct of our sex, and though I detest all appearance of *prudery*, yet I would always wish to see an easy politeness blended with *reserve*; and, depend upon it, this mode of conduct will alone entitle you to esteem and respect."

Whilst Mrs. Manderville was making these observations, Eliza had not appeared to take them to herself, but was busily occupied in arranging a bunch of flowers. This apparent inattention, did not pass the scrutinizing eyes of her relation, who, tapping her upon the shoulder, said, "Eliza, the remarks I have made, are equally applicable to *you*, and I am astonished at perceiving such traces of marked indifference upon your countenance, whilst your more susceptible cousin is drowned in tears; for though there is near a twelvemonth's difference in your ages, yet I shall not expect to see you act as a child."

A servant at this moment summoned Mrs. Manderville to the nursery, with the alarming intelligence, that the little boy was in a fit. The whole house instantly became a scene of confusion, and for several days the little sufferer was not expected to live. Improvement and recreation during this alarming period were suspend-

ed; and Eliza's sorrow was so unfeigned, that her aunt was fearful it would injure her health; neither did Louisa seem to take less interest in the poor child's sufferings, or feel less joy when the physician declared the danger past. Upon this gratifying intelligence being circulated, Louisa retired to her room, and fastening the door to prevent interruption, once more applied to her poetic muse; but upon receiving a summons from her aunt to see a new hat which was just arrived from London, she forgot to lock her writing-desk, and upon Mrs. Manderville's accidentally entering the apartment, she perceived the following lines, which were more gratifying to her feelings than the most sublime piece of poetry she ever perused, as they proved that the being for whom she felt the tenderest attachment, was endowed with a susceptible disposition, and a grateful heart.—

LINES UPON THE RECOVERY OF AN INFANT.

Again my darling Manderville,
A dimpled smile displays;
His azure eyes again look bright,
Illum'd by health's bright rays.

Long, charming infant, dearest boy,
May you enjoy the boon;
Nor terrify us with the dread,
Of losing you so soon!

Long may you live to bless the hand,
That rear'd your tender years;
May you reward our dear, dear aunt,
For all her anxious fears!

And if you live to be a man,
Together we will prove,
Our hearts have not forgot the debts,
Of gratitude and love!

L. D.

As Mrs. Manderville had just come to the close of this artless strain of poetry, the youthful authoress entered the room.

"This specimen, my beloved Louisa," said she, "of the affection you feel towards me, is the most gratifying proof of it I ever received — as a poetic production, it does credit to a girl of your age, and it conveys to me a more gratifying sensation, for it does honour to the feelings of your heart: I am going to write to your mamma, and I must take a copy of it, for I am persuaded it will afford her no less pleasure than it has done myself."

As the little boy daily increased in strength, his sister and cousin pursued their accustomed studies with greater avidity, in the hope of making up for lost time; and Eliza, who had noted down all her aunt's observations respecting the preceding months, requested she would have

the goodness to inform her what flowers and vegetables peculiarly characterized July.

"Many flowers, my love," said Mrs. Manderville, "are already withering; for when once the heat of the sun has completely matured them, they suddenly decay; and the short-lived existence of youth and beauty have not inaptly been compared to the flowers which fade. The beauty of the *mind*, however, defies the power of time to diminish it; in short, it becomes more attractively engaging as years increase; for a mind anxious for improvement is always adding to its stock of knowledge, and by disseminating it, resembles an extensive meandering stream, which fertilizes the grounds it passes through, without diminishing its own strength. But, to drop metaphor, and proceed with description, as January is *generally* the *coldest*, so is *July* the *hottest* month in the *year*—I make use of the term *generally*, because in our varying climate there is no *absolute* rule.

"Though hay-making is not yet commenced in the northern parts of the country, yet in the environs of the metropolis, that work is nearly completed; and this variation in the northern and southern parts of the kingdom, is of the greatest advantage to the poor labouring men, who from this diversity of climate, are enabled

to serve (as they term it) *double* tides; that is, when they have got in one harvest, they go to a part of the country where it has not began; and it is from the extra pay these poor industrious people receive during the hay and corn harvests, that they are enabled to lay by a sufficiency to discharge their rents."

"But I thought, aunt," said Louisa, "the greater part of the harvest-men came from Ireland."

"You are not incorrect in that opinion," replied her aunt, "for the farmers prudently follow the old adage, 'make hay whilst the sun shines,' and the labourers which he regularly employs, would not be able, witnout assistance, either to get in the corn, or hay-harvest in the proper time. You were enquiring, however, my dear," continued Mrs. Manderville, addressing Eliza, "what *flowers* and *plants* come into blossom this month; I will begin with the two which are most essential to the comfort of our existence, namely the *potatoe* and *hop*. The white lily and the jessamine, now adorn our gardens, the one giving us a sweet, the other, rather a powerful perfume; the marygold, the sun flower, the camomile, and the golden-rod, are likewise in their highest beauty about this time. The pimpernel, the cockle, and the fu-

mitory, decorate our corn fields; whilst the bulrush, the water-lily, and the marsh St. John's worth, bloom in marshy lands. My treacherous memory, however, will not allow me to enumerate even one quarter of the various plants and flowers which now decorate the scene; which spring up without either art or cultivation, but amongst the number, I must not omit the *wild thyme*; which in some parts of our island flourishes in great abundance, and is known to be the favourite *sustenance* of *bees*. Thus, my dear children, does the great Parent of nature provide for the support of every living creature that his hand has formed; and can we reflect upon such wonderful acts of beneficence with indifference or ungrateful hearts? Every thing around us is calculated to inspire our adoration! The flowers of the field bloom and flourish at his command! and what we term the productions of *nature*, are the enchanting, the wonderful works of an Almighty God."

Absorbed in reflections of this nature, Mrs. Manderville and her young companions had extended their walk to an unusual length; the former completely occupied in contemplating the works of the Deity, and the latter (observing her inclined to silence) in collecting a number of wild flowers. The gathering clouds

which had collected into a mass, had not attracted the attention of either; the distance they had rambled from the cottage was totally unobserved, until a loud, though *distant* clap of *thunder*, announced an approaching storm! The sound had no sooner reached the ears of Eliza, than she bounded forward and caught the extended hand of her aunt, exclaiming, "O *save me!* what will become of me, my dear, dear aunt?"

"Compose yourself, my love," said Mrs. Manderville, perceiving she trembled so violently, that she could scarcely stand, "what can alarm you thus my dearest Eliza? Are you not protected by a gracious, an all-merciful God?"

"Oh! there is another clap! where can we fly to?"

"We will make the best of our way home," Mrs. Manderville replied, "I blame my own inattention, or I might have perceived the approaching storm; and when we are at home, I will endeavour to convince you that the lightning is too far removed to do us any harm; and when you hear the sound of thunder, recollect that all danger is past."

Calmed by the composure of her aunt's manner, Eliza, in some measure subdued her fears, and as farmer Hawkins's house was only two

fields distant the party ran with the utmost agility, and took shelter there, although they did not reach it until they were nearly wet to the skin. The tempest soon raged with unusual violence; the very element seemed a body of fire, and, though Eliza was completely drenched, no peruasion could induce her to have her clothes taken off; for, upon entering the house, she ran up into a corner and dropped down upon her knees, throwing a great coat, which happened to lay upon a chair, over her, and hiding her face with both hands.—This awful scene providence ordained should be of short continuance; the collected vapours were soon dispersed; a soft shower succeeded the overwhelming torrent, and the glorious sun appeared in golden majesty.

To have reasoned with a child so completely under the dominion of terror, Mrs. Manderville was aware would have been folly; but the moment her apprehensions were diminished, she represented the impropriety of giving way to such terrific fears. "It is only the *guilty*," said she, "my dearest Eliza, that have reason to dread the vengeance of an offended God! Though every person would wish to avoid being exposed to a tempest, yet I felt as secure in the fields as under Mr. Hawkins's hospitable roof;

for the same protecting power could shield me from its violence; and no precaution of mine could preserve me if the hour of my fate were come."

"Oh! but there is something so *shocking*, aunt, in *thunder!* Oh it makes my very blood run cold! it used to frighten nurse so sadly, for she said it was the Almighty's voice."

"Ignorance is the parent of *fear* and *superstition*, my dear," replied Mrs. Manderville, "and nurse is not the only illiterate person who has indulged that erroneous idea; it is, however, by no means an irreligious one, and certainly originated from the Almighty's having conversed with Moses; but, since the Saviour of mankind's resurrection, miracles of every kind have ceased; for he mercifully laid down the plainest and simplest rules for our conduct, which, if we but obediently follow, we shall require no warning voice either to threaten or persuade us to persevere in *virtue's path*. The thunder and lightning which excited such apprehensions is the natural consequence of the dry weather which we have had for some weeks; for the power of the sun being now excessive, occasions an evaporation from the earth and the waters by which it is surrounded; and these rising vapours, that are sucked up by the sun's

attraction, form those clouds, by which we are environed. These clouds, which collect in large bodies, are impregnated with a certain portion of electric fire, and, when they come in contract with each other, from the force of their motion they naturally burst, and, for some moments, their vivid particles seem to flutter in the air."

"Well, but how is it, aunt, that lightning so often kills people," enquired Eliza, "if the flashes only flutter in the air?"

"I am pleased with the rationality of the question," replied Mrs. Manderville, "because it proves to me that you reflect upon what you hear; and, to account for what appears extraordinary, I must inform you that houses, trees, and the earth which we inhabit, are attractive, and consequently draw this electric fluid down. But the thunder, which seemed to alarm you more than the lightning, is merely occasioned by the explosion of the clouds, and all danger from the flash is over when the sound reaches our ears."

"I shall never, now I understand it, be so terrified as I used to be; yet it is impossible, I think, not to be alarmed; for last summer, aunt, when I was in Lincolnshire, five or six people were killed."

"It would be presumption in me to say that a tempest inspires no apprehension in my bosom," rejoined Mrs. Manderville, "yet I never indulge unnecessary fears. You say that five or six people were destroyed in Lincolnshire last summer; in all probability they sought shelter under some trees, which, as I told you, attracted lightning. But recollect, my love, we are exposed to accidents every moment of our lives; and how frequently have we heard of persons losing their existence from the unexpected blowing off of a brick or tile, yet this does not impress us with the idea of danger when we walk along the streets: in short, if we suffered ourselves to be in continual apprehensions, we should destroy all the pleasures of life."

"Dear ma'am!" said Mrs. Hawkins, "I could sit to hear you talk all day. Well, to be sure, madam, learning is a very fine thing; but until this moment I knew no more what occasioned the lightning than a new-born child."

"You know sufficient, my good Mrs. Hawkins," replied Mrs. Manderville, "to render you an ornament to the station you fill; and I may truly say, that I am persuaded you perform your duty both to God and man. We are highly indebted to your hospitality (for that worthy creature had supplied the party with dry clothes),

and I will not trespass any farther upon your kindness, as it is growing late, and the servants will be alarmed."

The storm, which had excited so much apprehension in the mind of Eliza, had not only cooled, but purified the air, and the surrounding prospect was truly enchanting; for the sun, declining in the west, was half concealed by a rising hill, whilst the verdant wood, which skirted it, was rendered doubly beautiful by its brilliant rays.

"This is a scene," said Mrs. Manderville, addressing her young companions, "calculated to call forth admiration in the most indifferent mind; for that storm which excited so much apprehension in your breast, Eliza, has rendered the prospect lovely to an extreme. How verdant appear the fields! how beautiful the meadows! But listen to the harmonious notes of that bird!"

"Yet I think, aunt, the birds do not sing so sweetly as they did a short time past."

"No, my dear Louisa," replied her intelligent relation, "they seldom are so harmonious after the month of June, probably from its being the moulting season, if we may judge from our poultry-yard. The swallows and martins now begin to assemble in large bodies; many of the

young ones fall victims to that rapacious enemy, the *hawk*; who, with an eager eye, watches their feeble efforts to follow their parents in their airy flight, and, darting down upon them when nearly exhausted, satisfies his craving appetite.

"*Flax*, that plant from which our finest linens are manufactured, is in a state for gathering this month; the process it goes through, even before it is ready for the weaver, affords employment for the industrious in many parts of the globe, as each fibre must be separated before it can be spun into thread. *Hemp* is now likewise in the same state of perfection: of this plant our coarser linens are composed, such as strong sheeting, kitchen toweling, &c. but the tougher parts of the fibres are formed into cables and ropes."

As Mrs. Manderville made this observation, she was met by old Stephen at the garden-gate, whose expressive countenance convinced her that some melancholy circumstance had occurred. "I was just coming to look *arter* ye, madam," said the faithful creature, "for I was *afeard* ye were out in the storm; but that *be'ant all*, for there has been three messages from Squire Hardy's; for the poor lady, God help her! has been for the last hour in fits! and well enough she may, for nature is nature,

and young Master Hardy for sure and *sartin* is dead !"

"Dead !" exclaimed Mrs. Manderville, shocked at the intelligence.

"Yes, dead," repeated Stephen, "as a *door-nail*; all the house, madam, as ye may suppose, is in confusion, but I heard somewhat about a *lecterfying* machine, that he had been desired never to meddle with (yet he always was a *self-willed boy*), and they say *as how* it *tracted* the lightning, and that is all I know."

Mrs. Manderville scarcely waited to hear the conclusion of Stephen's melancholy story, but flew on the wings of friendship to Mr. Hardy's house, where a melancholy scene presented itself, for the ill-fated George was no more.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

AUGUST.

