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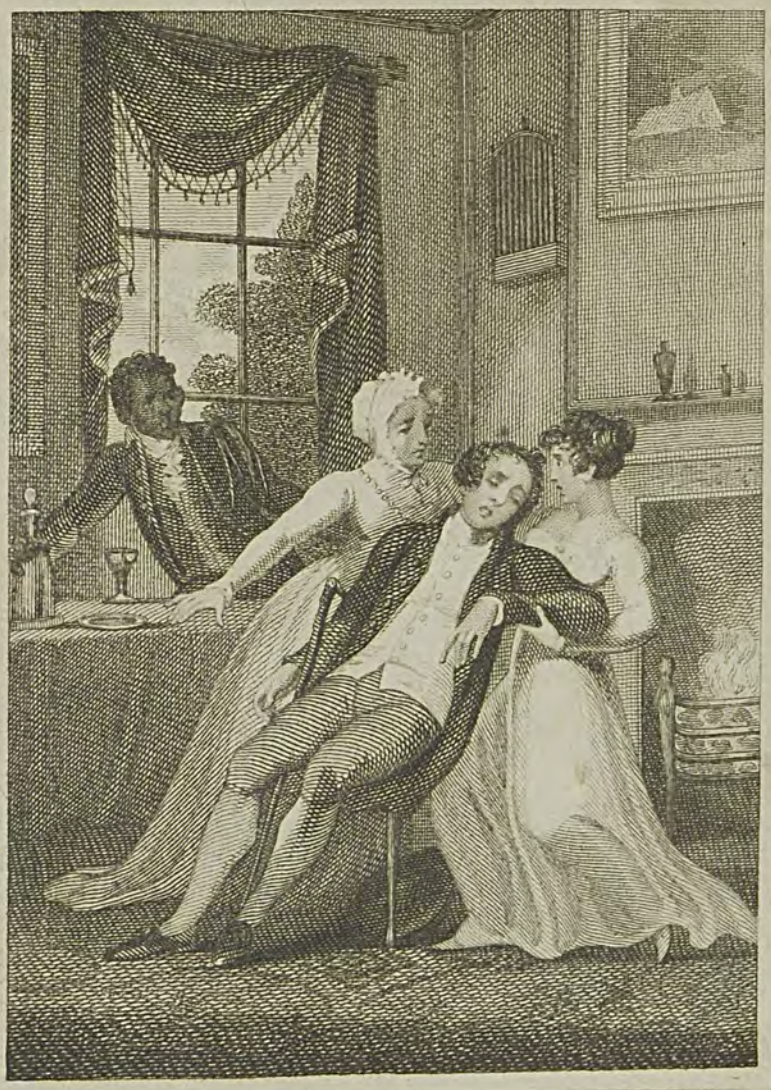

It was now Anna's turn to support her father. — page 189

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THE

ADOPTED DAUGHTER,

A Tale

FOR

YOUNG PERSONS.

By MISS SANDHAM,

AUTHOR OF THE TWIN SISTERS, WILLIAM SELWYN, AND MANY OTHER APPROVED WORKS.

"You took me up a tender flower."

London:

PRINTED FOR J. HARRIS,

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PREFACE.

THE following tale is intended to shew what people ought to be, rather than what they are; as there are few, possessing Mrs. Meridith's fortune, who have an inclination to dispose of it in the manner she is represented to have done. Indeed, the characters here introduced are too near perfection to be met with in real life, yet the Author hopes that her young readers will receive instruction, as well as amusement, in perusing it.

Some of the incidents may have been before introduced in works of the same kind; though she is not aware of plagia-

rism, or borrowing from other authors, and as she has endeavoured to pourtray those smaller delineations of character which often escape a general observer, she hopes many of the ideas will be found to be new; and that the present work will not lessen the favour which her former publications has so abundantly met with; and which she holds in grateful estimation.

THE
ADOPTED DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

"You took me up a tender flower."

Mrs. Meridith was the heiress of two considerable estates, one of which was in Sussex, on which she was born, and where, at the commencement of this history, she came to reside: her earliest and happiest days of childhood had been spent in the village adjoining where she was nursed by a respectable farmer's wife, having had the misfortune to lose her mother, who died in bringing her into the world. Various sorrows, and the loss of an affectionate husband very early in life, made Mrs. Meridith prefer the quiet scenes of the country to the glitter of

dissipation, or the more uniform amusements of a provincial town; and on entering Rosewood, the name of her estate, she hoped to lose the remembrance of her distresses, which had hitherto heavily oppressed her, in endeavouring to alleviate those of her tenants and the neighbouring poor. Her father, Mr. Woodville, was a great fox-hunter, and on the death of his wife, which he did not feel so keenly as might be expected from the amiable character she possessed, earnestly entreated Mrs. Campbell, who was the wife of his favourite tenant, to take charge of the helpless infant. He could have wished she had been a boy, as she was his only child; "yet," said he, "she must be taken care of, though a female, and I will not injure the fortune to which she will be entitled; and by and by, when she is old enough, I shall be glad to see her at the head of my table:" but while she was a baby, he thought if he entrusted her to a careful nurse, such as he was sure Mrs. Campbell would be, it was all that could be required of him. Nor was he desirous of having her in his own house, but perfectly satisfied that she should be removed to the farm, where he could see her as often as he wished: he frequently called on his return from the chace, and repeated his thanks to Mrs. Camp-

bell for her kind attention to his child, earnestly requesting her not to want any thing which his house afforded; but Mr. and Mrs. Campbell were above want, and possessed every comfort which their moderate wishes required, so that, except the allotted stipend which Mr. Woodville engaged to pay, she sought no other recompence, and seldom went to Rosewood, but when its owner was confined by accident or illness, and wished his daughter to be brought to him.

She continued with the farmer and his wife till nearly six years old, regarding them as parents, and loving them equally with her father, who, as she advanced in childhood, grew more attached to her, and, pleased with her winning ways, he never came to the farm without some new toy, or sweetmeat, or sugar-plumbs, the servants at home being ordered to have something nice always in readiness for him to take to their young mistress. These repeated presents insured him a welcome from his daughter, nor did he suspect that he was buying that love which she freely bestowed on her mammy Campbell, for so she styled her affectionate nurse. The little girl who was her foster sister always shared in these favours, and another part was

put by for the boys till their return from school, and whom she looked upon as her brothers.

It was the eldest of these boys who now occupied the farm on which Mrs. Meridith had spent her infant days; his father and mother were both dead, and he had taken a long lease of it just before that lady came into possession of the estate. Mr. Woodville had been dead some years, but Mrs. Meridith had not visited Rosewood since that event, nor after her marriage till now, being deprived of her husband, with whom she had lived on her other estate in Lincolnshire, she turned her thoughts to Rosewood, where she hoped to forget her grief, and if any of the companions of her childhood were living, she could by adding to their comforts, increase her own. Here she found not the farmer Campbell she had formerly called her father, but his son, whom she once loved as a brother; her good old nurse had died a few years before, and her foster sister also, but the latter had left a child, which the present Mr. and Mrs. Campbell brought up as their own: there were but two houses of any size in the village of Downash, except the parsonage, which was occasionally occupied by the vicar, a single man, who lost the pleasure he might have found in assisting those whom he professed to

take the care of, in drinking and visiting the neighbouring towns, as often as his situation would allow; the others were occupied by farmer Campbell and farmer Ward, who divided the arable land of Mrs. Meridith's estate between them, and the cottages of their labourers formed what was called the street. No sooner was Mrs. Meridith settled at Rosewood, than she felt the ties of affection renewed which had bound her to it in infancy, and she felt the truth of the following observation—

"Meanwhile returning to our native hearth,
"How keen the pleasure that our grief repays,
"When drinking every gale from kindred earth,
"As redolent of youth's refreshing days,
"Fancy the wonders of her art displays,
"And o'er each object we in absence mourn'd;
"Shedding the richness of her fairy rays;
"Bids e'en the little hedgerow that we scorn'd,
"Rise in a mellow light, by some new tint adorn'd."

Local Attachment.

and she determined to seek for happiness once more within its precincts. "Often as I have been disappointed in the search," said she, "and severely as I have felt its loss, let me at least endeavour to use those blessings yet left me for the good of others: and is wealth alone the only blessing left me?" continued she, as she walked pensively up and down the avenue which

led to her house. "Alas! I have now no relations whom I can share it with, no one whom I can call an intimate friend! My fortune would make many profess to be such, but I have proved the fallacy of such friendship, and know on what ground they are formed. I will seek the Campbells, if they are like their parents, they will not be parasites, for they were content with little, and thought the bread they ate the sweeter for being procured by their own industry." With these sentiments she called at the farm, within a few weeks after her arrival at Rosewood, and found Mr. and Mrs. Campbell sensible of her condescension, though not servilely so: they were both well informed, and paid her the respect which was due to her as the owner of their farm; nor were they ashamed to acknowledge her their superior, not only from her possessing more money, but from the difference the distinctions of society had made between them. She found the farmer sitting with two children on his knee, and his wife with an infant on hers, in the very place where the late Mrs. Campbell used to sit, and to whom she had often ran with the sweet things her father brought her while a child under her care. The shelves, the chairs, and oaken tables were the same as when she lived there, except that seve-

ral books were added to the simple library her foster parents possessed. On entering the room quite unexpectedly, she was not at first recollected as the lady they had seen at church the Sunday before; her face was particularly expressive, but it was marked with melancholy; and her voice faltered as she apologized for her abruptness, nor could she refrain from tears on observing the extreme likeness of the farmer to his good old mother, whose features she perfectly recollected. "It is Mrs. Meridith!" said he, on seeing her advance farther into their large stone kitchen; and setting the children on their feet, who were lost in astonishment at the appearance of a stranger, he jumped up and hastened to offer her a chair. Mrs. Campbell also rose, and remarking the agitation of her countenance, imagined that something had alarmed her, and she had fled to their house for shelter.

"Will you take any thing, Ma'am," said she, "I am sure you are very much frightened."

"No, no," replied Mrs. Meridith, "but the recollection of old times and old friends were at the moment almost too much for me; these walls and that face are no strangers to me:—do you not recollect me, Mr. Campbell?" con-

tinued she, holding out her hand to him. With a countenance expressive of pleasure, yet with the utmost respect, he took her offered hand.

"Certainly, Ma'am, I do," he replied, "and esteem myself obliged that you should still remember me."

"Alas!" said she with a sigh, "the loss of so many later friends has made me wish to see those of an earlier date: not that I did not often think of those I left at the farm, and only wish there were now more of them for me to meet. Your dear mother I know is dead; but my sister Anna, where is she? Ah! that little girl puts me in mind of her—and of a still dearer tie," added she, with a sigh half suppressed, while her eyes were suffused with tears.

"It is her child, Madam," returned Mr. Campbell; "I lost my sister when she was born, and she is ours now."

"Poor little thing," said Mrs. Meridith, drawing the child towards her, "your mother dead also! may you find in the present Mrs. Campbell as kind a nurse as I did in the former, and you will not know your loss. But your brother," continued she, "is he living?"

"Yes, Madam, and has taken a farm about fourteen miles from hence, and is married."

"My poor Anna!" repeated Mrs. Meridith, "how sorry I am that you are not here! she was the only one I ever called sister, Mr. Campbell: who did she marry?"

"A young man from the neighbouring town, Madam; but he was far from a kind husband to her: she lived with him but little more than a twelvemonth, and I fear it hastened her death, for she was so beloved by her own family, that she felt his unkindness doubly keen. This little one is now three years old; on her death-bed she begged us to take it, and its unnatural father has never enquired for it since; nor have we heard of him, except that he was gone as a soldier or a sailor, and perhaps ere this is dead in battle."

The little girl looked hard at him as he related this tale, seeming not to understand of whom he spoke, but as if wishing to be certain it was not herself, she took him by the hand with an enquiring look, saying, "*You* are *my* father, a'nt you?"

"Yes, my dear, and always will be a father to you," he replied, with an affectionate kiss. "But give me leave, Madam," added he, "to introduce my wife to you," who still stood contemplating the features of the lady, and

hushing the baby in her arms, who seemed disposed to cry at a scene so new to her.

"Did I not know her, when a child?" asked Mrs. Meridith.

"I believe not, Madam, her name was Dallwyn, and her father the owner of the farm my brother occupies."

"I can only say, that I shall be happy to know more of her," returned their kind visitor, "and to see her often. Thirty years has not obliterated the kindness of your family from my memory, and I cannot forget that to your mother's care I owe my preservation in childhood. Neither have I forgot your own efforts to please me, when I used to called you my brother William; you were always kind."

"And you were so to me, Madam," returned Mr. Campbell, with a smile; "that shelf (pointing to the place where she used to deposit the sweet things she reserved for her *brothers* on their return from school,) often reminds me of you."

Mrs. Meridith smiled also. "Ah! those were happy days," said she, "would I could forget many that has intervened!"

"Madam I am sorry any of your days should have been less happy," replied the farmer,

"but let us hope that there are yet happier ones in store."

Mrs. Meridith felt that the soothing voice of friendship, though from so humble an individual, was a cordial to her heart, and she thanked him for expressing it. "I wish," said she, "to forget all distinctions of rank between us, for I have found very little to recompense me for the trouble these have given; and for the future I hope you and your wife will look on me as your friend, and treat me as such."

"Your friendship, Madam," returned Mr. Campbell, "I should be ungrateful not to prize, and I hope I shall do nothing to forfeit it; but though you are so kind as to forget the distinction there is between us, I trust we never shall. Consider *us*, Madam, as the most faithful of your servants, and from our knowledge of each other in our younger days, believe me the most attached of your tenants."

Mrs. Meridith after walking over the garden and visiting the barn, in which, when a child, she used to play with Anna and her brothers, fixed a day for Mr. and Mrs. Campbell to dine with her; and retired with a sighing heart, yet not unmixed with pleasure at having found a friend.

"Perhaps," said she to herself, "in these

humble acquaintance I may find more real pleasure, and greater gratitude than in more refined society: had his mother been alive, I should have been happy to have made her comfortable; but at least I will do good to her sons. I know perhaps better than I did how to bestow what is useful, and money I have in plenty. May I be enabled to make a right use of it."

She returned home more at ease than she had felt for some time, and resolved to exert herself for the people of the village. "But it shall be by employing them," thought she, and she immediately planned several alterations in her gardens and pleasure grounds, and ordered her servants to employ all the old men and boys who were at that time out of work about them.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Meridith also visited the cottages of the poor, and from every one she heard something of the goodness of Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. "His father and mother were kind to us," said one of the old women, "and so is he and his wife also: *she* lets nothing be wasted in her dairy, or her pantry, and is always kind to us when we go there, and gives us something to eat and drink, and often some victuals to bring home with us."

Mrs. Meridith enquired if there was any school in the village, and on being directed to the old dame's house, who instructed all the little ones in their A B C, she determined not to deprive her of her employment, but endeavoured to find out a younger woman who could undertake the education of larger children, and teach them plain needle work, &c. The bigger boys used to walk to a neighbouring village to school, and as she found the man had a large

family, and bore an excellent character, she did not set up any other in opposition to him, but engaged to pay him for those boys whose parents could not afford it. Her servants were ordered not to turn any of the poor people away without relieving their wants; and in a very few months the inhabitants of Downash felt the benefit of having such a kind patroness living at Rosewood, as their houses were better furnished, themselves and children better clothed, and all their beds provided with blankets.

When the day came for Mr. and Mrs. Campbell to pay their promised visit at the great house, unused as they both were to visiting, it appeared in anticipation a formidable thing, notwithstanding the affability and condescension of Mrs. Meridith, which they had so amply experienced in her visit to them, but they dreaded the long train of servants and "saucy footmen" they should have to pass through, having heard that such were always more ready to notice any thing awkward than their owners: but they were agreeably surprized to find no such men at Rosewood. Mrs. Meridith's household consisted of no more servants than were absolutely necessary, and one footman and a black servant were all they saw. Her table and sideboard were neatly spread, without any

appearance of ostentation, and by the great respect with which she treated her guests, she taught her servants to do the same. After dinner Mrs. Meridith led them to the garden and pleasure-ground, and consulted Mr. Campbell on the improvements she intended; and by every action endeavoured to shew that she affected no superiority over them. Mrs. Campbell soon lost the restraint her being a stranger had occasioned, and Mrs. Meridith found her a sensible, well-informed woman. From this time she grew more attached to the family, and had frequent opportunities of observing Mr. Campbell possessed a solid understanding, with the strictest principles of morality and rectitude: she grew very fond of their children, and at length proposed adopting the little Anna, then about four years old, for her own. "I should have been happy to have shewn her mother every kindness," said she, "but since that is out of my power, let me transfer my affections to her child: Alas! I once had children of my own, but Providence has seen fit to deprive me of them; this little one will soothe many a lonely hour, and if she possesses the disposition of her family, will not be unworthy of my regard. I have an ample fortune and no near relation."

Mr. Campbell heard this proposal with silent respect and many thanks, and on her repeating that she had long thought of it, he begged to consult his wife on the subject.

Their conversation was not such as many of my readers may suppose; the farmer recollected she was the child of his only sister, whom his mother had brought up in the plainest and most industrious habits, "and I had intended," said he, "to follow her plan in regard to this second Anna; we have only one girl of our own, and I am blessed with health and strength, and a flourishing farm, and did not fear we should ever find her an incumbrance to us."

Mrs. Campbell declared the same, and that she loved her equally with her own children; "but yet," said she, "Mrs. Meridith will not take her away from Downash, she always intends living here, and seems attached to the place, and we know Anna can learn no evil of *her*. Will it be acting right, therefore, to deprive Mrs. Meridith of the amusement Anna will be, or Anna of the advantages Mrs. Meridith's fortune can obtain for her? We see riches has not made that lady proud or dissipated, and with such an example, may we not hope Anna will escape the effects which wealth and idleness too commonly produce?"

"If her father should ever inquire for her," said Mr. Campbell, "he cannot be displeased at finding her so situated; though I should fear was he to know it, it would tempt him to seek her out, in hopes of being benefited by Mrs. Meridith's kindness to her."

Mrs. Campbell observed, that his long absence from the place, and the report of his going abroad, made it very unlikely he should yet be alive, and as he was perfectly indifferent to her fate before he knew that they should take the charge of her, it was very unlikely he should think of her now. The fear of offending Mrs. Meridith went a great way in gaining their consent, and it was agreed the offer should be accepted, but not before old Molly, who had lived in the house when Anna's mother was born, had been consulted, and prevailed on to give a willing affirmative to the arrangement.

"She will never be happier in any great house than *here*," said she, "and as for money, what's the use of having more than is necessary? Sure, sure, a farm-house is the happiest place in the world; always busy, and something to look forward to from every employment which will be useful to ourselves and others. I should never wish to see our little

Anna any other than a farmer's wife, such as her dear grandmother was, not but what Mrs. Meridith is a very *good* lady: a very good lady indeed: but riches won't make people happy, that's plain to be seen in *her*. How dull she looks sometimes!"

"That proceeds from the many misfortunes she has met with, dear Molly," said Mr. Campbell, "and a farm-house is not exempt from the loss of family and friends, though our's, thanks be to Providence, has been so highly favoured."

"If then we are liable to lose any of our children by death," said Molly, "there seems the less occasion to *give one away*; but you *knows* best; I would not be the child's hindrance; yet I should not like her to be taken a great way off, as poor Mrs. Meridith was herself."

"There is no fear of that Molly," resumed her master, "for Mrs. Meridith seems inclined to prefer Rosewood as her home to any other place."

"Heaven be praised for *that*," returned Molly, "for sure she has done a power of good since she lived there, and if little Anna is to go no farther, I can see her as often as I like, for Mrs. Meridith has asked me to come often and

often; and told me never to take the children out for a walk without calling there, and latterly, some how or other, I never have, for let me go which way I would, the boys always contrived to come home round by Rosewood, and little Anna would peep and pry about through the paling, and the hedges, to see if she could find Mrs. Meridith, or the black man or woman; and I used to think to scold her for it, but *some how or other* I always forgot it."

Molly had now began talking, and it was some time before she stopped; for though there were but few subjects she could talk upon, she always found enough to say upon them; and she did not leave off till she was perfectly satisfied Anna should be Mrs. Meridith's child, so that while she lived she could see her as often as she wished.

The next time, therefore, that Mrs. Meridith called, and made the same proposal, it was readily agreed to, and little Anna was called in from her play with the boys, and the great mastiff dog who was letting them all ride upon his back. On being asked if she would like to live with Mrs. Meridith? she replied, "if William and John go too." John was but a few months older than herself, and William nearly seven years old.

"They shall come and see you every day," said Mrs. Meridith.