To relieve the distressed, to succour the unfortunate, and to pour the balm of comfort into the afflicted mind, was so habitual a practice with Mrs. Manderville, that she seemed to be consi-

dered as the guardian angel of the place; and, whenever any domestic calamity befel either the rich or poor, in her neighbourhood, she was instantly summoned to console, or to offer them advice.

Three different messengers had been dispatched by Mr. Hardy, and three of her own servants had taken different routes, when, as was specified in the last chapter, Stephen met his benevolent employer as she was entering the garden-gate.

To describe the melancholy scene which presented itself at Mr. Hardy's is impossible; but the imagination of my young readers will doubtless picture it without the aid of words, when they reflect that these attached parents were in one moment deprived of their only child, on whom they had placed all their happiness and their hopes!

Mr. Hardy had been attacked with some paralytic symptoms, for which his physician had recommended electricity as likely to remove; and the surgeon, who attended the family, not having a machine that was in order, Mr. Hardy sent for a new one from town. For several days Mr. Calvert had electrified his patient, and George, who was delighted with

several experiments that gentleman made, likewise received the shocks.

Previous to the commencement of the storm, Mr. Calvert called upon his patient, and was informed he would be at home in half an hour. He waited the expected time, and charged the machine ready; but, recollecting an appointment he had made, he locked the room door and gave the key to Mrs. Hardy, promising to return again in a short time. The moment he was gone, George requested his mother to indulge him with the key, but was refused, as Mr. Calvert had desired no person might touch the machine. Some domestic concerns, however, calling Mrs. Hardy out of the parlour, unfortunately the key was forgot, which the imprudent boy seized with avidity, and locked himself into the room. The tempest, as I observed, came on suddenly, and Mrs. Hardy was so alarmed by it that she neither thought of her son nor the key, which had been entrusted to her charge, until it had subsided, and Mr. Calvert returned. Upon enquiring for the key, it was not to be discovered; but what was more alarming, the luckless George was not to be found. The room in which the machine stood happened to look into the garden, and one of the labourers, who was bringing in his tools

announced that several panes of glass were broke. The melancholy truth instantly flashed upon the mind of Mr. Calvert: he flew to the apartment and forced open the door; the shattered fragments of the glass were scattered about the carpet, and the imprudent George lay extended on the floor! It is supposed that he had not only over-charged the machine, but that the two electric bodies had come in contact; for the lightning had evidently entered the window, and, passing through the room in a simicircular direction, had not only broke several articles, but shivered the wire of a bell.

The room, in which this melancholy accident happened, was in some degree detached from the mansion, and had formerly been a greenhouse; and, as the family were separated from it, the explosion which must have been made by the machine's bursting was not heard. Fruitless proved every attempt which was made by Mr. Calvert to resuscitate the ill-fated boy: this attention soon became necessary to Mrs. Hardy, as she was seized with the most alarming fits; and in that situation she was not only found by Mrs. Manderville, but remained so for several hours. The poorest inhabitant of the village would have received that amiable woman's attention, had they been reduced to so pitiable a state; she

therefore dispatched a servant with a note to Louisa, informing her she should not return until the following day, and charging her to see that her little cousin had every want supplied by his nurse.

For severad days Mrs. Manderville found it impossible to leave her disconsolate friend, except just to take a peep at her family, for the purpose of seeing that her nephew was properly attended to.

Louisa, who officiated as Mrs. M.'s Housekeeper, received not only the approbation, but the thanks of her aunt; for, young as she was, her mamma had accustomed her to assist her in domestic concerns; and Eliza, during Mrs. Manderville's absence, had paid more than ordinary attention to her tasks.

Not until the second day after the funeral did the amiable mistress of the cottage return; and, so deeply were her spirits depressed by the melancholy scene she had witnessed, that her health fell a sacrifice to anxiety and fatigue. Assiduously did the attached girls attend the sick bed of their protectress, and fervently pray to Heaven for the restoration of her health. The Almighty mercifully listened to their supplications, for in the space of a week she was able to quit her room.

Henry's vacation commenced previous to his aunt's indisposition, but the first fortnight of it he spent with Mr. Benson's eldest son, a boy of a most amiable disposition, to whom he was warmly attached, and who received an invitation from Mrs. Manderville to pass the remaining part of the holidays at her house. This young gentleman's company was a great acquisition to the party at the cottage, as Mrs. Manderville was desirous he should spend his time in a manner agreeable to himself; and, in addition to their accustomed walks and occasional visitings, she promised to give the young people a ball. In a general invitation it was impossible to omit Miss Cranbourn, without appearing pointedly rude; but in the card Mrs. Manderville particularly specified that it was merely a juvenile *fête*; adding that, as mere children would be assembled, she feared Miss Cranbourn would consider herself too much the woman to become her neice's guests. This hint had been given from an apprehension that this forward girl might invite Mr. Byfield to accompany her to the ball; as Mrs. Manderville had been informed that gay young officer actually lived at the house. Judge, then, of that lady's astonishment, when the day of celebration arrived, to see Miss Cranbourn, not only attend-

ed by Mr. Byfield, but another red-coated boy!

That urbanity which ever marked Mrs. Manderville's conduct, prevented her from showing the displeasure which she felt; though she could not avoid hinting to these intruders that she feared they would be very badly entertained, as her party consisted of mere *children*.

"Surely, ma'am," said Byfield's companion, eagerly, "you do not call Miss *Danvers* a *child!* I have had the felicity of seeing her at church several Sundays, and *'pon honour* I think her one of the finest creatures I ever beheld!"

"I consider my niece as what *she is*, Sir," replied Mrs. Manderville, with unusual gravity, "an *artless, innocent, amiable child:* nature certainly has not dealt niggardly by her; but I must intreat the admiration you profess to feel may be confined to your own breast; for any high flown compliments you might be inclined to pay her, would be as *unintelligible* as if you addressed her in Greek."

"Why faith, madam," rejoined the ignorant puppy, "I have never bothered my own brain with Greek; and as to your *Homers* and your *Virgils*, and all those old *musty* fellows, they knew nothing of the divine attractions of nature: nothing, my dear madam, of your sex's charms!

but, in obedience to your commands, I shall preserve a profound silence, though I hope to have the honour of your niece's hand."

Louisa, however, was engaged to dance the two first dances with Master Benson, and Eliza was the partner on whom Henry had fixed his choice; Miss Cranbourn, as was expected, gave her hand to Mr. Byfield, and his companion in frivolity selected a young lady of the name of Green.

Though it was Mrs. Manderville's intention to have left the young party to their own amusement, yet the unexpected appearance of Mr. Byfield and Mr. Collins, induced her to alter her design; and sincerely did she repent having invited Miss Cranbourn, who conducted herself with the same disregard to propriety she had done on the first day she called. After the conclusion of the second dance Mr. Collins claimed the hand of Louisa, and whispered such a rhapsody of nonsense into her ears, that the poor child was quite disconcerted, and intreated her aunt to prevent her from being so persecuted again.

Had it not been for these impertinent intruders the evening would have passed off delightfully; but as it afforded Mrs. Manderville an opportunity of breaking through all acquaint-

ance with Mrs. Cranbourn, she rather rejoiced than repented of having invited her daughter, whose conduct was calculated to inspire aversion and contempt. This forward girl, during the evening, took an opportunity of telling Louisa that Mr. Collins perfectly *adored* her; and enquired whether she never walked unattended by that watchful argus her aunt; "For, my sweet girl," said she, "he has ten thousand things to say to you, but he is so closely watched to night that he has begged me to intreat you will contrive to *meet* him, and name the *hour* and the *day*."

"Oh fie! Miss Cranbourn," exclaimed Louisa, whose indignation was roused by such a proposal, "what! walk out and meet a strange *gentleman*, without the knowledge of my aunt!"

The amiable girl's face was suffused with a glow of resentment as she made this appeal to her imprudent acquaintance, and Mrs. Manderville, who joined them at this moment, beheld these symptoms of anger with surprise. During the remainder of the evening Louisa carefully avoided all farther conversation with Miss C. and the moment the party separated, related to her protectress every sentence that had passed.

Mrs. Manderville embraced her with maternal tenderness; "You see, my beloved girl," said she, "the necessity for the precaution you received from your mamma; and severely do I blame myself for having suffered a sense of *politeness*, to invite such an improper acquaintance to my house."

Early on the following morning the amiable protectress of youth and innocence, dispatched a servant with a letter to Mrs. Cranbourn, the purport of it was to say, that the interest she took in her niece's future happiness, pointed out the necessity of dropping all farther intercourse with a young lady who would have corrupted a perfect child, by endeavouring to persuade her to act both with duplicity and impropriety, though she had discretion enough not to follow such baneful advice. Mrs. Manderville concluded her letter by intreating Mrs. Cranbourn not to construe this freedom into any *personal disrespect*, but to attribute it to the apprehension she entertained lest the force of example might in time influence the conduct of her niece, who, though at the present moment she was every thing she wished her, yet, from a pliancy of disposition, was likely to yield to bad advice.

This epistle, as Mrs. Manderville had expected, called forth the indignation of the weak woman to whom it was addressed, and instead of severely reprimanding her daughter for the impropriety of her conduct, she only laughed at what she termed being more nice than wise; "For, indeed," said she, "I see no harm, my dear Julia, in a young lady's taking a *pleasant walk* with a gentleman."

Mr. Byfield had been informed that Miss Cranbourn had ten thousand pounds independant of her mamma, and, finding that no obstacles were raised to her taking a *walk* with him, he boldly suggested the greater pleasure which would result from a *ride*; and actually persuaded her to accompany him to Gretna Green.

This young fortune-hunter was the son of a taylor in the metropolis, to whom the colonel of the —— regiment was deeply in debt, and who, to prevent an importunity for payment, had offered an ensigncy to the taylor's eldest son. As the profession which he had embraced entitles its members to the rank of a gentleman, and as Mr. Byfield was by no means deficient in assurance, he had not only forced himself into Mrs. Cranbourn's family, but into several others of high respectability in the neighbourhood,

who easily discovered that his education had been neglected, without suspecting he had originally been destined for no higher station than a taylor's board.

The low connections of this young man Mrs. Cranbourn was wholly unacquainted with, as he had represented his parents as living in the highest style; and the degrading intelligence of his father's being a taylor did not reach her until after the elopement had taken place. *Remorse*, *rage*, and *mortification*, by turns agitated her breast; and, overwhelmed with these sensations, she ordered the carriage to drive to Mrs. Manderville's.

"Oh! my dear madam, I am the most miserable being in the creation!" she exclaimed, throwing herself into an easy chair; "my child has been *decoyed*, *trepanned*—actually *ran* away with! and, what is still more shocking, by the son of a taylor!" She then, with sobs and groans, related the particulars of this unexpected flight.

Mrs. Manderville endeavoured to assuage the violence of this injudicious parent's emotions, by every argument which reason could devise; though she could scarcely avoid saying that her own misconduct was the cause of the event she deplored.

After having vented her grief by tears and lamentations, Mrs. Cran'bourn took her leave; when Mrs. Manderville pointed out the probable consequences of this ill-fated girl's entering into the marriage state, at a period of life when she was wholly unacquainted with the duties of a station which required both knowledge and prudence properly to fill.

"Though it will be several years, my dear children," continued she, "before any man would have the presumption to talk to either of you upon the subject of marriage, let this imprudent girl's misconduct make a deep impression upon your hearts; for, rely upon it, her *fortune* was Byfield's only object, and, as no settlement has been made upon her, that will soon be run through. Conceive, then, for a moment, what will be her feelings upon reflecting that she has brought all the misery she suffers upon herself."

Miss Cranbourn's imprudence and Mr. Byfield's artifice, afforded subject for conversation for several days; and Louisa, whose mind was more matured than her cousin's, was continually reflecting upon the misery she was likely to endure, with a man who had induced her to break through the first of all *moral duties*, and act in direct opposition to the wishes of her mother.

Not any thing material occurred at the cottage during the greater part of this pleasure-inspiring month; the mornings were, as usual, devoted to improvement, the afternoons to a variety of recreations within doors; and the evenings to a ride or walk, for the heat was too intense for them to be able to venture out in the middle of the day. The walks and rides never failed giving rise to a conversation which afforded the young people both instruction and delight; and Henry's young friend, Master Benson, appeared perfectly charmed with Mrs. Manderville's remarks. The busy scene which presented itself in their morning and evening rambles, was entirely new to that young gentleman, who had spent the greater part of his life in London, and until his visit had scarcely been more than ten miles from the spot. His father, it is true, had a country-house at Hampstead, and, of course, he had beheld corn-fields; but a whole space of country, as far as the eye could extend, covered with a luxurious harvest, was at once a new and gratifying sight. On Farmer Hawkins's grounds alone, no less than five-and-thirty industrious labourers were occupied; some in reaping the corn, others binding up the sheaves; each apparently grateful to the divine Dispenser of human blessings, for his bountiful mercies to man-

kind! The weather happened to be peculiarly favourable; not a single field of corn was laid; and each ear was in so high a state of perfection, as to promise the richest supply of grain. The gleaners soon began to be no less busy than the husbandmen, and, the sun being obscured one morning, the young people requested leave to omit their accustomed task, for the purpose of trying which could *glean* the *most*.

"Most willingly do I grant you this indulgence," said Mrs. Manderville, "on condition that you distribute the proofs of your industry amongst the poor, otherwise you would be committing a robbery, as they alone are entitled to the scattered corn."

"I intended to give mine, aunt, to poor old Dame Robbins," said Louisa, "for I was quite shocked to see how some of the gleaners pushed the poor creature about last night; and the moment she hobbled to the spot where a sheaf had been just put into the waggon, some of the young ones got before her, and declared it was their place."