"And father and mother going too?" asked the artless child, "and old Molly, and Growler," which was the name of the dog.

Mr. Campbell smiled and said, "she is encroaching on your goodness already, Madam, and would bring all my family with her."

"They shall come and see us very often," replied Mrs. Meredith, anxious to see the child accede to her proposal without regret, "but *you* shall be my little girl."

"And mother's too?" returned the child, looking towards Mrs. Campbell, whom she had always considered her parent.

"Yes, my dear," replied Mrs. Meridith, "but won't you call *me* mother?"

"*You are* good Mrs. Meridith," lisped the child; "and I do love you dearly, but I am my mother's own little girl."

"So then you won't be my little girl also?" said Mrs. Meridith, "nor won't come and live with me, and Bella, and Syphax?" the name of the black man and woman, of whom Anna was very fond.

"Yes, I will, I will, and walk in the garden, and play on the green," her little eyes sparkling with pleasure, "and William and John play too;

but then I sleep at home; and Molly put me to bed?"

"Yes, when you are here," replied Mrs. Meridith, "and when you sleep at Rosewood, Bella shall put you to bed."

"And William and John too," asked she.

"Yes, when they sleep there she shall put them to bed likewise," replied her kind friend fearful of hearing her flatly refuse to leave them; and not choosing to urge her suit any farther that day, she invited the whole family, (not forgetting Molly and the youngest child who was to be of the party,) to dine with her on the next. Nothing could be happier than the children were the whole of that day; and Mrs. Meridith afraid of Anna's expressing any dislike to remaining with her at night, would have wished William and John to sleep there, also; but Mr. Campbell advised her otherways, as it might make her expect it another time, "and I," said he, "may have as much trouble to make my boys willing to return home, as you apprehend having to make her stay." Before it was their bed time, he took Anna into the garden, and told her she was going to stay all night with Mrs. Meridith; and from leading her to imagine it was a very great favour, though it could not be supposed she could at present com-

prehend the extent of the kindness intended her, he made her very well satisfied with the change.

Molly then took the boys and the little girl home, and Bella put her new charge to bed, whom knowing her mistress's intention towards her she was particularly anxious to please, lest her dear lady should be vext at finding her otherwise. The novelty of the room and her new attendant, with the pretty little bed which had been prepared for her, all took Anna's attention, and she dropt asleep without enquiring for her brothers: but it was not so with them, and old Molly, who, while undressing them, talked of nothing but little Anna, and her not coming home any more.

CHAPTER III.

In a short time Anna was quite reconciled to her situation, and no longer thought any place her home but Rosewood, and Mrs. Meridith after the indulgence of a few weeks holidays, began the plan of education she had proposed for her own children, had she not been deprived of them; but though she wished Anna should know every thing necessary to adorn the station in life she intended her to fill, she was equally anxious that she should not pride herself upon it. The little girl had already learnt her letters, and could spell a few words, and for the first two or three years of her being Mrs. Meridith's child, that lady was her only instructress. Anna was allowed to take a great deal of exercise, and her cousins were not more expert in running, driving the hoop, and such amusements than herself. All the old men who worked in the gardens rejoiced at her good fortune; they remembered her mother, and had often pitied her fate.

"Now," said they, "we wish she could see how well her child is provided for: she deserved a better husband, for there was not a prettier, nor a more industrious, clean, neat girl in all the parish; and so kind hearted."

"Ah!" replied another, "I remember when she was but a little thing, how she came to see my poor Nancy that was ill, and cried over her; and brought her every thing which she thought she could eat! and when she died"—here the poor old man wiped a tear from his eye and could say no more. In short Anna was caressed by all the inhabitants of the village not only on her mother's account, but on Mrs. Meridith's also, who was pleased at every attention paid her "adopted daughter."

Who then can wonder that our young heroine should begin to think herself of more consequence than she really was? and that her little head was nearly turned with the notice which was always taken of her? and here it would be well if many children, who find themselves objects of attention to their friends, would consider that it is not for any thing extraordinary in themselves; or any particular

merit, or talents which they possess; but for the sake of their parents, or because of some misfortune, perhaps, which is attached to them, those who are good and benevolent are inclined to notice them; how foolish then to grow proud of themselves on such an account! they ought to be obliged to the kind friends who thus favour them, and endeavour to repay their kindness by attention, but it is a proof of their folly to value themselves on what arises from others, and not from themselves.

Mrs. Meridith had new clothes of every kind made for Anna; and though she drest remarkably plain herself, and Anna had never been used to see any other, the exchanging her coloured frocks for more white ones gratified her vanity, and she could not help shewing them to her cousins when they came to visit her.

"I wish Mamma would give you a new suit of clothes," said she to William, "how well you would look if you had more buttons."

"Nonsense," replied William, who had imbibed all his father's notions; "What for? these clothes keep me warm, and they are whole in every part; and should I be happier if I had more buttons on my coat?

I don't think you are more so in that white frock than in a coloured one; you don't enjoy a game of play so well, for fear you should tear it."

"I don't consider *that*," returned Anna; "I have plenty more in the drawer; and Bella has nothing to do, but to mend it for me, and Mrs. Meridith would not be angry."

"Well, but still," said William, "I am sure you could play as well in the coloured ones you used to wear, and eat and drink as well; and sleep as well when you went to bed, so that I don't see any difference in them."

Mrs. Meridith overheard this conversation as she was walking in the garden, and sighed lest she should not find her *protegée*, who was now about seven years old, all she wished her. She took no notice of what she had heard, but the next time Anna tore her frock, which was not long after, she called her in, and desired her to mend it.

"Bella will do that," replied Anna with a thoughtless air, "she does it so well, that you won't see where the rent was."

"But Bella has something else to do," replied Mrs. Meridith "cannot you do it yourself? *You* tore it."

Anna looked at her friend as if doubting she had heard her plainly. "Bella *always* mends my things;" said she.

Mrs. Meridith smiled, but it was accompanied by a sigh, "one would think," said she, "that this little girl had been bred in India, where she had slaves at her command, rather than in a farm-house, for the first four years of her life: I must alter my plan with her, she will expect too much and be disappointed,—as I shall be," thought she, and another sigh escaped her. Anna watched her countenance and saw sorrow expressed in it, and her own instantly bore traces of the same.

"What is the matter, dear Mamma?" said she, "are you sorry that I have torn my frock? if Bella is busy now, she can mend it another time, or if you wish it," continued she, "I will try if I can do it myself, but I never—" did darn, she would have added; when Mrs. Meridith thus addressed her.

"It is not that I am sorry for the frock, my dear, but that you appear so little sensible of the trouble you give, when you are so repeatedly tearing your clothes: if you considered others you would be sorry Bella should be forced to work for you; her eyes are not good, and she

is getting old; and because she is kind and would do any thing for you, you seem disposed to give her what trouble you can without any apology."

"I will mend it myself;" said Anna, with a face reddening with shame, and no little anger, as she thought Mrs. Meridith had never spoken so unkindly to her before.

"You shall try at it," said that lady; "and it may be you will then find out the trouble it is to other people; you are now seven years old, and had you continued with Mrs. Campbell would most likely have been better able to do it than you are now," the tears stood in Anna's eyes, and for the first time she almost wished herself again there; but she took out a needle and thread from her work-bag, and began the task she was quite unaccustomed to; already the rent appeared ten times larger than it did before; she looked at each way, and began to think her Mamma was right in saying she would now know the trouble of it; but still her pride prevailed, and she would not own she could not do it.

After holding it some time in her hand, she said, "may I go and ask Bella to begin it for me, Mamma? it is impossible I should know

how to do that, but if it was once began I could go on with it."

"I have told you Bella is very busy," returned Mrs. Meridith.

"Will *you* begin it for me then, Mamma?" said the little girl in a more humbled tone, and after she had pulled it backwards and forwards, and looked at it again and again.

"Yes; and do it too;" thought Mrs. Meridith, who could scarcely bear to see her so distressed; "and kiss those frowns from your face if I dared; but your nature would not bear it." She therefore only desired her to bring it to her, and began the darning which she returned into Anna's hand; well knowing that she could never finish it for it to be worn any more; but the frock was of little value in Mrs. Meridith's opinion, if Anna might be taught a lesson of humility by it. She continued her own work, and Anna set a few stitches but very different from the pattern set her, and often did she turn her eyes to the window hoping to see either her uncle or cousins coming up the lawn which she hoped would put an end to the work.

"How do you get on with it?" asked Mrs. Meridith, "have you done half?"

"No," said Anna, "my cotton is so troublesome."

Mrs. Meridith again took it in her hand, and saying that would not do, she cut out all that Anna had done, and then putting it once more in a proper way, she made her sit down by her, saying, she feared her eyes were directed more to the window than her work. Anna could scarcely suppress her tears; yet once more made the attempt to finish the work and was as unsuccessful as before, though Mrs. Meridith directed her each time where to put her needle.

"Are you convinced now," said she, "of the trouble you give Bella every time you tear your clothes?"

"Yes, dear Mamma," replied Anna, bursting into tears, and hiding her face in her lap, "and I am very sorry for it."

"That is enough, my dear child, promise me that you will be more careful, and more thankful to those who do any thing for you."

"I will, indeed," replied Anna, venturing to raise her eyes, and longing to be reconciled to her kind friend, who soon gave her the consolatory kiss, and then once more addressing her, she said:—

"I should regret my ever taking you to be my child, my dear Anna, if I spoilt you; I would wish you to know that I once had children of my own, whom I did not love better than I do *you;* but I took you to be my child, because I lost them, and because your grandmother was a kind nurse to me when I was a baby, and I knew your mother when she was a little girl, but more because you were unfortunate, and had lost your parents, though they were well supplied to you by your uncle and aunt." Anna's mingled feelings of regret, confusion, and gratitude, would not permit her to speak, but she looked with the most expressive earnestness at her friend who thus continued.

"*I* am now your mother and wish to make you happy, but it must be by adding to the happiness of others, not taking from it." Anna's tears now flowed afresh; and she threw her arms round Mrs. Meridith's neck.

"Oh I hope I shall be a good girl, and deserve your kindness," said she, "indeed I have nothing to be proud of, but I have given Bella a great deal of trouble, and you my dear Mamma, and thought nothing of it; pray forgive me."

Mrs. Meridith re-assured her of her forgiveness, and only hoped the foregoing scene might be impressed on her memory, and prevent her thinking so highly of herself another time; and she then proposed their walking to the farm together.

CHAPTER IV.

When Anna returned with her kind friend to Rosewood, she sought for Bella in order to tell her that she was sorry that she had hitherto given her so much trouble, and found her busily employed at needle work, and two or three little girls of the village with her, to whom she was distributing several articles of clothing, this, for the present, prevented Anna's speaking of what she came to say, and she only asked, "what she was about," and why these little girls were there.

They were not unknown to her, and she had formerly played with them before she left the farm; but now they saw her white frock and yellow shoes, and remembered she was taken to be Mrs. Meridith's daughter, they each made her a curtesy.

"O, don't curtesy to *me*;" said Anna, full of what had passed in the morning; "I am only a little girl like yourselves, and if it had

not been for a good uncle and aunt, and Mrs. Meridith's kindness, I should have been a great deal worse off than you, for I had no father or mother to take care of me."

"Oh Miss Anna, don't talk so," said Bella, "every body loves you, and would be glad to take care of you."

"But I would wish her not only to talk so, but to think so also," said Mrs. Meridith, who just then entered the room, and had heard Anna speaking, "if it will keep her mindful not to give more trouble than she can help; and I should be sorry she should forget that these little girls have as much right to her kindness as she has to mine, when she has it in her power to show them any."

"I will, Mamma, I will," replied Anna, "for they are all my old playfellows, and I used to love them very much."

Mrs. Meridith then enquired into the work Bella was doing, and Anna found she was going to clothe them also, and she heard her give directions for more things to be made, and tell the children to send another family out of the village to her.

As soon as they were gone she burst into tears, and said, "Oh mamma, I might have been one of these little girls, and you would

have been good to me as you are to them; but how much more kind to take me as your own? and why was it *me?* why not one of them? they are better little girls than I have been, and would never have given you so much trouble; but my dear Bella I am ashamed of it; you shall never have to mend my frocks as you have done."

"I never complained of it, my dear," returned Bella, who did not know what had passed.

"But you will have more time to assist the poor children in the village," observed Mrs. Meridith, "who are all obliged to do something towards supporting themselves already, and therefore your working for them will be more useful than for Anna."

The little girl agreed to all her mamma said, and she sat down to dinner with her, with very different ideas than the day before.

As soon as she saw William and John coming up the lawn, whom Mrs. Meridith had asked to tea; she asked her leave to go and meet them, and as they walked slowly round the garden together, she told them all about the torn frock which she had vainly endeavoured to mend; "you told me," said she to William "that these fine clothes did not make me

happier, a little while ago, and I have found it out now; but however I will never tear another if I can help it, at least I shall know what trouble it must be to Bella to mend it."

The afternoon passed rapidly away, and when she went to bed, Anna felt more grateful for the happy home provided for her than she had ever done before She frequently reverted to her former state in conversation with Mrs. Meridith, and her uncle and aunt, while the latter always endeavoured to imprint on her mind the sense of her obligation to her kind benefactress, by whose name she was now universally known, though that which really belonged to her was Eastwood, for so her parents were called.

In the course of a few years Mrs. Meridith evidently grew happier, while according to her own maxim she added to the happiness of others; she suffered no one to want work who were capable of it, and she regularly supplied those who were old or ill in the village with every comfort they needed, blankets were sent to every house, and each year her house was open for a whole week at Christmas; a plentiful meal was provided every day, but nothing superfluous; and her barrels of home brewed ale were tapped that all might have their al-

lotted portion. In short from her extensive fortune and her earnest endeavour to make these poor people happy, there was not a family in Downash, who had not at least one of their children apprenticed to some useful trade, while the others worked in the fields; nor was there a child in the village who had not learned to write and read, and while Mrs. Meridith was thus careful for Downash and its inhabitants, she was not unmindful of the poor on the estate she had left in Lincolnshire, but gave orders to her agent there that they should be provided with what was necessary for them; and often sent Syphax, her confidential servant, to see that it was done.

Mr. and Mrs. Campbell continued to receive many marks of her favour, and as their family increased she added to her liberality; nor did she forget the other brother and his family, but on his first visit to the farm after her settling at Rosewood, recognized him as one of her early friends with her usual kindness. She also sent handsome presents to his wife and children; and was always endeavouring to find out where she could be materially useful to both of them. At length the farm which the younger Mr. Campbell rented was to be sold; and unless he became the pur-

chaser he expected to be turned out. On hearing this, Mrs. Meridith advanced the money for him, and at the same time presented a deed of gift to the elder brother, of the farm which he rented of her, this perhaps would have been carrying her generosity too far, had she not possessed so ample a fortune, with no near relation to inherit it after her death, and those she had were all in a state of affluence. She therefore gratified herself, by thus obliging two worthy families, and convincing them the kindness of their mother to her in infancy was not forgotten. All who heard of these acts of kindness rejoiced that they were shewn to men so deserving of them, except the other farmer in the village whose name was Ward: he could not see what the Campbells had done to merit such a recompence, nor bear that they should be the owners of their farms while he only rented his. At market or wherever they met, his envy was apparent, and yet he could attach no blame to either of the brothers, since they were both ignorant of her intention, and would have declined her offer had she made it to them before the purchase was necessary; as it was, Edward Campbell insisted on paying her what money he had laid up against the

time he expected the farm would be sold; and to satisfy his scruples Mrs. Meridith accepted it, and also the same sum from his elder brother, which she immediately, and unknown to them, placed in the funds in the names of their respective children, but yet farmer Ward was still hard to credit that they had paid *any* purchase money: he had for some time viewed the notice Mrs. Meridith took of the family with a jealous eye, and much had been said by his wife and daughters of the increased consequence of farmer Campbell and his family, since the lady of the manor had done so much for them.

This last event did not take place till after Anna had been ten years with her kind patroness, whom she was now accustomed to look on as more than a mother, though often the circumstance of the torn frock was reverted to by her uncle, and he reminded her that it was the humanity of Mrs. Meridith, and not from any claim she had to her kindness, which had placed her in the situation she was.

As she was now arrived at the age of fourteen, the best masters the country afforded for music, French, and drawing attended her, "and these," said her attentive uncle, "you

ought to be assiduous in learning, that you may be able to amuse Mrs. Meridith as her age increases," but Anna's attention to these accomplishments did not prevent her from paying the same to more domestic concerns.

"It may be," said Mrs. Meridith, "you may never wish to play, or sing after your masters have left you; but you will always have a family to attend to."

As music was what Anna was particularly desirous of improvement in, and as she had a very good voice, her kind friend did not discourage her endeavours to advance in it, "but remember," said she, "that to add to the happiness of others, you must do something more than sing to them.—A song, or a concerto on the piano will not satisfy the calls of hunger, or still the pains of sickness; and the poor in the village will not thank you for sitting whole hours at your instrument, if it leads you to neglect them; and may you recollect, my dear, that one chief reason, why I adopted you for my daughter, was that you should supply my place to the poor of Downash, when I am no longer here to assist them." Anna always heard her with tears upon this subject, and faithfully promised to regard her injunctions.

At this time she often walked among the villagers and listened to their wants, or rather their account of how they had been relieved; and the praises of good Mrs. Meridith: and when the purchase of the farms were made, she met with various congratulations.

"I am sure both your uncles were deserving of it," said one of their labourers, at whose house she called to know why his daughter was not at school the week before; "they are as good masters to work for, as can be found in all the country, and *we be* all heartily glad that the farms are their own."

"Mrs. Meridith," replied Anna, has given us all reason to rejoice that she came to live here, what has she not done for me."

"Ah, dear Miss," returned the man, "now you *speaks* of that, your poor dear mother was deserving of it."

"It is all for *her* sake," answered Anna, "but did *you* know her."

"Ah, and your father too, Miss, if he deserved to be called so, who could leave you as he did."

Anna sighed, "I wonder where he is," said she, not expecting the old man could inform her.

"Why some do say that he went for a sailor," returned he, "but I did hear a little while ago that some one *see'd* a man that had seen him about a twelvemonth before."

"You don't say so," returned Anna, with eagerness, half afraid yet anxious to hear more; "who was it? and where was he."

"Why I don't know for the truth of it, Miss," said he, "nor whereabouts it was he *see'd him*, but I thinks it was some where beyond sea; but it was at farmer Ward's my daughter heard it, and the reason, ma'am, she *ha'n't* been to school this week, is, she has been there, while their girl was gone home to see her mother."

"At farmer Ward's," replied Anna, "I thought they would have had some of their own labourer's daughters."

"And so should I, Miss, but somehow Nancy Ward has taken a great fancy to my girl, so I let her go, as 'twas but for a little while; but I *hopes* to get her into your aunt's, Miss, when she wants a girl, and if you would be so good as to speak for her it would be doing a great kindness, she is very handy, and knows how to do a great many things; but here she comes, and Nancy Ward with her, I declare,"

Anna looked out and saw them coming towards the little wicket, she therefore would not leave the house till they entered it; and as it was at farmer Ward's that something had been heard of her father, she thought she might hear more of it from Nancy, whom, though she had not seen for some months, yet as children they were often together; but she was not aware of the difference Mrs. Meridith's late kindness to her uncles had made in *her* behaviour, as well as in that of her father.

"How do you do, Nancy," said she, "I hope you are well, you are much grown since I saw you."

"And so are you, Miss," replied Nancy, with a saucy air; "and all your family I think, —the farmer Campbells are quite gentlemen now, and Miss Meridith, or Miss Campbell, or Miss Eastwood, or whatever name I may call you by, is quite a fine lady."

"Not more so than I was a few years ago, when you did not account me so," answered Anna with rather an haughty air; but it was immediately humbled when the insolent girl proceeded, "according to the old proverb set a beggar on horseback."

"A beggar!" returned Anna.

"Yes," said Nancy, "your father was one, or is one now; and it would be a good thing for him if he could come in for some of Mrs. Meridith's bounty."

"I believe," replied Anna, with some spirit, "that if he needed and deserved it, he would not have long to wait for it; but can you tell me where he is?"

"O dear no, Miss, I have no acquaintance with him, nor do I wish to it: I only think that if he knew how generous Mrs. Meridith is to all who belong to *you*, he would soon be here to get a little out of her."

"Fye, Nancy, fye, I am ashamed of you," said the old man, "if you can't talk better than that, you should hold your tongue, you may be ashamed of yourself, can any one help the faults of their parents."

"It is the first time," thought Anna, "that I have suffered for the faults of mine, till now every body pitied me for having such a father."