"That was *might* overcoming *right*, indeed, my love," replied Mrs. Manderville, "and we too often see that selfish principle actuate the *lower class*; yet we must make allowances for those who have not enjoyed the advantages of

education, and recollect that personal interest too often influences the conduct of those who have; but you have certainly made an amendment in my motion, to use a parliamentary term; and I beg you will all divide the produce of your industry amongst the different *old women* you see in the field. But it will be necessary to request Mr. Hawkins's permission, before you begin your work."

Whilst hats, gloves, and tippets, were preparing, the indulgent Mrs. Manderville desired Hannah to put some ham and a cold fowl into a basket, to which she kindly added two bottles of cyder, informing the young party that as they were going to become gleaners they would of course like to dine in the field. This was a treat so wholly unexpected, that the liveliest joy was depictured upon every face; and, as Hannah was to accompany her young mistresses, she took care that the basket should be amply supplied, and asked her lady's permission to add part of a cold veal pie.

A happier group never were assembled. Henry and Master Benson by turns carried the basket; civilly saying it would be a shame to allow a *female* to do it when in company with two such stout boys. Permission having been readily granted by Mr. Hawkins, each eagerly

commenced their new employ, which they had not long been engaged in, when they overheard some of the gleaners grumbling at their being there, and declaring it was a *shame* for *gentlefolks* to *rob* the *poor* of their *right*.

The person who made this observation was one of those who had behaved with so much incivility to poor Dame Robbins; Louisa, therefore, instantly went up to her, and with some degree of indignation said, "We are not going to *infringe* upon your *privileges*, good woman, we only mean to assist those who cannot assist themselves; I saw how unkindly you behaved to poor old Dame Robbins yesterday, and so we are come to give her a helping hand."

"Lord, Miss Danvers, I did'n't know 'twas *you*, I am *sartin*, or I shoud'n't have made *bould* for to *spake*; I hope, Miss, you be'a'nt offended, for I am sure I did'n't mean any harm."

"Oh! no, I am not offended, Mrs. Mathews," replied the forgiving Louisa, "but I thought you had received too many proofs of the kindness of my aunt for any of her poor neighbours to imagine she would allow us to *rob you* of any *corn*, and she gave us orders to divide our gleanings amongst those who were the least able to work hard."

"God reward her goodness to us all, Miss," rejoined Mrs. Mathews, "but for the matter of working hard, why, Dame Robbins can do well enough without; for the parish allows her a matter of three shillings a week, and it would be as much *charity*, Miss, to give your gleanings to them as has *four* or *five children* to feed."

As Louisa easily perceived that envy gave rise to this observation, she did not think it necessary to make any reply, but pursued her occupation, resolving not to give Mrs. Mathews a single grain. Air and exercise soon excited hunger, and seeing the gleaners retire under the hedges between twelve and one o'clock, the party resolved to follow their example, and Hannah, who was equally hungry, readily spread a cloth upon the grass, and displayed the banquet before them, which they surrounded with heart-felt delight. At about twenty yards distance they discovered Dame Robbins, accompanied by two companions nearly of her own age; Louisa first cast her eyes upon the fowl, then at the infirm trio, and involuntarily heaved a sigh.

"What do you sigh for, cousin?" enquired Eliza, "for I never felt *half* so *happy* in my *life*."

"I am as happy as you can be, my dear Eliza, but I was just thinking that I wished

poor Dame Robbins and her companions had as nice a treat."

"And so they *shall!*" exclaimed Henry, darting forwards towards the group. "Come, dame," said he, attempting to raise her from her recumbent posture, "you and these old lasses shall all dine with us. Come along, come along, all three of you, we will give you something better than bread and cheese." So saying, he tucked the dame's arm familiarly under his own, whilst Edward Benson, who had followed, seized each of the other poor women by the hand, and leading them towards the young ladies, seated them in the most shady place.

Hannah having performed the office of butler, and uncorked one of the bottles, was likewise compelled to take her seat amongst them; "for we are all gleaners," said Henry, "and do not want any person to wait upon us; for this treat, in my opinion, is better than dining with the Prince of Wales."

Hannah's assistance, however, became very necessary, as neither of the party had ever dissected a fowl. Louisa first helped her aged companions, who were more delighted with her affability than with the delicacy of their food; but who each declared they durst not drink cyder, lest it should disagree with their stomachs.

Henry at the moment his company had made this declaration, espied Mr. Hawkins at a short distance, and without saying a word bounded towards him, and describing the fears of the party he had so generously invited, requested a bottle of ale.

"A *bottle!* God bless your feeling heart! why I'd give you a *barrel,*" exclaimed the farmer, dismounting from his horse, and going up to a full can which had been brought into the field for the labourers, and out of which he filled a quart jug, refusing to let Henry carry it, declaring *he* would *wait* upon the *old girls*.

"God bless you all, *young* and *old!*" said the farmer, approaching them. "Why, dames, ye seems to be living on the fat of the land."

"Thanks to these dear young ladies and gentlemen," they replied, with tears of gratitude in their eyes.

"I han't seen a sight that pleased me so much for these twenty years," observed Hawkins, "but the young 'Squire tells me ye are at *dry work*, so here's a can of ale for ye, and I'll pledge ye all; and Heaven send down a blessing upon the harvest, and grant that it may be got in without rain! yet I do wish *as how* Madam *Manderville* and my *Bet* could see you. Oh me! what an example do these sweet dears set to your

upstart gentlefolks! a parcel of *mushrooms*, as I calls 'em, sprung up out of their *own dirt*."

Eliza, who did not perfectly comprehend the farmer's meaning, said, "Have you *got* any *mushrooms* there, Mr. Hawkins?"

"No *mushrooms*, Miss; good-hearted *oak* of *Old England*, that takes a sound, a *lasting root*, and I hope I shall live to see ye all bear acorns, though I sees you don't understand such sort of talk. But as for mushrooms, Miss, *real* and *true* mushrooms, you might have had enow of them last month, and now I think on't, my Bet did send Madam a basket."

"True, Mr. Hawkins," said Louisa, interrupting him, "and we had some for dinner, you know, Eliza; the rest were made into ketchup, and I remember my aunt told us they were in high perfection at that time."

"Well, I must not stand gossiping here," rejoined the farmer, "and so God bless ye all! You are welcome, old girls, and you, Mrs. Hannah, to as much of my October as you can drink, and I don't think you will find better in the county, although I say it myself."

The repast being ended; and still some fragments remaining, Hannah observed that it would be a pity to carry any of it home; she was therefore desired to distribute it amongst the gleaners,

and to give it to whoever she thought fit, and Mrs. Mathews happening to pass at that moment, accompanied by three little children, Louisa's resentment was forgotten, and they came in for a share.

"I thought, Miss Danvers, you had declared that woman should not benefit by our gleanings," said Edward Benson.

"It would be hard to punish the children for their mother's faults," replied the amiable girl.

"So it would indeed," rejoined Edward, "and if I were to live for ever, I never should forget this happy, happy day."

As a desire of seeing who could glean the most had given double zest to the employment, whilst Edward and Louisa were conversing, Henry and Eliza had re-commenced their work, and in the pleasing employment they were soon joined by the no less industrious boy and girl.

A little before tea, Mrs. Manderville joined the young party, who each sprang forward to display the different fruits of their toil, and so completely were they delighted with the novelty of the amusement, that they had actually gathered a larger bundle than any other person in the field; but their backs began to ache, and each made the proposal of distributing the corn according to the manner they had agreed.

Repeatedly did each of the young people express their thanks to Mrs. Manderville, for the inward gratification they had enjoyed.

"Rather return thanks to the bounteous Lord of the Creation," said the amiable woman, "for dispensing his blessings with so liberal a hand. Fine as are the crops, and abundant as are likely to be their produce, yet a few short hours might have destroyed all the farmer's sanguine hopes; each ear might have been affected by a blight to which every grain is liable, and a scarcity, of course, must have been the consequence. A violent storm, also, might have levelled that beautiful field before us, and half of the grains, which are now ready to drop from the ears which contain them, might have been scattered by the wind; and, what is less common, and still more deplorable, a flash of lightning might have destroyed the whole produce of these fields. A calamity of the latter description I witnessed in Bedfordshire, about five and twenty years ago; the weather had been similar to that which we have lately experienced, and the fire spread from field to field."

"What a dreadful sight it must have been!" exclaimed the children.

"It was a sight indeed beyond the power of language to paint; for the flames spread with a

rapidity that defied exertion to restrain them, and the whole surrounding country appeared in a perfect blaze. The wind, which, separated the grain from the ear, drove it into masses, which the fire at once blackened and calcined; and large lumps were dispersed about the fields, which had the appearance of cinders, larger than the crown of a man's hat. The conflagration was not confined to those fields which were richly laden with their produce, but extended to several capital farms, whilst at least thirty poor labouring families had not a place to cover their heads."

"Oh! but what became of the poor people, aunt?" enquired the sympathizing Eliza.

"Providence, my dear girl, kindly raised them up friends; the neighbouring gentry supplied their immediate necessities, and a subscription was set on foot in the town and university of Cambridge; in addition to this (if I be not mistaken) a collection was made in all the churches throughout England and Wales.

"I have mentioned these circumstances to prove how grateful we ought to be to Providence for crowning the husbandman's labour with success, and for supplying us with such abundant crops.

"Fair Plenty now begins her golden reign,
The yellow fields rich wave with ripen'd grain;
Joyous the swains renew their sultry toils,
And bear in triumph home the harvest's wealthy spoils."

The party were at this moment met by Farmer Hawkins, who said he hoped he should have the pleasure of the young ladies' and gentlemen's company at his *harvest home*; when Mrs. Manderville assured him that her nieces should wait upon him, "but my nephew and his companion, Mr. Hawkins," said she, "will have left me before that time."

"No, no, Madam, that must not be," rejoined the farmer, "I must have the young 'Squire's company, and I won't give my consent to his leaving us until all the crops are *well housed*; for, as I said just now to my dame, I am sure God's blessing will follow him whereever he goes." He then related the morning's adventure, and described the gratification he had felt in supplying the old women with ale: "Aye, he is the very moral of his father, Madam, be'an't he?" enquired the farmer, "and of his mother, too, as a body may say; well, God give a blessing to him, and by the end of next week I shall have got in all my peas and beans; so he must come to my harvest supper, and eat plum-pudding and roast beef." So saying, with

a respectful bow, the worthy farmer wished the whole party good night.

"Then peas and beans are the latest crops, ma'am, I suppose?" said Edward Benson.

"You are perfectly right in that conjecture, my dear sir," replied Mrs. M. "for they are not in a proper state for cutting until the pods become of a blackish hue; the honest farmer, however, is very late in his harvest this year, which has probably been occasioned by the unusual wetness of his land, for a bank gave way at the commencement of the winter, and poor Hawkins sustained a very severe loss."

"For my part," rejoined Edward, "I should like harvest to continue throughout the year."

"Then it would lose its charm, and you would not have the pleasure of skaiting, which you told me was your favourite diversion; and you would be deprived of the gratification which every feeling mind experiences in contemplating the opening charms of Spring. A harvest of a different kind from what you have witnessed, is now commencing in many parts of England, particularly in Kent; and I think a hop-ground, in point of *beauty*, preferable to a corn-field."

Eliza, who had never seen, or even heard of a *hop-ground*, eagerly requested a description

of hops, and actually was so ignorant as not to know for what purpose they were used.

Mrs. Manderville, who always felt pleasure in giving information, told her that hops were an essential ingredient in every kind of beer, though from bearing a high price, the brewers were apt not to put a sufficient quantity, and were sometimes accused of substituting less wholesome materials in their place. "Hops," she continued, "sometimes grow wild upon the hedges, but the cultivators of them find, that to attain perfection, they require a rich soil: they are set at a regular distance from each other, and each surrounded with a small hill—to every five plants three poles are erected, from sixteen to twenty feet high: early in Spring the young plants begin to make their appearance, and gradually entwine round these poles. As soon as these useful plants have reached their summit, they begin to flower, and it is impossible to conceive any thing more beautiful than the drooping clusters these elegant blossoms form. They are generally in a state of perfection the middle or latter end of this month, when the poles are taken out of the ground, with the plants entwining round them, the flowers of which women and children carefully pick off; they are then dried over charcoal, and afterwards exposed

to the air, to take off that crispness which they have acquired from the heat; then packed up in sacks and sent to market; and though their price is precarious, it is always high.

Though the beauty of our gardens now daily diminishes, yet we are compensated by a variety of luscious fruits; for the peach, the nectarine, the plum, and the apricot, now invite us to cool our palates with their refreshing juice; and though the fig is seldom in this country brought to high perfection, yet that likewise ripens about the close of the month. A variety of those plants denominated *ferns* come into flower at this period, the most beautiful of which are natives of America: the greater part grow wild, but some few are cultivated in green-houses, and bear a strong resemblance to the human mind, which, in a rude and unpolished state, may possess many amiable qualities, but which, in a state of cultivation, becomes more attractively bright. This is exactly the case, my dear children, with the ferns which are reared in green-houses, and their natural beauties improved by the gardener's fostering hand; the wild ones, however, prove of great utility, for they will flourish in a soil unfavourable to less hardy plants: their extensive branches not only afford an asylum for a variety of the feathered crea-

tion, but afford a shelter to a number of small quadrupeds; whilst the slimy mucilage, which arises from their roots, affords nutriment to a diversity of insects, and a variety of tender plants.

About the middle of this month, the *swift*, or the *long-wing*, the largest species of the swallow tribe, begins to take its departure, not (as some imagine) for the purpose of returning to caverns and holes, but to a more southern region, though this, I allow, is conjecture, as we have no positive proof."