"Oh!" returned the girl, determined now to vent her spleen as she had began, "the poor little Anna Eastwood, or Campbell as she was called, is so proud since she has become Mrs. Meridith's daughter, that she ought to be told of what she was, she was only taken out of charity at first."

"I know it," replied Anna, with a dignified air; "and I am obliged to Mrs. Meridith for giving me such an education as has not disgraced that charity. If I *am* proud, I am sorry for it, for I well know I have nothing to be proud of; but I hope I shall never be insensible to the kindness of Mrs. Meridith, or my uncle and aunt's, and as for what that lady has done for *them*, it was because their mother was her first friend; they wanted not her assistance, though they know how to value her friendship, and condescension in noticing me as she has done; and there are other people who rejoice at it for my mother's sake."

"That we all do, Miss," said the old man, "and as for your being proud, no one thinks you so, any more than Mrs. Meridith herself; and it is a rare thing to see ladies like her with so little, and remember former kindnesses, and friends as she does. I am sure old Mrs. Campbell was a good nurse to her, and she has rewarded her family for it."

"I think so, indeed," replied the envious girl, "when she has given them both farms for it."

"You are mistaken there," said Anna, very mildly, for the honest encomiums of the poor man had calmed her anger. "My uncles had

not laboured so long, nor my grandfather before them, not to be able to purchase the farms you mention; and Mrs. Meridith only gave the preference to any other buyer."

"My father could buy a farm as well as them, I fancy," replied Nancy, with a toss of the head.

"I dare say he could," returned Anna, "but you do not imagine Mrs. Meridith would have sold that in which my uncle lived, away from him, if it was in his power to purchase it, any more than she would sell your father's to another person if *he* wished to have it." Nancy Ward now looked half ashamed, and Anna turning from her said something to the other girl (who had stood by in evident distress during this conversation) about her coming to school the next week, and then bidding the old man farewell, she hastened home ruminating on what she had heard, and particularly on that which concerned her father.

CHAPTER V.

When Anna related what had passed at the old man's cottage to Mrs. Meridith, that lady said, "I am glad you answer'd her as you did, for to return anger for anger is never of any use; and if she intended to mortify you, she will find she has lost her aim."

"No," replied Anna, with a dejected air; "for she *has* mortified me greatly, by telling me my father was a beggar; sure he was not so low as that, or my mother would not have married him."

"He professed to be a gentleman," said Mrs. Meridith, "as your uncle has told me, and that he was by no means an uneducated man; and his manners were very prepossessing, but he was little known in this neighbourhood till your mother married him."

"And where could she meet with him?" ask'd Anna, "I thought she knew nobody out of this village."

"But little of the world," said Mrs. Meridith, "or she would not have been taken with his specious appearance; but when about eighteen, she went to return a visit she had received from a young friend at the next town, and there she first knew him; he apprehended her to have more money than she really had, I suppose, and she was handsome, and agreeable, and perhaps at that time he did feel attached to her; it was evident she was pleased with him, and he gained her regard by following her home and making proposals to her father, who did not altogether approve of it; so your uncle says, but he saw her attachment, and therefore complied; a small house was taken for them in the village, and I believe he was to have part of your grandfather's farm, who promised to assist and instruct him in cultivating it; but he soon discovered himself unworthy of so good a wife; and at length she died; and you know the rest."

"My poor mother," said Anna, "how happy should I have been had you lived to have afforded you some comfort! But I am ungrateful to *you*, my dear mamma, in not saying I am happy *now*; and *you* have had your sorrows also; oh! may I be a comfort to you!"

"True indeed, my Anna," returned Mrs.

Meridith, "I have had my sorrows, and deeply have I felt them!"

Anna had never heard more than that her kind benefactress and friend, had lost an affectionate husband, and three children; and she forbore now, as on former occasions, to ask by what circumstances; yet her looks strongly indicated her desire of hearing a more particular account of them; and Mrs. Meridith reading her wishes in her countenance, told her that the next evening her uncle and aunt were with them, she would endeavour to relate them, if she found the recollection not too painful.

"In the mean time," said she, "I am thinking of farmer Ward; it is clear that he and his family are jealous of my attachment to your uncle and aunt, but they do not consider that gratitude, and an early acquaintance has caused me to notice them more than others; besides there is such an upright integrity in your uncle, so free from any of the fulsome flattery I have met with, and so much unaffected intelligence, that his company is agreeable to me, and your aunt's likewise, who is a sensible, well informed woman, and our sentiments agree: she knows what the world is from theory, I from experience; and I scruple not to say, I find them both pleasant companions; but it is not likely farmer

Ward and his wife would be so ; they were I know very differently brought up, and though very honest, industrious people, would despise any other conversation than that which related to their farm and its occupations ; but I do not ridicule them for this, I thought they were happy and satisfied ; at least they were so till Envy reared her snaky head."

"Well, indeed," said Anna, interrupting her, "may Envy be thus represented surrounded by snakes, for she is extending her malice to every one she can reach, and instigating all in her power to do the same."

"It is Medusa, one of the three Gorgons, whose hair Minerva changed into snakes for polluting her temple, who is thus represented," said Mrs. Meridith, "but there is in one of the poets a very striking picture of Envy, describing her as eating her own bowels ; if I am not mistaken it is in Spenser's Fairy Queen, we will look this evening : but to return to farmer Ward, I tell *you* what I mean to do respecting him, because I hope hereafter, (if you find no ill effect arising from it,) you will do the same."

"Oh mamma ! could I but hope to do as you have done."

"No flattery, my dear Anna," said Mrs. Meridith, smiling, "what I have done may be done

by any one who has the means in their power so amply as I have; and if your means are lessened, your sphere of action will be so likewise. I thought that I shewed no distinction between the two farmers; except that I considered one as my friend, but I endeavoured to be impartial in what was done for them as tenants; though I have sold one farm and not the other, yet if farmer Ward wishes to buy his farm, he shall have it on the same terms as your uncle had his."

At this moment Anna would have said, "is not this rewarding farmer Ward for his malevolence to my uncle and me? had she not recollected that in every thing Mrs. Meridith knew best: but the change in her countenance was not unnoticed by her kind friend, who said, "it is better to stop the mouth of envy, by acts of kindness, than by returning their resentment; I should rather say, to endeavour to do it, for though our intention may be good, their animosity may prevent its having the desired effect."

Mrs. Meridith, therefore, took the first opportunity of asking farmer Ward, when he came to pay his rent, if he would like to purchase his farm?

"Oh Madam!" said he, (malice still per-

ceivable in the expression, though the kindness of her manners had seemed to soften his,) "I have not so much money as my neighbour Campbell; I am not able to purchase it."

"I believe your land is of the same value as his," returned Mrs. Meridith, "and you have both made it more valuable by your care and cultivation, you have, therefore, a better right to enjoy the advantages of it than any others."

"Are you determined then, madam, to sell my farm also?" asked Ward with apprehension on his countenance; "certainly not, unless you are the purchaser," said Mrs. Meridith. This unexpected kindness altered the behaviour of the farmer; he made her a low bow, and thanked her with great cordiality.

"I am in no hurry to sell it," continued Mrs. Meridith, "and will readily promise you shall have the first offer of it when I do; and you shall have it on the same terms that farmer Campbell had his."

"I own I should like to be the master of a farm as well as *he*, ma'am," said the man, whose heart was now quite opened by her generosity: "but I must consult my wife and other friends about it: perhaps you would not refuse to take the money by instalments."

"In any way most convenient to you farmer

Ward," she replied, with her accustomed kindness, "for I have that opinion of your industry, and honesty as not to fear your paying me; and I shall have my estate bordered by two as flourishing farms as any in the country, while farmer Campbell and yourself are the owners of them, for I know you spare no pains to make them so."

"Well, I declare I did not think you would have been so kind to *me*, ma'am," returned the farmer; "I have certainly done you wrong; but I'll speak the truth; I beg your pardon, but I thought all your favors were reserved for my neighbour Campbell, and that in a very few years he would have my farm as well as his own, and I should be turned out to make room for him."

"I am sorry you should think so," returned Mrs. Meridith, "you are convinced now, I hope that there was no reason for it; I have always looked upon you and him, as tenants too good for me to wish to lose either."

"Well, this comes of evil surmising," said the farmer, conscious of his ill conduct to Campbell when they met at market, and other places, "I am ashamed of it, that I *be*—dear, dear, how unhappy have I made myself about it, and some other people too, I am afraid, madam," looking

at Mrs. Meridith to discover whether farmer Campbell had mentioned his behaviour to her, but he read nothing in her countenance which indicated it; and indeed he had not thought it worth while to relate it, though he was hurt that her kindness to him, should produce an effect in one who had for many years been his friend and neighbour. "Another evil surmise," resumed Ward, after a short silence. "I'll be bound Campbell ha'nt said a word about it; I'll go home, ma'am, and tell my wife how much I have been mistaken; and I begs your pardon for thinking as I have done; some future time we may talk about the purchase; and pray, madam, accept my hearty thanks for your kindness."

"Oh, don't mention that, farmer," returned she, "it is no more than your due, you have always taken good care of my land."

"I will, madam, for the future," said he, "whether I can raise money enough to buy it or not; but I am ashamed to say it, but truth will come out, I did *not* intend to take any more pains with it; for I thought Campbell would soon have it all."

"Oh farmer, I hope you will never give way to such ill-grounded suspicions again," returned Mrs. Meridith, "depend upon it I would act with the same fairness to you, as to him," and

seeing the poor man quite confused with a sense of his error, she offered him her hand, and begged him to believe her as much a friend to his interest as to Campbell's; "only I have known him a longer time," said she, "and *his* mother was *mine* when I had lost my own."

The farmer appeared quite melted by her condescension, and not being able to say another word he gave her hand a hearty shake, and hurried out of the house to tell his wife how he had been mistaken in what he thought was Mrs. Meridith's intention.

CHAPTER VI.

About this time poor old Molly, who had been a faithful servant, first to their father and mother, and then to the present farmer Campell and his wife, began to lose her strength, and she was not allowed to do any thing in the domestic affairs, but nurse the little ones when she liked, and rock the cradle, but her affection for Anna was not decreased by absence; and when she could no longer get to Rosewood to see her, Mrs. Meridith was anxious that Anna should pay her a daily visit. Mrs. Campbell had now four more children, and it was Molly's pride and pleasure to have as many of them about her as she could; but Miss Anna, and some of Edward Campbell's children must be there also, to make her as happy as any old woman of her age could be. In visiting her, and one or other poor person in the neighbourhood, part of every day was spent by Anna, and Bella would often

accompany her, who, when she saw old Molly surrounded by the grandchildren of her former mistress, would sigh, and say it was just so in their country, and they were as happy and united till the cruel white men came amongst them.

"When I was a girl," said she, "though they do call us savages, my father was good man, he did love his wife, and his father, and his mother, and his children; we did all live in one home, *we* work, and the old did look at us, and tell us what to do, we did no harm to any body; then came cruel war; my father, and all the men went out to fight: oh shocking, shocking day! I cry now to think of it! then came cruel, wicked, white men; and I sold to be a slave!"

"Oh, do not talk of it," said Molly, clasping her feeble hands together, "be thankful, my *dear, dear* children, that you are born in England."

"No slaves here," said Bella, "but there be very many bad people, English people too, but not *all* bad, neither are all black people good, I *could* tell a great deal—but you are happy, happy people that live and die in this peaceful village: I lived in peaceful village once when I was a girl; I was happy then, so

I am now I am old; my dear mistress very very kind to me; I shall die quiet here: no more wars, no more wicked white men; all good here: but I think of what is past, and that makes me cry. I never saw father, or mother, or brothers, or sisters, after I once taken away!"

All the children shed tears at her recital, and Molly folded them to her heart in unfeigned joy that this could never be their case. Anna and the elder boys each extended their hand to Bella, and their countenances more than their words, told them how much they pitied her; the younger ones wept because the others did; and Mr. Campbell when he entered the room was surprized to find so sorrowful a party.

"Oh father," said John, "Bella has been telling us, how she was taken from her father, and mother to be a slave, was not that cruel?"

"Indeed it was, my dear," said he, "but they tell us now, that the Slave Trade is abolished, or at least put under such restrictions, that it is less cruel than before."

"But why can't they hire the negroes, as servants are hired here," asked Anna, "would not that be as well."

"Ah, my dear," replied her uncle, "men either as a body or individually, seldom do any thing well: but it is said the negroes are of such a disposition that nothing but bondage will do for them."

"O, master, their own conduct makes them so," exclaimed Bella; "they treat us ill at the first, and then think we must not seek revenge, or even to escape from their cruelty; but if they good to us, we, good to them, we don't come to them, we want to keep out of their way, but they come for us, and buy us whether we will or not."

"It is a bad subject, my good Bella;" returned the farmer, "nor can I justify many of my countrymen in their treatment of you; but *some* are good."

"Yes, some are good," said she, "but it was my lot to fall into very bad hands at first."

"What did they do to you, my poor Bella," asked John, his heart beating with compassion.

"Oh they beat me, and starved me, and worse than that, they killed my child; or they would not let me see it after it was nine months old, but made me work *hard hard* work."

Here tears seemed to choke her utterance, and the children looked at each other and their father, in silent distress.

"Get something to revive poor Bella," said he, to Molly, whose weeping eyes bore testimony that her feelings were not blunted by age; "and do not begin this subject any more, my dear children," continued he, "you see how it distresses poor Bella, and it only opens to your knowledge crimes which I hope you will never have the inclinations to commit. If as the scriptures declare, these people are suffering for the sins of their forefathers, and their state of slavery has been foretold so many thousand years, we must acknowledge all God's decrees are just, though the crimes of those who enslave and ill treat them, will most assuredly be punished."

Bella was now a little revived, and Anna proposed their returning home.

"Thank you, good sir, for your kindness to a poor negro woman," said Bella, "my mistress will tell you *all*, but me talk no more about it, it tears my heart too much."

Molly begged her to say no more, and the children after kissing her, promised never to ask her any more questions on so distressing a subject.

In a few days after this poor Molly died, as she was sitting in her arm chair; and her young companions supposed her to be asleep, till their mother came in and perceived her altered countenance; she was laid on the bed, and the two eldest children sent to tell Anna that Molly was very ill. Bella and she came down immediately, and every thing was done to restore the pulse of life, but it had ceased to beat, and Mr. and Mrs. Campbell rejoiced that their faithful servant had not suffered more at the close of life. She had lived in their family from the age of fifteen to seventy-five, and deserved by her strong attachment to it, every attention which they paid her, and never did a master, mistress, and servant agree so well as Molly, and both the Mr. and Mrs. Campbells had done. All the children greatly lamented her loss, and with Mrs. Meridith's permission, Anna, Bella, and Syphax, attended her funeral; Mr. and Mrs. Campbell being the chief mourners. Such is a village funeral, where the parade of ostentation is not known; but the simple honours which are paid to honest integrity, come from the heart. Every one had a sigh and a good word for poor Molly, as they returned from the affecting scene; rendered still more so by the un-

feigned grief of the children, and the grateful testimony her master and mistress gave of her fidelity and attachment. All the people were pleased that they were not above attending her funeral themselves; and that Mrs. Meridith should let Miss Anna, (who was *her* child now) follow, was another proof of her condescension; but Mrs. Meridith knew what was due to merit, though in humble life, and rejoiced that she had escaped from a world, where such an acknowledgement of it would have been thought ridiculous, or at least superfluous.

Anna had seen Bella so distressed at reverting to her former days; and had felt so much herself at hearing the recital; that she feared to ask Syphax if he had known similar troubles; but one day as he was assisting her in planting a piece of the garden, he looked up, and with a dejected air, said,

"Ah Miss, this is a deal better than planting sugar canes, with the whip over my head, and irons on my feet."

"Irons on your feet," said she, shuddering, "poor Syphax, why was that?"

"All the slaves wear them in the West Indies, Miss, I come from there."

"Did you know Bella, there?" asked Anna, "no, Miss, she came away before I did come there, she got good mistress before me."

"And where did you know Mrs. Meridith first."

"In the East Indies, Miss, I ashamed to say how I became acquainted; she be too good to me if she has not told all."

"I never heard her say more than that Bella and you were both servants she brought with her from the East Indies," said Anna.

"So she did, Miss, and thank her for it a thousand times; for we had no friends there; poor Bella torn from all her's long ago, and I never had any but poor slaves like myself: I was born a slave, but I did not feel the whip, or the irons, and the cruel ratings the less for that; but I have been a sad, sad man, Miss," continued he, "ask me no more, and if my good lady ever tell you, do not hate me for it as she has forgiven me: I knew no better then, but, good deal of good has come of it to me."

Anna was too mindful of her kind protectress's maxim, "the way to be happy ourselves is to add to the happiness of others, not to take from it." To press for any farther explanation

from Syphax, when she saw he wished not to give it; and she looked forward to Mrs. Meridith's promised recital with increased anxiety.

"I am afraid Syphax has been the cause of some of her sorrows;" said she to herself, "how wrong of him to distress so kind a friend; and what has she gone through, O! if I cannot add to her happiness, I shall never be happy myself."

With this view she was still more attentive to the instructions her kind friend was continually giving her, and those of the different masters provided for her.—Accustomed to be Mrs. Meridith's constant companion, to read to her, and hear her remarks on what she read, as well as to express her own, and have her judgement informed and set right when she had formed a wrong opinion; it was not extraordinary that her understanding was beyond her years, and when little more than fourteen, her manners and sentiments were those of a woman double that age; and in many respects, her ideas and knowledge was far more correct. Her conversation, also, was of great use to William and John; she either lent to them or gave them an account of whatever books she read, and this encouraged in them a taste for literature, it is

probable they would not have indulged, but that they might converse more freely with her.

Mrs. Campbell had now seven children; four boys and three girls, the infant which she had in her arms when Mrs. Meridith first visited them, was grown a fine girl of ten years old; and her sisters were one eight, and the other six; the two youngest were boys, but none of these had that affection for Anna as William and John, who still thought of her as a sister. Anna would have instructed the girls in every thing she knew, had not her uncle and aunt prevented her.

"It is not necessary," said Mr. Campbell, "that *our* daughters should learn singing, and music, and French, or any accomplishment; though for Mrs. Meridith's child, as she has been pleased to make *you*, it is. Our's are farmers daughters, and I hope never to see instilled into their minds a desire to be otherways; which might be the case were they to know a little of what *you* I hope know enough to justly appreciate its value; and which is worth nothing, unless it enables you to amuse Mrs. Meridith, and to pass through the world with more credit to her as her adopted daughter, than you

could have done had you been ill-bred and illiterate; but let my children never have an idea of learning accomplishments, for they can never be useful to them. Every thing which can make them sensible companions they shall know, as far as books, and my ideas of education will permit; and should you continue to live here as your kind patroness has done, I hope you will not find them unworthy of your friendship, or less agreeable companions than Mrs. Meridith has condescended to say she has found their mo her."

Anna could not but allow the justice of his remark; and while she saw how little he thought of those acquirements, which most young ladies are proud of possessing, she imperceptibly learnt how far she ought to value them in herself. She could not say her cousins were the happier for *not* knowing them, since she had not found them causes of unhappiness in herself: the idea of affording Mrs. Meridith amusement, or adding to her pleasure gave a zest to her attainments; but this was a motive her cousins could not have, since their father and mother did not desire it.

"I will not say then," thought she, "that they cannot be happy without them,

but it is all best as it is; it is right I should endeavour to attain them, and that they should *not*. Thus shall we be each fitted for our separate stations."

CHAPTER VII.

The next time that Mr. and Mrs. Campbell came to dine with their kind friend, she recollected the promise she had given Anna, of relating what had passed during her stay from Rosewood.

"I think it but right to relate it," said she, "lest from what has at various times escaped me, you may have formed a wrong idea, and think that I was not so happy in the married state as my regard for Mr. Meridith's memory would otherwise evince.

"You remember, Mr Campbell, when I left your house, I was not more than six years old; happy in having lived with you, and wishing for no other home: I loved my father, for he was very good to me, but I had rather see him at your house than his own, for there I had no one to play with me, or be my companion. When I dined with him, which you know was not very often, it was generally after

he had been fatigued with a long ride in the morning; and when he had loaded my plate with every thing he called nice, and what he thought I should like, and allowed me as much fruit after dinner as I could eat, and gave me one or two glasses of wine to help my digestion, (and truly I needed something for that purpose, as I never rose from the table without a violent head-ach,) he would drink himself five or six times that quantity, and then fall asleep; and I was ready to follow his example; for not daring to open the door, lest I should awake him, I had no other amusement than creeping to the window, and there, with my eyes half shut, and my head and stomach violently oppressed, from the quantity I had eaten, I used to watch the coming of somebody to fetch me home; and glad I was to wake the next morning free from the head-ach, and without the expectation of going again to my father's.