At this instant Henry, who was all life and agility, jumped across a ditch, and throwing his hat upon some moving body, exclaimed with delight, "Oh! I have caught you, my little dear!" when carefully removing the covering, he displayed a young partridge. Benson, with the rapidity of lightning, followed his friend's example, and Eliza expressed a wish of doing the same, but was restrained by her aunt observing that jumping was not a very feminine pursuit; and desiring her to walk a few yards farther and get over the stile. The little captive was immediately presented to Eliza, who had expressed a desire of calling it her own; and Henry, embracing his sister with fraternal tenderness, promised to endeavour to obtain

another for her, saying that he had seen several large coveys in the neighbouring fields.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

SEPTEMBER.

THE promise which the amiable Henry Danvers had made to his sister was fulfilled in the course of a few days; and as each of the birds proved young ones, the two ladies vied with each other in endeavouring to make their own the most tame.

"Could those poor little creatures be sensible of the dangers from which you have shielded them, my dear girls," said Mrs. Manderville, "they would display their gratitude by a greater degree of attachment than birds are accustomed to shew; for the season rapidly approaches for their destruction: yet man, who ought to protect and shield them from death and slaughter, is their bitterest enemy, and their greatest foe."

"Then do you think it *wrong* to *shoot*, aunt?" eagerly demanded Henry, who, though a mere boy, was enthusiastically fond of the sport.

"Not actually *right*, my dear, certainly," replied Mrs. Manderville, "yet the same censure may be passed upon the greater part of country sports. *Fishing*, for example, is not only a *cruel*, but a *treacherous* amusement, for the unsuspecting little animal is allured under the pretence of a favourite regale. Suppose we were invited to a feast, and in the most luxurious dishes a deadly poison were concealed?"

"Oh! aunt, aunt!" exclaimed the amiable boy, "sure you do not place a *fish* upon an equality with a human being?"

"I do not mean to do so, but your impatience, my good fellow, would not permit me to conclude my remark. The book of holy writ—that most sacred oracle, tells us that beast, fish, and fowl, were created for the use of man; but it is the *abuse* of *blessings*, not the *use* of them, to which I allude. If we are entitled to deprive those creatures of existence which a bounteous Providence doubtless formed for that purpose, let humanity induce us to do it with the least pain we can inflict; and, to revert to *angling*, how frequently are those poor little animals found with hooks in their stomachs, which by accident came off, and conceive, for a moment, the torture they must have lived in, for hours, days, nay, perhaps, weeks. *Coursing*, again, is another

cruel amusement.—What would be your sensations if pursued by a mad bull? yet it is doubtful whether you would feel greater terror than the timid hare does. In justification, however, of your favourite amusement, *shooting*, I must acknowledge that the victims are not terrified by the apprehension of approaching danger, nor allured by a treacherous bait; for death overtakes them so suddenly that time is not allowed them to dread the stroke. That there is a kind of instinctive foreboding of dread, in the maternal bosom of this devoted part of the feathered creation, at the sight of a dog, has been proved by the observation of many sportsmen, who, with philosophic composure, have watched their anxious alarms."

"Where do partridges build their nests, aunt?" enquired Louisa.

"They have no *nests*, properly speaking, my love; they begin to pair early in the Spring, and in May they generally deposit their eggs in a hole in the earth, and after having laid from fourteen to eighteen, the hen sits upon them two and twenty days, when the young ones break their shell, and come out feathered like chickens, and like those birds are able to pick their food, which consists of corn, ants, and slugs. The parental solicitude of this devoted race is com-

pletely interesting to a feeling and reflecting mind; for the moment the old birds apprehend danger, they fly from the objects of their care, who as instantly huddle together, and appear to be waiting for their protectors' return: if these attached mothers have the good fortune to escape from the fowler, they return to their young by a circuitous route, when running along the furrows with a rapidity that proves their agitation, they arrive at the spot where their treasure had been left; when collecting them, they contrive to withdraw them to a place of greater safety, and by this change of situation frequently avoid the threatened death. Whilst the hen bird is thus occupied in maternal watchfulness, the cock, with feelings apparently no less sagaciously anxious, seems to be endeavouring to draw the sportsman's attention to himself, and frequently flies with a trepidated motion, as if he were wounded, only a few yards at a time; but when he thinks the brood are safe under their mother's protection, he takes a more rapid flight, and sits attentively listening to hear a call which directs him to her new retreat."

Though each of the young party had attentively listened to this interesting description of natural affection in little creatures unendowed with reasoning powers, yet Henry appeared particularly

thoughtful when Mrs. Manderville made a pause, and heaving a sigh which was evidently the effect of feeling, "Well, aunt," said he, "I am determined to spend all the money I had hoarded up to buy me a gun, although I have been above two years collecting it, and my mother assured me she should not object to my shooting with Sir George Hanbury when I was sixteen."

"And what has induced you to relinquish an amusement from which you had promised yourself so much pleasure?" enquired Mrs. Manderville.

"Can you think I should derive *pleasure* from it, ma'am, after what I have just heard?" said the amiable boy, in an impassioned accent, whilst his whole face was covered with a crimson hue.

"Ever *think* and *act thus*, my beloved boy," rejoined his respected monitress, pressing to her bosom the hand which he had passed through her arm.

At this moment they were joined by Mrs. Cranbourn, who with a party on a visit to her were taking their evening walk.

"Oh! my dear Mrs. Manderville," said that lady, "I have not seen you since I received a letter from my daughter, who, with her abominable wretch of a husband, are now at Carlisle; but, would you believe it, Madam? the creature

has the audacity to deny his father's being in trade! Although, my friend, here, Mr. Colville, informs me he made the very clothes he now wears."

"*Fact*, 'pon honour, ma'am," rejoined the conceited Mr. Colville, with an expressive shrug. "Strike me inelegant, if I ever heard any thing so atrociously shocking! a charming creature like Miss Cranbourn to have married a *taylor's son!*"

"There doubtless is something peculiarly mortifying in the idea of *unequal alliances*, sir," replied Mrs. Manderville; "yet, had Mr. Byfield been a man of probity, education, and sense, I doubt not but Mrs. Cranbourn would have overlooked the degrading circumstance of his father's being in trade; and indulged the hope that though he could not boast of hereditary honours, he might, in his profession, acquire a dignified name; but that he is destitute of the former noble quality is evident, or he would not have taught a lesson of *disobedience* to a mere child; and that his education had been neglected the frivolity of his conversation proved; however, he is very young, and it will be charitable to indulge the hope that both his mind and manners will improve. And, my dear madam," continued she, turning to Mrs.

Cranbourn, "I hope you will forgive an act that cannot be revoked."

This injudicious parent, however, who ought to have condemned her own *want* of precaution, vowed she would never again behold the undutiful girl; declaring she should never have a shilling of her property, if she even knew her to be in want.

This violent mode of expressing displeasure, was so totally new to Mrs. Manderville's young friends, that they alternately gazed upon each other, scarcely crediting the evidence of their ears, and, upon the party taking leave of each other, they could not avoid expressing their surprise.

"But only think of Mr. Byfield, aunt," said Louisa, "denying that he is a taylor's son! Surely he must be both a very wicked and undutiful young man; and if my papa had been a *cobler* I should not have wished to conceal his *trade*."

"I am persuaded you would not, my love; but you are to remember that Mr. Byfield is a very weak young man, and, in the profession which he has imprudently embraced, pride of origin makes a conspicuous figure; and, had it been known that his father was a taylor (to make use of a fashionable phrase), he might have been *quizzed*. Although in the metropo-

lis there are many men in that business who live in a very genteel style, and doubtless render themselves respectable members of society, perhaps even more so than those who are born in an elevated state. The conduct of Mr. Byfield, however, reminds me of two curious anecdotes which I met with in Sonntang's Russian Extracts, and, as they are not inapplicable to the present subject, I will endeavour to recollect them, conceiving that a moral lesson may be drawn from the relation.—

"Lieutenant-general Bohn was the son of a country clergyman, whose income was extremely confined. At an early period of life the general quitted the bosom of his family, and offered his services to Peter the Great. Merit, with that prince, required not the aid of court favour; Bohn distinguished himself in a subaltern state, and, by degrees, he arose to the rank of lieutenant-general, without any enquiries after his family connexions having been made. His pride, however, rose in proportion to his exaltation. His father, who had been long dead, was never named; and, though aware that his mother's circumstances must be embarrassed, yet he neither noticed her nor sent her the smallest supply. Maternal affection, however, was not abated by the want of filial attention; in vain

had Madame Bohn endeavoured to trace the pursuits of this ungrateful son, when, by accident, she heard he formed part of the suite of the emperor, who at that time was at Copenhagen. Eager to behold the being to whom she had given existence basking under the smiles of royalty, she converted her few household articles into money, wholly unmindful of bodily fatigue, and, reaching the capital of Denmark, easily discovered the abode of her son. Thither she flew on the wings of maternal fondness. The general was unfortunately from home—'Tell him,' said she to the adjutant, 'I am his *mother*, and will call again early to-morrow morning.'

"The appearance of the poor woman was emblematic of her poverty, and it is natural to suppose the adjutant, who happened to see her, did not gloss it over. Bohn, exasperated at the idea of having his humble origin known to an inferior officer, exclaimed, 'My *mother*, *indeed!* poor woman, she has been dead many years! it is some maniac, who has broken from a place of confinement: give her ten ducats, notwithstanding; but order her never to *molest me* again!'

'Oh the wretch!' exclaimed the attentive Henry, 'I hope she exposed his unnatural conduct to the king.'

"No; but when the adjutant offered her the money, she indignantly threw it upon the ground, saying, 'Tell the general, sir, I did not come to crave *alms* of *him*, but to embrace a long lost child! However, as he *disowns* and *despises* his *mother*, I from this moment will endeavour to banish his image from my heart. Nature, however, conquered her resentment, and as she made this declaration she burst into a flood of tears. The story soon got into circulation, and the czar not only reprimanded Bohn, but compelled him to allow her two hundred roubles a-year.

"I shall now adopt the practice of those judicious painters, who skilfully blend *light* with their *dark shades*, and relate my other anecdote, which is a complete contrast to the one you have just heard.—

"In the year 1712, when the Russian army was placed under Prince Menzikoff, the command of the cavalry was bestowed upon a general named *Borner*, who, like Bohn, had rose to that dignified station by his merit, and not any of his brother-officers were acquainted either with his family or his friends. The valor he had displayed in several engagements had obtained him the favour of his sovereign. That he had been a mere youth when he entered the army,

was universally known; but in what part of the empire he had been born, or whether his family were in elevated or humble situations, were circumstances which had never even *excited remark*; for so conciliating were his manners, and so unaspiring his demeanor, that he was universally beloved, respected, and admired. In the year I mentioned, the regiment he commanded was quartered near Husem. He one day requested all his brother-officers to dine in his tent, and sent his aid-du-camp to invite a neighbouring miller and his wife to become his guests.

"The worthy pair at first imagined it was a mere frolic of the young man's, but, upon his solemnly assuring them his general had declared he would not receive a denial, they began to fear they had accidentally offended this great man, and with hearts palpitating with apprehension, repaired to his tent. Borner easily perceived their embarrassment, and did every thing in his power to make them forget that *distinction* which *fortune* had *made*, and, by the condescending sweetness of his manners soon inspired his worthy guest, the miller, with as much confidence as if he had been associating with his equals in life. The moment the general observed that freedom of thought was restored to the breast of

his associate he began conversing upon his family affairs, enquired whether he had a large family, and how long he had rented the mill.

"*Rented!* please your excellency,' said the miller, 'the mill has been in our family many, many years; it became mine at the death of my father, because I happened to be the elder son. My two brothers are respectable tradesmen; my sister is married to one in the same business, and, thank God, we all do well.'

"So your father had *three sons*,' observed the general, interrupting him.

"No, please your honour's excellency,' replied the miller, 'there were *four*; but the *younger*,' continued he, with a sigh, 'enlisted in the army, and, as it pleased God, doubtless was killed; for we have not heard of him since he went to the wars.'

"You are surprised at my curiosity, doubtless, gentlemen,' said the general, addressing his brother-officers, 'and wonder why I should wish to know the particulars of this worthy man's family; but as you were unacquainted with *my history*, allow me to inform you that it has just been told; in that *mill* was I born—this honest man is my brother, and *I* am the being he has long supposed dead.' Then ten-

derly embracing his brother, like Joseph, he wept upon his neck.

"On the following day he invited all the party to dine with him at the *mill*; to each of his relations he made some valuable present, and sent the miller's only son to be educated at Berlin, who did honour to the fostering care of his uncle, and became not only a *good*, but a *great* man."

These anecdotes afforded subject for conversation until the damps of evening warned Mrs. Manderville of the necessity of returning to the cottage; and Eliza observing the ascending vapours, which floated in the atmosphere, requested her aunt to look at the thickness of the fog.

"I perceive the *dew* rising very rapidly, my dear Eliza," said Mrs. Manderville, "and but for its nurturing quality, the earth would present a decaying picture to our sight, for, if I am right in my calculation, six weeks are elapsed since it has been refreshed with a shower of rain. Yet *fog* and *dew* are produced from different causes; the one is a condensity of the atmosphere around us, or rather of those exhalations, which, from the want of wind to disperse them, float in the air, and seem to cling about us like a wet sheet. This accounts for foggy weather

being unfavourable to the constitution, for those vapours which naturally arise from stagnate pools and putrid bodies, instead of ascending to any height, remain suspended in the air at so short a distance that we draw in their noxious qualities every time we breathe. November is the month when fogs generally are most prevalent; for, as the cold increases, the air becomes more rarefied, and of course, these vapours meet with no obstacles in their ascension, but rise until they seem to mix with their kindred skies. To the refreshing power of the dew every blade of grass bears witness! *Trees*, *shrubs*, and *flowers*, display its vivifying influence. It is produced by the attractive power of the sun upon those immense bodies of water, which are dispersed over the different parts of the globe.'