"You know how differently the days passed at the farm, where I ate no more than was necessary for me, and I met with attention from all the servants and labourers, because I was the Squire's daughter; and except the time your good mother took to teach me my letters, and to spell a little, with the use of a needle and thread, I was allowed to play the

rest of the day with Anna, whom I loved as a sister; and when you and Edward were at home, you always joined our party. Thus were my youngest days spent, and often have I looked back to them in far different scenes.

"At length a sister of my father's, who had married Sir Robert Meridith, and had no child of her own, proposed my living with them, saying that I should be quite a rustic if I remained any longer at Rosewood; and with some reluctance, as I have been told, my father consented. My aunt was much older than her husband, and he paid her but little attention; her fortune had been his chief inducement to marry, and of this he made ample use, though what was settled on herself he could not touch. She was proud and haughty, and continually reproved me for talking so much of the farm and your family, whom, she said, I ought to forget entirely; but this I thought I never could do.

"I remained a twelvemonth with her, at their house in Leicestershire, during which time my father came twice to see me; and being told by my aunt that I was already much improved, and only wanted education to make me what I ought to be as his daughter and the heiress of Rosewood, he affected to be satisfied, and told

her he left my education entirely to her; "yet," said he, "I think my dear little Maria don't look so brisk and lively as when she was at the farm." I took this opportunity of enquiring for the friends I had left there, but he could not tell me half I wished to know, as how Anna was, and whether she went to school, and if Edward and you were grown; he said you were all well and grown very much, but as for any thing else he had not enquired. I sent you all many kind remembrances, and would have added some of my playthings for Anna, but as he travelled on horseback, neither himself or his servant could be incumbered with them.

"After this time my aunt went to London, and took me with her; my uncle had been there for many months, and his behaviour to my aunt after our arrival, was still less attentive than in the country. He had his acquaintance, and she hers; a few old ladies like herself with whom she formed card-parties, and spent her evenings; while I was sent to what was called a very good school, and learnt every thing that was taught in it; and when I say this, my dear friends, perhaps you will not imagine it was *much more* than was good. I learnt from the masters who attended, those

accomplishments which are regularly introduced into schools; from the governess all that feigned politeness, which teaches us to appear glad to see a person, when we are not so; to tell them they look well, when their appearance is just the contrary; to acknowledge obligations where I felt none; and even to tell untruths rather than be uncivil, or say what would make my hearers think I wanted politeness. I learnt from the rest of the ladies, and *some* of the teachers, how to deceive our governess, and to make her think we had learnt our lessons when we had not; and these instructions, I am sorry to say, came very easy to me, though those from my masters were hard.

"Yet I often wished myself at the farm again, or at Rosewood, where I had nobody I desired to deceive, and scarcely knew what deceit was; but it was not required there: while here it was in daily requisition, for I had always some fault of my schoolfellows, if not of my own to hide; and though from them I learnt to laugh at my aunt's *finical* ways, as they used to call them, I was obliged to put on all the courtesy and feigned politeness my governess taught me, whenever she came to see me.

"My father could never be brought to visit

me in London, for he said he hated the smoke of it, and would by no means put himself in sight of a ladies boarding-school, who would laugh at the manners of a fox-hunter, and teach his daughter to despise him; but when in the summer vacations I accompanied my aunt into Leicestershire, he would visit us for a day or two, and was evidently pleased when my aunt told him I was wonderfully improved, and knew as much as any young lady of my age. 'Well, well, I am no judge,' said he, 'but I hope she will make a good woman, and not disgrace her mother's memory. Ah! she *was* a woman, Lady Meridith, which is not to be met with in these days.'

'But have you forgot your old friends, the Campbells?' said he to me.

'No, indeed, papa,' I replied, their kindness rushing on my mind, 'and I hope I never shall;' and my enquiries were renewed after them and their family, without dissimulation.

"He told me that your father and mother were grown very old, and that you and Edward were nice boys, with every promise of making as good men as your father was. From my pocket allowance I was enabled to send my good old nurse some token of my remem-

brance, as my father said he would not wish me to forget either her or her children.

'They will be *her* tenants by and bye,' said he to my aunt, 'and then what sort of figure will she make if she *has* forgotten them.'

"I was then about eleven years old, and I remained at this school till I was fifteen; my father died as you know very suddenly, and I was not apprized of his illness till he was no longer in this world. I was then thirteen, and was at first very much hurt, as his strong attachment to me, though singularly expressed, had never suffered him to see a fault in any thing I said or did; and I was sure to meet with indulgence from him, whenever I needed it. He appeared to have been doubly kind to me after I had lost him, but the new mourning I now appeared in, and the increased consequence I gained in the school and with my aunt, on being the heiress of Rosewood and Coombdale, both my father's estates, made me soon forget it; and in two years afterwards I left the school highly accomplished, as my aunt's flattering friends told her, (in my hearing) both in mind and person, and my vanity led me to think they told her true, though from the many lessons I had taken of dissimulation,

I ought to have known the value of their commendations.

"I was now to be introduced to the world, but who was to introduce me was the question. My aunt was too old and devoted to the card-table and her little coterie, to attend me to balls, routs, and dinner parties. Sir Robert had now given up even the appearance of civility to his wife, and lived in a distant county with another woman: but there was the widow of a brother of Sir Robert's whom I had occasionally visited with my aunt, whose circle of acquaintance was much larger, and very different from hers; my aunt went round to about a dozen houses, while Mrs. Meridith visited all who lived at the west end of the town, and was intimate with but a very few: to her therefore I was consigned to see the world, which in the meaning they attach to it, is to dance at several balls, dine at different houses, yet mostly meet the same company; and be able to speak of the merits and demerits of the principal performers at both theatres, and at the opera house, yet in this I was to be careful not to deviate from the general opinion, lest I should be called singular, and positively to know nothing. A few noblemen's ladies, or

their titled daughters, might venture to differ in their likes, and dislikes; but such an avowal would not do for me, who was only a commoner."

Mr. Campbell smiled at these distinctions, and began to hope the recital of their friend would not cost her all the anguish he had apprehended, since she could so cheerfully speak of her introduction to them.

Anna laughed, and said, "I hope I shall never be introduced to the world, for I should make a terrible figure in it; I have never been to boarding-school, you know, mamma."

"True, my dear," returned Mrs. Meridith, "but the lessons you allude to are easily learnt without going there. I found them daily practised in the society I was in, and yet Mrs. Meridith was what was called an amiable woman, and for so young a widow, remarkably strict in her conduct. She had one son, whom I had not yet seen, as he was then at college, but after I was so much at his mother's (for the evening parties to which I constantly accompanied her, were so much later than my aunt's, that she allowed me to take up my residence there when we were in town,) he came home at the vacations, and I was intro-

duced to him; and this Mr. Meridith you will readily suppose was afterwards my husband. But as my marriage will lead me into far different scenes, I shall, if you please, defer them till some other evening. You must be as tired of hearing as I am of relating those circumstances which, however new they may be to you, are old and stale to me; and I am sick of what is called a knowledge of the world."

"And so, dear Madam, should I," replied Mr. Campbell, "but I cannot help acknowledging that we have too much of it in our little village, though in an humbler way. Human nature is the same every where, and a deceitful heart the characteristic which the word of God has given to man; we need not, therefore, go to London, or the great world, to find it out, unless our eyes are shut to what is going on within ourselves."

Supper was then ordered, and Mr. Campbell with great pleasure told Mrs. Meridith the alteration her last conversation with farmer Ward had made in his conduct towards himself.

"He has told me all," said he, "and with that ingenuousness, which I fear is not to be met with in the circles you have described to us, acknowledged himself wrong."

"In that respect," said Mrs. Meridith, "people belonging to less polished society have the advantage, for they are not ashamed to own themselves mistaken when they really feel they are so; while more polite ones never will."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next afternoon the Campbells again joined Mrs. Meridith's fire-side, and after tea she began what she called the second part of her adventures.

"After running the round of polite life which I told you of last night, for three years, I was married at eighteen to Mr. Meridith, the nephew of my uncle, and the ostensible heir to his title and estate; but the fortune belonging to it was known to be so reduced by my uncle's expences, that the addition of mine was considered as a desirable thing, both by my uncle and aunt and Mr. Meridith's mother; as for himself, I have reason to think he would have preferred me to any other woman, had I not been the heiress of Rosewood and Coombdale, but as he expected the Baronetcy, it was very convenient he should have a better fortune to enable him to support it, than would be left him with the title. We were married but a twelve-

month before his mother died; and my aunt, lady Meridith, soon after; and my uncle Sir Robert, married again, and as it was not unlikely he would now have a son, all thoughts of the title were given up, I may say without regret by either of us. My uncle had taken no notice of us for some time, and though he was appointed joint trustee for me, with a friend of my father's; he left every thing in his hands; by my father's will I was not to be put into possession of the estates till I was twenty-five; nor was I allowed sufficient for us to live on in the stile we had been accustomed to; particularly as my husband's fortune was small, and from the hope of his possessing the estate of his uncle, his mother had not proposed his following any profession. His father had property both in the East and West Indies, but since his death the remittances had been entirely suspended; and Mrs. Meridith not caring to encumber herself with any litigation respecting it, had not pursued her enquiries into the cause. My husband now proposed going over to Jamaica, where the West India estate lay, and to claim it for himself, as he had sufficient documents to ascertain it as his property; I had one child at that time, and was large with another. but I determined to accompany him,

and having settled every thing necessary in England, we embarked; intending to be absent not more than three years; and to return previous to my coming of age. I had one maid who attended me, and an old servant, who had lived with the late Mrs. Meridith, determined to follow the fortunes of his master.

"From this time my sorrows began, my first child then about fifteen months old died on the voyage, and I was so ill myself, from sea sickness, that I feared I should not live to see the island we were bound to; and earnestly did I wish my husband had never thought of it. However we arrived there with the remains of my dear little boy, whom I had no sooner seen laid in the ground, than I was taken ill, and a premature birth was the consequence; but the child which was another boy lived, and I loved it with ten times more affection from having lost its brother, and its being born in a strange country. I was too weak to nurse it myself, and a black woman was provided to suckle it.