"Yet I do not quite understand, aunt," said Eliza, "how the sun can draw water out of the rivers or wells: for, if so, I should think it would fall down again in rain, or else quench the sun's heat."

At this natural, though childish, observation, both Louisa and young Benson smiled.

"What is there to laugh at, cousin?" enquired Eliza, "for my aunt always desires me to ask her any questions I please."

"I always receive pleasure from giving you information," replied Mrs. Manderville, "and I will endeavour to explain in what way the sun acts. If your clothes were drenched in rain, and you stood before a large fire, would you not perceive a vapour, or smoke, as it would vulgarly be termed, issue from them, and if this vapour were collected into a receiver, a certain quantity of water would be produced."

"Oh! I understand it now, aunt," exclaimed Eliza, "I have often seen a horse full of wet clothes smoke."

"But you never perceived the fire to be quenched by those vapours," said Mrs. Manderville.

"Because," rejoined Eliza, "they were not near enough."

"Neither are those vapours which are sucked up from the earth and waters, sufficiently near that luminary, the sun; do you comprehend the similarity, my dear?" enquired Eliza's instructive companion.

"Oh! yes," she replied, "I do indeed, ma'am."

"When the sun is at its height, the dew, of course, is not perceptible," continued Mrs. Manderville, "but as it declines this nurturing vapour falls; and we behold its crystaline drops

refreshing the vegetable creation, and, like so many beautiful pearls, hanging upon the trees and flowers."

"I wish I were as *wise* as *you are*, Mrs. Manderville," said Edward Benson, who had attentively listened to the preceding discourse.

That amiable woman smiled at the observation, saying she trusted in a few years he would be much *wiser*.

Upon reaching home, Mrs. Manderville found a letter from her friends at Roe-buck Park, informing her that as Emily was confined with the measles, they thought the intended visit had better be deferred until next month, as Mrs. Lainsborough recollected that neither Louisa nor Eliza had had that disease. This was a great disappointment to both these young ladies, as Mrs. Manderville had intended to pay her visit immediately after Henry went to school; but as it was only a delay of the intended pleasure, they enjoyed the anticipated satisfaction of seeing their young favourite early in the ensuing month. A servant at this moment arrived from the farmer, to inform the young people the harvest-home would be on the following night, and requested Mrs. Manderville would allow them to come early, for the purpose of seeing the last load carried out of the field.

Ever anxious to contribute to the happiness of those with whom she was connected, Mrs. Manderville expressed an intention of dining at an early hour, and at four o'clock on the following day the happy party were all assembled in Mr. Hawkins's last mown field : an old blind fiddler, who regularly attended all the harvest-homes in the neighbourhood, was at that moment entering the field, conducted thither by a child about five years of age.

This poor old man no sooner heard the sound of Louisa's voice, than he exclaimed, "God Almighty bless ye, my dear young lady, be ye come for to dance a Scotch reel? Shall I play Jemmy Gordon? or will ye please to have the Athol Jig?" and at the same moment, tuning his fiddle, he joyously began to sing. The merry gestures of the old man completely delighted his young companions; the labourers instantly stuck their forks in the ground, each alternately intreating him to play them some favourite tune.

"Come, come, my old boy," said the farmer, approaching the indolent circle, "none of your *hum-strums* till the last cart; then you may fiddle away till to-morrow morning, or night, if you have a mind."

Roused to exertion by this observation, the delighted group returned to their different em-

ployments, and when the clock struck six, the air resounded with *heeky, hawky! harvest-home!* The cart which conveyed the last load was adorned with oak branches—the old fiddler was hoisted upon it, surrounded by the younger part of the labourers with bows of riband, and oak leaves stuck in their hats.

Mrs. Hawkins had long waited tea for the *young gentlefolks,* as she styled her delighted guests; and different plates of hot cakes were smoking upon the table, with two glass jugs filled with the most luxuriant cream. As the anticipated pleasure of the *hawky* had taken away their appetites at dinner, they did ample justice both to the tea and cakes; and scarcely was the repast ended, when the labourers came flocking to receive the reward of their toil. This commenced with a hot plum-bun, and a large mug of October; and the wives of those who lived in the neighbourhood received the same; when the fiddler, having partaken of a similar refreshment, desired his little grandson to lead him to the green, where he was soon followed by the happy circle, who danced until eight o'clock, when a summons from the mistress of the mansion informed them their hospitable supper was ready prepared.

In a large hall, which would have held near

a hundred persons, a long table was spread for twenty-nine; the party consisting of the neighbouring farmers and their wives; and in the kitchen a much larger number were assembled, who were amply regaled with plum-puddings and roast beef. The table in the hall might actually be said to *groan* under the weight of victuals; there were fowls, ducks, hams, and tongues, with a sirloin of beef of so large a dimension that two females were obliged to carry the dish. Puddings, pies, and cheesecakes of every description likewise decorated the board; in short, a Lord Mayor's feast admitted of the same comparison that a capon does to a lark. The curate of the parish, a most facetious gentleman, enlivened the company by a variety of good-humoured tales and remarks; and when two enormous bowls of punch were placed upon the table, he proposed that each of the party should sing a song; adding, that as he had made one upon the occasion, he would set an example to the rest; then making two or three laughable observations between himself and the fiddler, he began the following song, which he entitled

THE HARVEST HOME.

Ceres crowns your toil with pleasure;
See, her golden tresses wave;
But, whilst Plenty smiles around us,
Let us not forget *Who gave.*

Grateful let our hearts be glowing,
For the blessings Harvest spreads;
View the barns all stor'd with treasures,
See the loaded ricks and sheds!

Mirth and frolic be our motto;
Farmer Hawkins, here's your health;
May the wheat, the rye, and barley,
Prove to you a mine of wealth.

Well I know your honest nature,
Well I know your feeling heart;
Plenty is to you a blessing,
For the poor will share a part.

And your wife too—health be to her,
May she reach threescore and ten;
Never was a better woman;
Where's my clerk to say amen?

Here's a health to all the party;
Pass the can, my lads, about;
But the man who dares get tipsey,
Shall directly be turn'd out.

This appropriate specimen of the curate's poetic abilities was universally admired; and the honest farmer declared he would rather hear one song of the parson's than fifty such *squallers* as the *Lunnun* folks admired.

So completely were the young party charmed with the novelty of their evening amusements, that they were totally unmindful of the lateness of the hour, and had not Stephen (who had

been invited to join the kitchen groupe) informed them it was near eleven, they, in all probability, would have staid until a new day arose.

The departure of Henry and his friend was sensibly felt both by his sister and cousin, though from the more regular renewal of their daily studies, they had but little time to reflect upon their loss; and little Manderville, who, for the last six weeks, had been rather neglected, soon regained the first place in his attached sister's heart. The calendar, however, had long been suspended; Eliza had even omitted to note down the characteristics of the preceding month, but by the aid of her cousin's memory she was enabled to make a memorandum of the information she had received from her aunt, and soon afterwards took an opportunity of asking what were the distinguishing marks of September; observing, that as the harvest was gathered in, Farmer Hawkins would be quite a gentleman, and not have any thing to do.

"Farmers are never *idle*, my dear," said Mrs. Manderville; "a small portion of the different crops will immediately be threshed out, for the purpose of taking to market as a specimen of their worth. The plough, likewise, will soon again be in motion, to prepare the fields for a fresh supply of grain; and at the

latter end of this month, or the beginning of October, they will commence sowing again. In those parts of England where saffron is cultivated (which is chiefly in Essex and Cambridgeshire) they now begin to pick and prepare it for medicinal purposes. Saffron, I suppose you know, is a species of the crocus. The saffron grounds require a great deal of manure; they are planted in July, and about September the flowers are in a proper state for being gathered, as they are not suffered to expand entirely, but are picked just as the leaves begin to unfold. The stamens or chives, which are within the leaves of the flower, are carefully picked out and collected together, and then dried in square cakes. The saffron and the ivy are the only flowers which now strike me as coming into bloom this month, but I need not observe to you that the orchards now make an inviting appearance; though it is only in southern aspects that the apples can be called completely ripe, yet in the cider counties they generally gather them this month. Those who understand the management of bees, now find it necessary to lessen the entrance of the hive, to prevent the wasps from making depredations upon their property, which would otherwise be the case. On the eastern and western coasts of this island the

fisherman's harvest now begins, for the herrings, the most numerous inhabitants of the briny ocean, arrive in large shoals. The herring fishery makes a principal article in commerce, and the propagation of them so far exceeds imagination and belief, that if I were to describe their immense numbers to a person ignorant of the fact, they would pay no more attention to my account than they would to a fairy tale. I will merely say that they arrive from the northern countries in such immense bodies, that even the appearance of the ocean is changed."

"I was in Herefordshire, you know, aunt," said Louisa, "last September, and all the apples for cider were gathered whilst I was there."

"I do not doubt it, my dear," replied Mrs. Manderville, "because they do not let them hang to be completely ripe, for they are always laid together in large heaps to ripen before they are taken to the mill."

"What! do they make *flour* of apples?" exclaimed the unreflecting Eliza.

"I am rejoiced no stranger heard you make such a ridiculous enquiry: let me intreat you never to speak without reflecting, or you will be thought an absolute idiot, my dear child," replied Mrs. Manderville, scarcely able to repress a smile.

"The apples are sent to a mill, Eliza, for the purpose of expressing the juice from the fruit more completely than manual exertion, or any machine could do; for I suppose you know that cider is the juice of apples, mixed with a certain portion of water, and perry the juice of pears.

"Towards the end of this month, the chimney, or common swallow, takes its departure towards the Spanish coast, for immense flights of them have been observed crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, though doubtless some few remain behind. These shelter their tender bodies from the inclemency of the weather by creeping into crevices and holes, where they remain in a kind of torpid insensibility, unless roused into action by an accidental warm day; when they will come out in search of food, but regularly return again to their hiding place before the sun goes down. Several others of what are termed the soft-billed birds, likewise migrate about the same period; whilst some of a different species return to us from the more northern countries, such as the fieldfare and red-wing; the ring-ouzle, also, a native of Wales and Scotland, visits us about this time, attracted, as it seems, by the numerous berries with which our hedges are stored. The woodlark, the thrush, and the blackbird, again enchant us with their autumnal notes;

the wood-owl begins to hoot, and the stone-curlew to clamour as regularly as the season returns.

"The oak, that king of trees, now begins to shed its acorns, which in forests affords a rich repast for the swine; the common snake now casts its skin, and leaves its whole envelope either amongst the weeds or high grass, without break or crack in it, yet is as totally divested of its covering as an eel that has just been skinned.

"On the twenty-second of this month is the autumnal equinox; when, as in the vernal one, the days and nights are of an equal length; this equal division is occasioned by the sun's arriving at one of the equinoctial points; but this, I know, is like talking algebra to Eliza, though I hope next year she will perfectly comprehend what I mean; but allow me to ask you, my dear Louisa, whether you recollect the regular passage of the sun through the zodiac, and what sign it enters on the twenty-third of this month?" Louisa, after pausing a few moments, replied she believed she could recollect them all, and immediately repeated the following table to her aunt:—

The Sun enters Aries, or the Ram .	Mar. 20.
Taurus, or the Bull	April 19.
Gemini, or the Twins . . .	May 21.
Cancer, or the Crab	June 22.
Leo, or the Lion	July 23.
Virgo, or the Virgin . .	Aug. 23.
Libra, or the Balance . .	Sep. 23.
Scorpio, or the Scorpion . .	Oct. 23.
Sagittarius, or the Archer . .	Nov. 22.
Capricornus, or the Wild Goat .	Dec. 22.
Aquarius, or the Waterer . .	Jan. 19.
Pisces, or the Fishes	Feb. 18.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENH.

OCTOBER.

NOT any thing particular occurred to the young party at the Cottage, until nearly the middle of October, when Mrs. Manderville made her intended visit to the family at Roe-buck Park. Though that lady had previously determined to wean her little nephew when she paid this visit, and Mrs. Lainsborough had engaged a niece of Betty Dawson's to supply the place of the wet-

nurse, yet as the child had been unwell, she altered her intention, and determined not to wean him until her return from the Park.

This artful wet-nurse had by accident been made acquainted with her mistress's intention, and in consequence of it, took an inveterate dislike to the Dawsons, and in the malignity of her heart resolved, if possible, to prevent the worthy Betty's niece from supplying her place. Mrs. Manderville had even observed that during the Lainsboroughs' visit to the Cottage, nurse seemed to have taken an antipathy to the once sightless child, for if ever she attempted to caress the infant, she always contrived to make him cry, and then declared the poor girl had hurt him, at the same time protesting he should not be kissed.

About a week after the family's arrival at Mr. Lainsborough's, several little articles were missed, such as a silver fruit-knife, a gold thimble, &c. As all the servants had been long residents in the family, suspicion fell upon little Manderville's *nurse*, who, either from listening to the conversation, or fancying herself suspected, requested that the boxes of every person might be examined. The domestics, one and all, readily agreed to this proposal, and nurse was even thanked for the sagacity of the thought. Each wil-

lingly opened their different boxes, but, alas! the lost sheep was not to be found.

"But Betsey's box has not been opened, madam," said the artful creature.

"The poor dear child! surely no suspicion can fall upon her," observed Mrs. Lainsborough, embracing her at the same time with maternal affection, and declaring her to be the best of girls.

"Oh do pray look in *my* box, ma'am," said the artless child, mortified by the insinuation of the nurse, and offering the key to Mrs. Lainsborough, who reluctantly turned the lock, and putting her hand down to the bottom produced the *golden thimble*.

"Oh dear! dear! dear! what will become of me?" exclaimed the terrified girl. "Pray, dear ma'am, pray do believe me; for indeed, and indeed, I never put it into my box."

"*Who* should put it in, you little thief?" enquired the malicious woman, with a satanic grin.

"I will suffer no language of that kind in my presence," said Mrs. Lainsborough, at the same time emptying the box of its contents, when all the articles which had been missing were discovered, accompanied by a small silver nutmeg case.

"*That is mine*," exclaimed the nurse, grasping at it; "I lost this, madam, when you was at

my mistress's house; and, God forgive me, I blamed one of my fellow-servants, until I heard of the many things your ladyship had lost, and then, some how, it came across me that little hussey had *stolen them*, which made me beg of you to look into every box."

At this unexpected discovery the whole house was put into confusion: yet even the servants all declared they believed there was some foul play; and the innocent child who had been accused so wrongfully, was actually ready to expire with terror and grief. Mr. L. happened to be from home at the time of this discovery: Mrs. Lainsborough therefore resolved not to take any measures to fathom the truth until his return, as he was expected home at the dinner hour. The moment he heard the story, he asked Mrs. Manderville whether she did not think the child sufficiently recovered to bear the loss of the breast; and upon being answered in the affirmative, he summoned the nurse into his library, and contracting his features into the severity of an enraged magistrate, he said, "I suppose you know that I am a justice of the peace."

"Oh! yes, please your honor," replied the undaunted creature.

"Then I think it necessary to tell you, that

I shall commit you to gaol, not only for a *robbery*, but for the greatest act of treachery I ever heard of in my life. I perceive your drift, and am no stranger to the motive which induced you to possess yourself of that innocent child's key." Then perceiving her ready to make some false protestation, he exclaimed in indignation, "I will not hear a word—unless indeed, by a confession of your iniquity, you spare yourself from encountering the horrors of a gaol."

Appalled by a threat of which she dreaded to see the momentary execution, the terrified creature dropped upon her knees, and acknowledged her crime, but declared it proceeded from her strong attachment to the child, whom she wished to continue the care of, after it was weaned; adding that she thought if she could impress her mistress's mind with the idea of the Dawsons being a *dishonest* family, that she would not take the young woman she had hired.

I shall not take up the time of my young readers by relating the observations Mr. L. made upon the aggravated circumstances attached to the crime, but merely say, the vile woman was instantly discharged; poor Betsey tenderly caressed by all the family, and her cousin destined to fill the place of the worthless nurse.

One circumstance, however, I must not omit mentioning, as it proves the high sense of rectitude which persons in the most humble state of life often feel. The news of the robbery had spread throughout the village, and poor Betsey Dawson was proclaimed the *thief*. Her mother heard the distressing news, and flew to the Park in a state of distraction, shocked at the bare idea of having given birth to such an unprincipled child. Pale, and almost breathless, she rushed into Mrs. Lainsborough's dressing-room, when throwing herself upon her knees, she exclaimed, "Oh! in mercy, madam, spare the ungrateful creature! though well do I know she deserves sending to gaol. *Honesty*, madam, has always been the portion of the Dawsons, for generation and generation past; and I never shall be able to kold up my head again, if his *honour's worship* goes for to send the poor child to gaol, for a child she is, please your ladyship; but don't think I *means* to say so by way of excuse; and though it's a matter of two years since I laid finger upon her, yet I believe I shall break every bone in her skin when I gets her home: Oh dear! Oh dear! to think that a *child* of *mine* should have brought such disgrace upon me: indeed, indeed, madam, I believe my poor heart will burst!"

This affecting proof of maternal anguish was expressed in a voice almost choked by grief, yet with such exquisite feeling, and with so much genuine sensibility, that Mrs. Lainsborough did not attempt to interrupt the poor creature until she came to the close of her speech; when gazing upon her with a mixture of sympathy and admiration, she said, "my dear good woman, pray arise, and comfort yourself with the certainty of your child's not even being *suspected* of *disgracing* her *name*. The Dawsons, as you observe, have always been *respectable*, even in poverty, but your daughter's amiable qualities have procured her friends capable of raising her from the humble state to which she was born, and who, if she continues to behave in the manner she has done hitherto, will enable her to prove the duty and affection she owes to the worthy people who gave her birth."

"The Lord be good unto me!" ejaculated the astonished Betty Dawson, clasping her hands, and suddenly rising from her knees, "Why I hardly *knows* whether I am in my seven senses; for Jenny Mortlock, not half an hour ago, said *as how* she was this morning at the Park, and that the *sarvants* had told her, madam, that a parcel of fine *gold* and *silver*

things had been lost, and that *so* his worship's honor said there should be a *scrutney* for them, and *so* they *was all found* in my child's trunk—yet now, madam, you say *as how* the poor thing *war'n't suspected even*, and talks about her being a *comfort* to *us*; so do pray, good, my lady, tell me the rights of this wicked report; for be it *true* or false, I can't help fearing my poor dear child will be *thought* a *thief*."

In as concise a manner as possible, Mrs. Lainsborough explained the circumstance; when the poor woman's expressions of joy were even more affecting than those of grief; and upon the child's accidentally coming into the room without knowing her mother was present, she flew towards her, and caught her round the neck, exclaiming, "Oh! my dear, dear girl! God Almighty forgive me for praying to him to take you out of this wicked world; for, my child, I had heard you robbed your worthy mistress, and had it been true, I am *sartin* it would have broke my poor heart; for you know it was never said that any of the Dawsons ever was guilty of a *dishonest action* in their whole lives."

All the young people happened to be present at this affecting interview, and the emotion it excited drew tears from their eyes. It was a scene which afforded ample scope to the

amiable Mrs. Manderville to expatiate upon the enormity of vice; and to point out the *admiration* excited by virtuous principles in those persons who have not enjoyed the advantage of cultivated minds. She drew an interesting contrast between the wet-nurse and Betty Dawson; and represented *envy* and *selfishness* as the foundation of many crimes; the former passion had induced that wicked woman to endeavour to injure the Dawsons in her mistress's opinion, whilst the latter principle made her form the iniquitous plan, under the hope of retaining a comfortable place.

After passing near a fortnight with the respectable Mr. and Mrs. Lainsborough, Mrs. Manderville and her young companions returned to the Cottage. The weather proved peculiarly adapted for travelling, and the country was strikingly beautiful, from the richness of the autumnal tints. Roe-buck Park was not only surrounded with romantic scenery, but part of it might be called majestically sublime, for the hand of art had hollowed a high hill with so much ingenuity, as to give it the appearance of an excavated rock, at the bottom of which flowed a beautiful serpentine river, which in parts of the road was concealed by the thick foliage of a wood, sometimes presenting itself to the de-

lighted eye of the travellers, and at others buried under the umbrageous shades of the spreading oak. Scenes like these were not likely to be passed with indifference by a being whose mind was so replete with devotional thoughts; and, as the young people expressed their admiration of the surrounding prospects, Mrs. Manderville directed their ideas towards the Great Creator of the world, whose forming hand had produced order out of irregularity; and at whose command valleys became fruitful, and majestic mountains arose, whilst rivers flowed in dry places, at once to fertilize and beautify the ground.

Whilst conversing upon the beauties of nature, and admiring the works of nature's God, the travellers felt not the slightest fatigue from their journey; but, as the horses did not seem to be in the same situation, Mrs. Manderville determined to sleep on the road; fulfilling an observation of Solomon's, that "A merciful man sheweth kindness unto his beasts."

Though it would not be proper to say they awoke with the *lark* at that *season*, yet our travellers commenced their journey at an early hour. The morning was peculiarly beautiful, and the spangled dew-drops hung upon every rising blade of grass; but the gossamer, which seemed to float in the air, attracted Eliza's at-

tention, and, as the carriage drove on rapidly, she exclaimed, "Aunt, what can it be? for as we pass the hedges, nets appear to be hanging from them of the *finest gauze!* Oh, beautifully fine! and so delicate, that I think they would hardly bear to be touched!"

"And you think right, my dear," replied Mrs. Manderville, "for they are woven with such exquisite art, that the softest touch would injure, if not destroy, them."

To the art of *weaving* Eliza was no stranger, and she innocently enquired for what pursose the weavers could spin it so *very fine?*

"They are very young hands at the business," replied her aunt, smiling, "and they spin those very fine materials for the purpose of conducting themselves from place to place."

"Now I know you are joking; but pray tell me seriously all about it," said the curious Eliza.

"Well, then, seriously, my love, the weavers are young spiders: I need not tell you that the whole race are endowed with a kind of liquid matter in their bodies, which they shoot out, and, as you must have seen frequently, form into webs; over which they can run to any distance, that the threads, or web, extends. As the spiders increase in age, that matter which exudes from their bodies acquires a greater con-

sistency, and is capable of being spun into a thick cobweb; but what issues from the younger part of the species is termed *gossamer*, and is that which you have perceived floating upon the different hedges we have passed. In this month it is generally more perceptible than at any other time of the year; for the winds, occasioned by the equinox, are now abated, and if the weather were boisterous, the workmanship of these little artisans would be destroyed, as it is so delicately formed as not only to be incapable of resisting the touch of the finger, but every rough blast of wind."

Louisa observed she thought it astonishing her mamma, who was such an admirer of industry, should be displeased with the servants if she saw cobwebs in any room.

"Do you think the festoon of a spider, then, an ornament to an apartment?" enquired Mrs. Manderville.

"No, indeed I do not, aunt; but my mamma has frequently desired me to take example from the industry of the *busy bee*, and I think the spider seems as industrious an insect, and I should not like to have its labour destroyed."

"The spider, you are to recollect," replied her aunt, "toils from a *treacherous motive*; those webs are not only spread for the purpose

of a platform for them to run upon from place to place; but are so many *snares* spread for the destruction of the different species of flies which form the favourite food of the artful ensnarer; but you must read Doctor Goldsmith's History of this destructive tribe, or Mrs. Pilkington's abridgment of that excellent publication, from which you will discover that, by comparing a *bee* to a *spider*, you injure the former very much, whose laborious exertions prove beneficial to mankind."

The conversation having taken an improving turn, Eliza enquired whether the farmers were very busy this month; and was informed that these who had extensive lands to cultivate could not have got in all their crops, where the plough and the seedsman were busily occupied. That the domestic employment of *brewing* demanded both the farmer's and his wife's attention, as the best keeping ale was always manufactured this month; and that those who were fond of *home-made* wine were now busily occupied in picking and preparing the grapes; which, though in this country never arrive to a high state of perfection, yet were capable of being made into a very pleasant beverage.

"The bee-hives are likewise now despoiled of their treasures," continued Mrs. Manderville,

" for, as very few flowers remain in bloom, the little industrious tribe would otherwise live upon their labours instead of being devoted to the use of man. From the ground being peculiarly favourable for *hunting*, October has acquired the name of the *Hunter's* Month; for the fields, you know, have been recently stripped of their sustaining treasures, and the new-sown corn has not began to shoot; therefore, those who are fond of that recreation, can enjoy it without the fear of doing injury to the industrious farmer. On the first of this month (by an act of parliament), those who gain a livelihood by the sale of *wild-fowl*, are likewise permitted to reassume an employment which they were obliged to suspend for some time; and on that day again open their extensive *decoys*."

"What is a *decoy*, aunt?" enquired Louisa, who was unacquainted with the meaning of the term.

" A decoy, my love, is generally formed in a pond that is surrounded by willows and other kinds of marshy wood; the complete explanation of a decoy you will likewise find in Goldsmith's Natural History; but, as I observed, it is an invention for the purpose of ensnaring every species of wild-fowl. In the original contrivance there doubtless was much ingenuity; pipes or narrow ditches are formed in the pond, each of

which terminates in a large net. The decoy-man carefully conceals his person in the reeds, or wood which envelopes the pond, and, knowing that the wild-fowl regularly alight in search of food about the time that evening closes, he throws handfuls of hempseed into these pipes, which soon attracts immense numbers of wild-ducks, teals, and wigeons, that were previously flying near the spot. The most curious part of the business, however, is that of training ducks for the purpose of decoying the unsuspicious birds; and, by a certain noise they always make upon discovering a spot stored with provision, they conduct the deluded wanderers into the net; or, if they are once got within the pipe, they are driven forward by the equally-tutored yelping of a little dog. Lincolnshire is the part of England most famous for these decoys; there are some in Cambridgeshire, likewise; and from ten only, in the former county, thirty-one thousand two hundred ducks, teals, and wigeons have been sent to the London markets in one season."

Eliza, whose fondness for fruit sometimes led her to eat more than her aunt approved, observed, with a sigh, that her palate was not likely to be regaled for many months; "But though I shall not want food," said she, "I

often wonder how the little birds contrive to live."

"Their beneficent Creator," replied Mrs. Manderville, "has not, as you may observe, been unmindful of their wants; for there are hips, haws, sloes, blackberries, &c. in abundance dropping from the hedges, and, as it were, inviting them to eat; and many of these berries are of so hardy a nature as not to be injured by the severest cold. At the present period the feathered tribes live almost as luxuriantly as they do in the summer months, for the fruit of the elder tree has not all been gathered, and it is known to be a very favourite food. Speaking of birds, I must just observe that the common martin, which forms its nest under the eaves of houses, generally takes its departure about this time of the year; and is followed by the sand-martin, which I formerly observed is the smallest of the swallow tribe. The royston, or hooded owl, which breeds in Scotland, and other northern regions, migrates to a more southern climate as soon as the cold sets in. These, however, are very unwelcome intruders, as they are nearly as destructive to the smaller birds as the hawk and the raven; and it has even been asserted that they will kill and devour young lambs. A few straggling woodcocks are gene-

rally seen on our eastern coasts in October, though they do not arrive in any numbers until the next and the following month; but wild fowl of every description now begin to be abundant; geese, in particular, find their way to the fenny lands, and do the farmer a great deal of mischief by devouring the young blades of rye.'"

The white chimneys of Mrs. Manderville's elegant retreat now caught the eyes of her young companions, who, though they had passed their time so happily at Mrs. Lainsborough's, exclaimed, "Oh there is our *dear home!*"

"May you always view home with the same pleasurable sensations," my dear children, replied their respectable relation, tenderly embracing each.

Crack went the postillion's whip—the carriage whirled up to the door with increased rapidity—joy sparkled in Louisa's eyes, for Mrs. Danvers had unexpectedly settled the business which had occasioned her long absence, and had flown to the door upon hearing the sound of the carriage wheels; and my young readers may judge of the delight Louisa must have experienced from such an unexpected event.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

NOVEMBER.

THOUGH November had commenced with more than its accustomed gloominess, from an alternate succession of misty rains and fogs, yet the inhabitants of the cottage felt not its depressing influence, for cheerfulness and good-humour presided at Mrs. Manderville's hospitable board; and, as the party were no longer able to enjoy the pleasures of the country, they amused themselves by music, drawing, and a variety of tasteful works. The work of charity at no season of the year was ever omitted, but practised by Mrs. Manderville with increased ardour, as the winter approached. The hungry were fed—the sick visited, and the naked clothed. This clothing afforded no small degree of gratification to the young ladies, who, fancying themselves rather too old to dress dolls, were delighted with the employment of making frocks for the poor children whose parents resided in the neighbourhood; as it had for many years been a practice with Mrs. Manderville to make presents of that

description upon Christmas day. In this kind of work Louisa had long been a practitioner; for, though her mamma's income would not admit of her being so liberal as Mrs. Manderville, yet she had generously bought two or three sets of child-bed linen, for the purpose of lending to those poor people who were not able to buy a sufficient number for themselves, and the greater part of this linen had been made by Miss Danvers. Eliza, therefore, acted as assistant to her cousin in this benevolent employ, and each worked with as much earnestness and assiduity as if their existence depended upon what they earned. Impatiently did they look forward to the arrival of Christmas, for the pleasure of distributing their work, although their aunt would not suffer their zeal in the cause of benevolence to interfere with their accustomed tasks.

Eliza's fondness for *reading* increased daily; and the improvement she made in the different branches of education even exceeded her aunt's hopes; and, ignorant as she was when she came to the cottage, yet every friend of Mrs. Manderville's now pronounced her an uncommon clever girl. Her father, with whom she regularly corresponded, was so much delighted with the elegant and unstudied style in which she wrote,

that he not only replied to her letters with the greatest punctuality, but as constantly sent her some present as a testimony of his approbation and regard; neither was he unmindful of Louisa, to whose example he in great measure attributed the wonderful improvement his daughter had made.

As the month of November advanced, the weather became more favourable; the western winds were succeeded by those from the opposite point; walking again became practicable, and Farmer Hawkins and his respectable wife were not forgot. Three weeks, however, had produced a surprising change in the surrounding prospect; the walnut-trees were nearly dismantled of every leaf; and but few remained upon the mulberry, the horse-chesnut, sycamore, ash and lime. The elm, the beech, and the oak, still retained a greater portion of their fading beauties, and seemed to vie with the apple and peach trees, which are sometimes known to preserve an appearance of verdure, even in December.

The farm-yard at Mr. Hawkins's presented a more animated picture than it had done in the summer time; for the cattle were driven from the fields, and preserved from the inclemency of the weather by a comfortable bed of straw near two feet deep.

The plaintive notes of the wood-pigeon, or stock-dove, caught the young people's attention as they were walking to the farm, and they were informed by their intelligent relation, that those birds of passage generally returned about the latter end of the month.

As they entered the farm-yard they were met by Mr. Hawkins, who was giving orders to his men to grease the ploughs, and put them by in a place of safety; "For, madam," said he, addressing himself to Mrs. Manderville, "I shall not want them again for several months: and safe *bind*, safe *find*, you know, that is my maxim."

"And a very good one it is," replied Mrs. M. "but you have finished ploughing, Mr. Hawkins, sooner than many of your neighbours, as I saw several at work in the different fields through which we passed."

"Why some of my neighbours, madam," rejoined the industrious farmer, "thinks more about *pleasuring* than making the *pot boil*; and whilst they go out a hunting with their *betters*, it can't be expected their men will work very hard; but every one has a right to follow their own inclination, that's for *sartin*; and, for my part, I have more pleasure in looking *arter* my men than in riding *arter* a poor frighted beast, and,

as I may say, running the risk of breaking every bone in my skin. But pray, madam, walk in, my dame will be heartily glad to see ye; for 'tis a mortal long time since you was at the farm; our Joe is just gone to your house with a bit of a present, that's *com'd* all the way out of Wales, and as my wife said *as how* it was a kind of a rarety, she thought you would not be offended if she sent it to you."

The farmer's wife, seeing her husband in conversation with Mrs. Manderville, at this instant joined the groupe, observing that she had a brother engaged in the salmon fishery; "And I need not tell you, madam," said she, "it begins this month, and he always makes a point of sending us one of the first that are caught; half of which I have taken the liberty of sending Joe with to your house."

At the mention of the salmon fishery Eliza's curiosity was excited, and she intreated her aunt to inform her in what manner they were caught.

"Salmon," replied Mrs. Manderville, "though resident in the briny ocean, always come to the mouth of some large river which is connected with it, for the purpose of depositing their spawn; and the *shad*, the *smelt*, and the *flounder*, adopt a similar plan. The fatigue and exertion a salmon undergoes

upon these occasions is *wonderful*; there is no danger or difficulty which they will not surmount; and they have been seen to work up their passage to rivers not less than five hundred miles from the sea. These labours are doubtless undertaken for the better security of their progeny: and, as the bed of the rivers in which they intend to deposit their spawn, are always lower than the body of the sea, they extend their bodies in a straight line, and, with astonishing courage and rapidity, suddenly take an advantageous leap. As the fishermen are acquainted with the time of these periodical visitants, they either place baskets to receive them, or extend nets; there are several of these *salmon leaps* (as they are called) in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, though a small number in proportion are caught in the Thames."

"Well to be sure, madam, as my husband says, it is a pleasure for to hear you talk; for one gains more knowledge in listening to you, than from all the books I ever read in my life."

"Your domestic concerns, my good neighbour," replied Mrs. Manderville, "require too much attention to allow you much time for reading; but it would be a shame if I, who have so much more leisure, did not endeavour to improve my mind; besides, I have a double plea-

sure in doing it, as the knowledge I have acquired will, I trust, prove beneficial to these dear girls."

"Aye, I warrant it will, madam," rejoined Mrs. Hawkins, "and God Almighty grant they may become as *good women* as their *aunt*; though one might walk a good many miles to find such another lady as you be, madam."

"You will make me *vain*, if you talk in this manner; and I have an aversion to vanity in *young* people, but I think it insufferable in *old*," said Mrs. Manderville, smiling, and tapping her partial friend upon the arm.

The unfortunate boy, who had excited Eliza's risible faculties upon her first visit to the farm, now made his appearance, but not the slightest trace of a smile was to be seen upon her face; on the contrary, so far from appearing to think his calamity a fit subject for ridicule, she immediately offered him a piece of cake she had just received, which the poor fellow snatched out of her hand with great eagerness, saying, "Now I will love you, that's what I will."

"Oh, Richard, you ought not to take the young lady's cake," said his kind protectress.

"I takes what she gives me," replied the unfortunate Richard, "and *nation* good it is; let's fry a bit, Miss," continued he, laughing,

seizing a slice from the plate and throwing it into the fire; when, seeing his uncle enter the apartment, he appeared terrified, and, pointing to Eliza, said, "*Miss threw it in.*"

"Take care I do not throw you in after it, Dick, for telling me an *untruth*," said the humane Mr. Hawkins, casting a sympathizing look at the poor boy, who, though deprived of reason, evidently knew he had acted wrong. Then, directing his discourse to Mrs. Manderville, he observed it was necessary to keep the ill-fated lad under some controul, as he had such a propensity for *burning* every thing, that, was it not from the dread of punishment, every article in the house would be consumed.

Poor Richard's calamity afforded a subject for conversation until the party had nearly reached home; and Mrs. Manderville reminded her nieces of the gratitude they ought to feel towards their Creator, for having preserved them from an evil so greatly to be deplored; yet, which was too often beheld without exciting *commiseration*, though the greatest misfortune to which human nature is exposed.

"Pray, aunt, do not let us talk any more about that poor boy," said Eliza, whilst a self-reproaching tear trembled in her eye; "for I cannot forgive myself for having laughed at him;

but indeed, and indeed, it was from *want* of *thought*."

"I have not been dwelling upon Richard's misfortunes with a view of condemning your *former* conduct, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Manderville; "but to inspire your tender bosom with sympathy for *every* unfortunate fellow-creature who may be reduced to a similar state; and, as you increase in years, if Providence bless you with affluence, remember that those who labour under this most lamentable of calamities have the strongest claim upon your relief; and if my fortune were sufficiently large to enable me to endow a public institution, it should be a receptacle for harmless idiots, such as we have just seen."

A hooting noise of children at this instant drew their attention.

"Whence proceed those voices?" enquired Mrs. Manderville, when, turning a corner they perceived a well-dressed female running towards them, followed by a large party of boys and girls; some of whom were laughing, others throwing gravel, at the unfortunate creature, and all accosting her under the appellation of Cousin Bess. With a wildness truly expressing the disordered state of her intellects, the unfortunate maniac gazed around: a number of cocks' and

hens' feathers were stuck in her hat—in one hand she carried a piece of wood, cut in the form of a sceptre—and in the other a crown, composed of reeds. In a dignified tone, though in imperfect English, she addressed herself to Mrs. Manderville, informing her she was little aware of the consequence of the being who accosted her, as she was no less a personage than the *Princess Royal* of *France*; that her husband had behaved like a brute to her, and that she was going to seek redress at the English court.

A severe reprimand to the unfeeling groupe, whose taunting insults had exasperated this poor *imaginary* princess, suddenly dispersed them like chaff before the wind; when, in a voice of pity, and in the unfortunate woman's native language, Mrs. Manderville informed her she sincerely commiserated her unfortunate case; and, humouring the chimera which haunted the ill-fated being's imagination, she enquired whether none of her royal highness's *attendants* had accompanied her in her flight?

Joy and satisfaction suddenly beamed upon the poor maniac's countenance at hearing herself addressed in French, and she began relating a story, framed with so much ingenuity, as might have deceived even Docter Willis himself; but, before she came to the conclusion, a

new turn was given to her ideas, and, bursting into a loud laugh, she said, "How easily the English are taken in! I thought, from the expressive turn of your features, I had been addressing myself to a lady of sense; but you are all *alike*, mere dupes to fabrication, and not able to distinguish a *woman* from a *man*."

Both Louisa and Eliza were completely terrified by this rencounter; each clung close to their aunt, who, in all probability, did not feel very pleasant, though she did not testify the smallest alarm; but having arrived at the garden gate, she drew the key from her pocket at the moment her unfortunate companion made the preceding remark. Old Stephen happened to be repairing a fence not far from the entrance; the gate was no sooner opened, than Eliza rushed in, and flying towards him, begged he would go to his mistress, as a woman was with her almost raving mad.

Poor Stephen turned pale at the idea of his mistress being exposed to danger, and in the course of a few moments was by her side, saying, "Did you call me, Madam? for I thought I heard your voice."

The maniac was still laughing very heartily at the idea of having imposed upon Mrs. Manderville, but the moment she beheld Stephen her

features underwent a sudden alarm, and she eagerly demanded whether he were a villain employed by her *keeper?* or one of the wretches whom Count Roussillon had hired to take away her life?" At the name of *Roussillon* Mrs. Manderville recollected a melancholy story which some months before she had heard, of an unfortunate emigrant of that name, who, from the dreadful distresses she had encountered, had been deprived of reason, and had been rescued from a watery grave by a gentleman of fortune, who had placed her under the care of his gamekeeper's wife. That this was the ill-fated Madame Roussillon Mrs. Manderville no longer doubted; she therefore intreated her to spend the remainder of the day at her house; but, dreading lest her guest should be seized with a paroxysm of her disorder, she instantly dispatched a servant to Mr. Calvert, and another to Mr. Green's gamekeeper, who lived within the distance of seven miles.

The moment Mr. Calvert arrived, he confirmed Mrs. Manderville's suspicions, and kindly offered to conduct the unfortunate wanderer to her abode, informing her that Mr. Green had dispatched messengers in every direction in search of the poor fugitive, who had eluded the watchful eye of her keepers on the preceding day,

and had either passed the night under some hovel, or in the open fields.

To the person of Mr. Calvert Madame Roussillon fortunately was a stranger, and to his profession likewise, or, in all probability, she would not so readily have allowed him to conduct her home; but as she informed him also she was going to represent her case to his Majesty, he sagaciously told her he had an appointment at court, and requested she would allow him the honour of conducting her there. This scheme answered even beyond his expectation; she had scarcely patience to wait until the horses were harnessed, when, embracing the terrified girls, she informed them they should receive a *princely* present from her the moment the first *quarter* of her *pension* was paid; then, paying her compliments to Mrs. Manderville, with all the elegance of a woman of fashion, she sprang into the chaise, desiring the coachman, in imperfect English, to drive to St. James's and make the best of his way.

Though neither of the cousins had expressed to their aunt the terror this unexpected visitor had excited, yet, when the carriage drove off they involuntarily exclaimed, "Thank Heaven she is gone!"

"I perceived your alarm," said Mrs. Man-

derville, "but what might have been the fate of that poor creature, had I not fortunately met her? insulted by an unfeeling rabble, and unable to defend herself; indeed I do not think, in the whole course of my life, I ever experienced so refined a gratification as from the reflection of having afforded a temporary asylum to that unfortunate woman. Yet, dreadful to say, her case is by no means singular: how many hundreds, like her, have been reduced from affluence to a state of want; plundered of their property! driven like vagabonds from the estates of their ancestors! and perhaps compelled to behold their nearest and dearest connexions perish by the sword! How grateful ought we to be to Providence for protecting this favoured country from falling a prey to that sanguinary tyrant who has drenched the greater part of Europe in blood! and for shielding us from similar calamities to those which the unfortunate Madame Roussillon has endured."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

DECEMBER.

THE worthy Mr. Green, who had taken so warm an interest in the fate of the unfortunate Madame Roussillon, sent a most feeling and elegant epistle to Mrs. Manderville, expressing his sense of the kindness of her conduct in the most grateful terms; neither was he deficient in acknowledgments to the humane Mr. Calvert, whom he insisted upon detaining to dinner.

That virtue is generally its own reward, is a well-known observation, and so it proved in the present case; for whilst Mr. Green and his guest were at dinner, an old butler, who had lived many years in the family, broke a bottle as he was drawing the cork, and as he was pressing it tight between his knees, the broken glass cut him in the most dreadful manner that can be conceived.

"You must send instantly for your surgeon, sir," said Mr. Calvert, who had never been employed in a professional capacity by Mr. Green.

"Fortunately my future surgeon is present, sir, for I have long doubted the abilities of Mr. Thompson, and I would not for the world intrust him with the life of that valuable man; it was through his injudicious council that poor Madam Roussillon was permitted to walk in the garden alone, in contradiction to the express orders which I had given my gamekeeper."—Thus then was the worthy Mr. Calvert's humanity rewarded by a material addition to his annual income; for Mr. Green's family was not only large, but his benevolence was unbounded, and to the poor of the parish in which he resided he was the most generous of friends; and the surgeon he employed received orders to attend all those who were sick, and add the charge of medicine and attendance to his yearly bill.

Mr. Calvert, therefore, not only waited upon Mrs. Manderville for the purpose of delivering the letter entrusted to his care, but to make her acquainted with the unexpected good fortune which had attended a kind and charitable deed. Upon the benefits which frequently arise from acts of beneficence, Mrs. Manderville largely expatiated; "yet, allowing, my dear girls," said she, "no such advantages could arise; still the inward satisfaction which a feeling mind

must necessarily derive from them, is, doubtless, in *itself*, a sufficient reward; and young as you both are, I am persuaded you have frequently experienced the truth of this remark."

Both the young ladies acknowledged the justice of their aunt's observation; declaring that the secret gratification they experienced from the performance of a *kind* or *generous act*, far exceeded any other pleasure which either of them had felt.

The long wished-for period of Christmas drew near—the intended presents were all completed; and, what added still more to Louisa's happiness, Henry was expected home in a few days; for never did a brother and sister love each other with greater tenderness and regard. The weather, however, had again been unfavourable for walking; cold winds were accompanied by fogs and rain; yet the gloominess of the day was compensated for by the *cheerfulness* of the *evening*, when Mrs. Manderville (if she had no company) always read some entertaining book. Eliza, notwithstanding, would sometimes regret the loss of summer; and lament she was no longer able to enjoy her beloved rambles in the fields.

"Yet," said her aunt, "had you been able to *continue* that *recreation*, you would not re-

ceive half the gratification you will experience when you are permitted to renew it again."

"*Retirement* and *seclusion*, at this period of the year, seems to be the law of nature: how many living creatures now take up their winter quarters, and do not return again until spring. The frog shelters itself in the mud of ponds; whilst the lizard, badger, and hedge-hog, retire to different holes in the earth; and the bat clings suspended by its hind legs to the sides of barns, deserted houses, and coal-pits; dormice remain in a state of torpidity, though, upon a warm day, they will sometimes rouse, and eat sparingly of that food which they had providently stored; whilst squirrels, water-rats, and field-mice, without being completely torpid, seldom move out of their separate abodes, but feed upon a magazine of nuts, potatoes, and acorns, which they had carefully provided as a supply for nature's wants.

"The vegetable tribes appear now in a state of stagnation, except those few evergreens and hardy plants, which I informed you in January were able to defy the cold; to these I might add several species of mosses and *liverworts*, which fructuate during the winter months. These liverworts, or *lichens*, are peculiarly fruitful in the cold climates, and afford a very salutary sus-

tenance for the rein deer. In Iceland, when fresh gathered, it is used as a medicine, and when dried and pounded, it becomes an excellent substitute for flour. How beneficently, therefore, does Providence supply the wants of his creatures! This lichen, which grows wild upon heaths, rocks, and the banks of ditches, affords food both to man and beast; and flourishes in a clime where less hardy plants must perish, in spite of the cultivator's utmost care."

On the twenty-first of December, which is the winter solstice, or the shortest day, the hours seemed to fly with unusual rapidity; for the amiable Henry's vacation commenced, and he had such a variety of anecdotes to relate to his sister and cousin, that when the hour for retiring arrived each expressed a wish that the day could begin again.

Mrs. Manderville observed with a smile, "that though they wished *time* to make a retrogade movement, they had not wasted any part of it in *silence* since her nephew's return; it has been spent innocently, however," said she, "my dear children, and I have enjoyed a secret pleasure in listening to the overflowing tenderness of your hearts. Yet let me intreat you never to forget that dignified observation which the Emperor Titus made, who every night before

he laid his head upon the pillow, recalled to his recollection the actions of the preceding day, and upon retiring to rest one night, after having remained some time in a musing posture, he started from his reverie, and addressing himself to his attendants, exclaimed, 'my friends, I have *lost* a day."

"What did he mean by that, aunt," enquired Eliza.

"He meant, my love, that he could not recal to recollection any act of beneficence to the unfortunate or distressed; and so truly amiable was his disposition, that he considered a day, in which he had not exercised his authority in checking vice or supporting virtue, as *completely lost*. If we were all to adopt a similar practice, and make a point of recalling to our recollection the transactions of each day, it would not only be the means of reminding us of many *neglected duties*, but impress the important value of the *present moment* upon our minds; for life is not only *short* but *uncertain*, and we know not how soon we may be called upon to deliver up our great account."

Old Stephen, who, as I before observed, was a kind of privileged personage, at this moment tapped at the parlour door, and being desired to

enter, after making his obeisance, said, "I make bold, madam, to *ax* whether you have heard the news?" and upon being asked whether it were of a public or private nature, he replied, "for the matter of that, madam, I thinks it is *both*, for though it more particularly *consarns* Mrs. Cranbourn, I warrant ye it will be town and country talk; for you must know, that red-coated chap that *runned* away with her *darter* has runned away with her *ten thousand* pounds, and the poor thing, about an hour ago, arrived at her mother's just like any creature out of her wits. Oh dear! Oh dear! there has been sad doings, for madam, at first, said *as how* she should not come in—then *miss*, or *ma'am*, I suppose I must now call her, fell down at the bottom of the *shay* in a fit, and her poor mother was then almost distracted, and tore her hair, and wrung her hands—one *sarvant* was sent for Doctor Calvert, another was ordered to get water and drops, and so, as I happened to be passing just as all this screaming and hooting was going forwards, why, thinks I, it will be but right to stop, and in I goes, for the doors was all open, just for all the world like a public house; and there I staid till I *seed 'em* both better, and Mrs. Cranbourn sends her *sarvice*,

madam, to you, and hopes you will go up there in the morning, as she says she wants to *ax* you what is to be done."

"There is very little to be done, Stephen," replied Mrs. Manderville, "but I am truly concerned at hearing this account; however, I hope that poor Miss Cranbourn's imprudent conduct will prove a warning to all thoughtless and injudicious girls."

At an early hour on the following morning, a messenger arrived at the Cottage from Mrs. Cranbourn, intreating Mrs. Manderville's immediate presence, as she feared her daughter was in a dangerous state. To this abode of domestic distress the amiable Mrs. Manderville hastened; but upon approaching the sick-bed of Mrs. Byfield, all apprehensions of her being in danger fled; rage, mortification, and disappointment were depictured upon her countenance, and from *passion*, not disease, she might be said to rave—she had been duped by the man in whom she had placed implicit confidence—she had been plundered of that property which had rendered her independent of her mother—yet to that mother she was compelled to return, and not only implore her forgiveness, but intreat her to shield her from want, for her

unprincipled husband had drawn every farthing of her property out of the funds.

The extreme youth of the unfortunate Mrs. Byfield was *one* apology for the impropriety of her conduct; and the little restraint her mother put upon her actions ought to have been another; notwithstanding which, all the neighbouring families who had daughters, unanimously declared she should never enter their houses; and Mrs. Cranbourn, finding her company avoided, in the course of a few months was under the necessity of removing from that spot.

The long-expected day arrived which is received in every Christian country with joyful transports and reverential awe—I mean that on which our blessed Saviour made his appearance in the world. This glorious day was always celebrated by Mrs. Manderville with every testimony of heart-felt delight; and after attending the service of the church, and giving a public testimony of her reliance upon the mediation of a Redeemer, she generously displayed the benevolence of her mind.

Instead of her house being crowded with guests, in an elevated station, her company was selected according to their poverty and distress; an ample dinner was provided for ten of the

poorest families in the neighbourhood, and those who were invited one year did not expect to be down in the list, as the inhabitants of the village were too numerous to be all invited at the same time. Husbands, wives, and children, all partook of this regale; mirth and good humour beamed upon every countenance, and old Stephen always presided as master of the feast. Some of the party were accompanied by six or seven children, others by two or three, and, according to the number, presents had been previously ticketed, and even their parents received some small testimony of the generosity of their entertainer's heart.

The greatest decorum was observed by every one present; for though a day of rejoicing, Mrs. Manderville would not suffer it to be prophaned by noisy mirth. The children, after dinner, were all treated with oranges and apples, and the spirits of their parents enlivened by a large bowl of excellent punch. When this was emptied, a bell was rang by old Stephen, which was received as a signal for the intended presents to be brought, and Mrs. Manderville made her appearance, attended by her nieces, and followed by a servant with two large baskets full of clothes.

"A happy Christmas to you, madam! a happy Christmas to you, young ladies!" exclaimed

near fifty voices at once. "God Almighty send you long life and prosperity! Pray God keep you in health many, many years!"

This fervent wish was expressed in a voice so affecting, and with such demonstrations of gratitude and regard, that Eliza, who had never witnessed a scene of that nature, burst into tears, and embraced her aunt, softly whispering, "God Almighty *must* bless you! I did not expect to feel thus, indeed, my dear aunt."

Though the tear of sensibility trembled in the eye of the generous Mrs. Manderville, a smile of benevolence beamed upon her face; and after returning the good wishes of her humble visitors, she informed them her nieces would dispense her accustomed gifts; then adding, that tea would be prepared in a few minutes, amidst the prayers of the surrounding multitude she quitted the room.

The children eagerly crowded round the baskets, exclaiming, "Oh what a pretty cap! Oh what a sweet frock!"

"Your fathers and mothers must be served first, my dears," said Louisa, in a kind accent, taking ten large cotton handkerchiefs out of the basket, and delivering one to each of the men who were present, saying her aunt requested they would wear them round their necks.

Eliza, in the mean time, was presenting the women with ten plain round-eared caps, ornamented with a purple riband, with a smart bow placed at top, and ten pair of worsted stockings, all marked with the initials of the intended wearers' names.

Thanks and *blessings* flowed spontaneously from the lips of every person in the room; whilst the impatient children cried out, "Now, misses! now for us!"

Frocks, caps, shirts, shifts, and petticoats were instantly spread upon a long table.

"Pray, let me have *this!* pray, let me have *that!*" they exclaimed eagerly, admiring every article which they saw.

To proportion the present to the size of each, was, however, necessary, and took up no small portion of time; some received only two, others three or four different parts of apparel, according to their value; each, notwithstanding, was perfectly contented with the distribution that was made; and Mrs. Manderville listened with secret satisfaction to her nieces' account of the grateful emotions her humble guests testified.

"At how trifling an expence, my dear children," said their amiable relation, "have I contributed to the happiness of near fifty of my fellow-creatures; for these different presents,

which they so highly estimate, have not cost me *thirty* pounds, a sum which at one fashionable entertainment would scarcely procure a dessert. Thus, whilst I live, do I always mean to celebrate the birth of our blessed Redeemer, who impressed the duty of *charity* in the strongest terms, and informed his disciples that *one virtue* would cover a multitude of sins."

At the close of the year Louisa returned to the abode of her affectionate mother, who received her with open arms; for though during the preceding year they had always spent part of the day together, yet Mrs. Danvers was delighted at having her once more entirely under her roof, and Louisa did not experience less gratification, although she was tenderly attached to her aunt.

Eliza and her little brother remained under the protection of Mrs. Manderville, whose affection towards them daily increased; and when the former had completed her calendar, she displayed it to her aunt, who not only applauded the style of writing, but the *motive* which had induced her to undertake the employ.

FINIS.

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