During this time my husband, who behaved to me with the fondest attention, found out the estate he was in search of, and was put in possession of it without much trouble. We lived in a house which was situated on it; my little boy grew, and I began to recover my health

and spirits, and to think that strange as the people were around me, I could live here happily enough till the time arrived for our return to England.

"Mr. Meridith every day brought me accounts of the flourishing state of the plantation, and the number of his slaves, but though this was the case, we did not appear to receive much emolument from it. The overseer he employed told him there were great drawbacks, and that it was necessary to use a stricter discipline towards the negroes on their having changed their master. I must say I did not like his reasoning, or his manner, and could not be persuaded but that he was imposing on my husband, to whom I mentioned my suspicions, but he thought them groundless; and declared his intention of leaving him in charge of the estate, while he went to look after that in the East Indies, and which he had been taught to believe was still more considerable. I gave up my opinion to his, and offered to accompany him thither: at first he refused, but I could not bear to be left with my child in the care of Jackson, the man I thought so ill of; and therefore taking with us the black woman who was nearly as much attached to my child as myself, with the English servants we

brought over with us, we once more embarked on a stormy sea. Having doubled the Cape of Good Hope we arrived at Madras after a voyage of nearly four months, during which time we were in two violent gales of wind.

"My husband having introduced himself and me to some of our countrymen, settled me there, and I remained with my two female attendants, and the man-servant I mentioned before, while he proceeded to Bengal to identify his property, which he understood by some writings in his possession, was in that province, and bordering on the river Ganges; those of my own sex and country, with whom I became acquainted, endeavoured to make my time pass as agreeably as they could in his absence; but I declined going into any company; my little boy, and the prospect of another child engrossed all my attention, and many anxious hours I passed for the fate of their father, who was absent four months, during which time I heard from him as frequeutly as I could expect, but he did not recover his property here so easily as in Jamaica. While he was away the black woman who nursed my little boy died, and her place was supplied by Bella; she was recommended to me by a lady who had lately purchased her, and offered to give her up to me on the same terms. Bella

had seen many hardships, but her attention to poor Susee, (the woman I lost) while she was ill, made me like her, and she soon gained my good opinion and also my affection.

"Mr. Meridith returned a few weeks before I presented him with a daughter, whom I was enabled to nurse myself, and I had now two children, one born in the West, and the other in the East Indies; I pressed them both to my bosom, and longed for the time when I should return to England and live with them, and their father, either at Rosewood or Coombdale."

Mrs. Meridith sighed when she came to this part of her tale, and a responsive sigh was uttered by all her auditors; who were too impatient to hear the rest of her eventful story to interrupt the silence which for a moment or two prevailed; and she continued.

"After I was sufficiently recovered for him to leave me, Mr. Meridith again went up the country, in hopes of bringing with him, on his return, a true estimate of his property, or an equivalent for it in specie. Myself and children waited his arrival for another four months, and when he came back, it was without any hope of recovering the estate for which he had had so much fruitless trouble. A very small part of it could be ascertained to be his;

and for this he was content to receive a trifling sum compared to what he expected: but the negroes who were employed on the land concluded that he must have received much more, and when he had quitted the place to return home, they followed him, and after murdering our old English servant, who had this time gone with his master, they robbed him of all he had in his possession. Syphax was one of these negroes, whom he had purchased but a few weeks before, and brought away with him, having been pleased with his appearance; and though he was evidently connected with those who followed them, and knew their intention, it was to *his* interference that his master owed his life: for, though he had been his property but a little while, his kindness insensibly gained his affection; and, when the attack was made, Syphax joined those on his master's side—the negroes prevailed in gaining his property, but the eloquence of Syphax saved his life, and his contrition, and faithful attachment ever afterwards, made Mr. Meridith and me highly value him. I was saved the agony of hearing of this rencounter before my husband came back, or I should have suffered greatly. As it was, I was sufficiently happy in having him restored to me, though he came destitute of

every thing but the clothes he wore, and bitterly lamenting the loss of our servant Wilson, whose death was not at first made known to me.

'Our late voyage,' said he, 'has been entirely in vain; for I have given up the small part which I could obtain of the property, I believe to be mine, for a sum of money which I have been robbed of since; my poor servant was killed in my defence; and I am returned to hear all my acquaintance blame me, for having attempted to recover what was at such a distance."

"Syphax was in the room when he said this, and falling on his knees, he exclaimed, with the most affecting earnestness, 'Wilson *be* dead, Sir; I will supply his place if you will let me; I have been very bad man, but the negroes did persuade me; I ashamed that ever I agree to them: but I did not know you a good master till I lived with you, I thought all white men, bad men. They treat us ill, and we treat them ill, but *you* never treat me ill. Wilson die for you, so will I: I keep your life as my own! and your's too, dear lady,' turning to me, 'and the children's for my master's sake. I will be your faithful servant."

'I thanked him, and Mr. Meridith promised to consider him as such.

'But will you return to the West Indies with me?' said he, 'you say you have no friends there.'

'Nor none any where, Massa,' said he, very affectingly, 'for bad men do not deserve to be called so. I have been very badly used in the West Indies, but I go any where with you to the end of the world.'

"He was then dismissed, and I would have persuaded my husband to return immediately to England: 'within a twelvemonth,' said I, 'and I shall be of age, and Rosewood and Coombdale will be your's. Surely on these estates we can live comfortably. O let us go, and think no more of property in the Indies when we have so much at home.' He seemed affected hy my earnestness, but made it appear so very necessary that we should once more visit Jamaica, and leave our property there, in proper hands to send us the remittances, that I agreed to accompany him thither again, secretly hoping that a few months more would land us in England."

Mrs. Meridith now found herself fatigued, and begged to postpone the remainder of her story till the next evening.

"The worst is still to come," said she, "and I do not find myself equal to the recital,"

and her friends were too attentive to her feelings to urge her to continue it. Anna related what had passed between Syphax and herself in the garden.

"And his distress lest you should reveal his story, Mamma," said she, "is now accounted for, but he need not have been afraid, for I think it does him credit rather than dishonour."

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Campbell, "for though he had consented to the plan the negroes had proposed, his attachment to his master got the better of his submission to them."

The rest of the evening soon passed away, and Mrs. Meridith was more than usually silent, she appeared melancholy, and as if the distresses she had still to relate lay heavy at her heart.

CHAPTER IX.

The whole party were true to their appointment the following evening, and Mrs. Meridith resumed her story.

"On our second arrival at Jamaica, Mr. Meridith had every reason to believe my opinion of Jackson, (the man in whose care he had left his property, and the overseer to the plantation,) was right, for he was hardly willing to let us re-enter our own house; and Syphax, who soon gained intelligence among the slaves of his rapaciousness, and cruel conduct towards them, informed his master, though not without great fear of the consequence. The very idea of having part of our property in our fellow creatures was to me always distressing; and I now proposed selling the estate while we were on the spot, and discharging Jackson without any recommendation; Syphax and Bella, who also came

with us from Madras, eagerly seconded my proposal.

'Oh Sir, you don't know how he uses them,' said Bella, 'I have felt what they feel.' 'And I too,' said Syphax, 'at least, massa, put some better white man over them than he is.'

"Oh no?" said I "sell them to some humane purchaser, (if we must enter into this horrid traffic) and make Jackson's character sufficiently known to prevent his being employed again, at least over these poor creatures; and let *us* not live in the constant apprehension of what they must suffer to provide us rum, and sugar, and sweet-meats when we are not here to see how they are treated," my arguments prevailed, and the plantation was sold with the slaves upon it; except those who were old and disabled, to whom we gave their liberty, and they were received into a charitable asylum for persons of that description, and to which Mr. Meridith presented a handsome donation.

"Bella and Syphax wept for joy when they saw some of their poor countrymen in this place, and were ready to think all the white men whom they knew in their younger days were

not Christians, 'but now we see what Christians are,' said they, 'and we will love them dearly.' Alas! they *had* seen them before, or men bearing that appellation, but how deserving either were of the title, we must leave to the judge of all hearts to determine.

"When the estate was sold, (and I have reason to think it was disposed of to a compassionate man, as well as to great advantage to ourselves) my husband satisfied Jackson's demands; and we were pleased to hear him say, that he meant to trade with the money he had acquired (and very badly I fear,) and no longer act as overseer to any one.

'There is one cruel, white man less then,' said Bella, 'to whip my poor countrymen.' We were now on the eve of departure, and my hopes were all alive for England, when the yellow fever broke out, and Mr. Meridith caught the infection: he would have insisted on my leaving him but I would not hear of it; I sent my two children with Bella and Syphax to a distant part of the island, fully assured that they would take care of them; and with the best advice the place afforded my husband at length recovered, but my poor English maid died of it, just as she was fondly hoping to return to her native country."

"I have often regretted both her, and Wilson," continued Mrs. Meridith, after shedding a tear to their memory: "as our having brought them from their home, though not against their inclination, made me more desirous of their returning with us; but both their lives were sacrificed to our service; and I think it but a poor amends to their families, the being enabled to assist them, who must feel the loss of a son and a daughter, too keenly for money to recompence, at least if they feel like me. It was my anxiety alone, and extreme solicitude for my husband which prevented my taking the infection; and I was no sooner assured that there was no farther danger of it, than we re-embraced our children, and once more prepared for England; Bella and Syphax were now our constant attendants, and we embarked, and arrived in our own country, in less than a month.

"I had then been of age about four months, and after the necessary preliminaries was put into possession of my estates, and the money we brought with us from the West Indies was vested in the funds, and we hoped to live happily for many years, but my husband's constitution had received a shock from the

fever, and the violent remedies which were given him for it, which he never recovered; and I had the misery of seeing his health daily growing worse and worse; though every medicine and change of air was repeatedly tried: his uncle and mine, Sir Robert Meridith, was not dead, but his second Lady had brought him only daughters; so that he was now anxious for the recovery of his nephew, and often solicited us to try a milder climate, to this I should readily have consented, but he would not hear of it.

'I have carried you over the seas often enough, my dear Maria,' he would say, 'nor will I again risk your precious life for what I have not the most distant prospect of obtaining; my health is too far gone ever to be recovered, but for the sake of our dear children, do you take care of your's,' but let me pass over the melancholy detail.

"Having tried the air of various places, without any material benefit, we at last settled at Coombdale, where he lingered out a painful existence for above three years, which all my attention could not alleviate, and which rendered him still dearer to me, as I saw the fortitude and resignation with which he bore his sufferings,

I became a widow with two children when only thirty years old; need I tell you my distress, or what I felt when I found he was no more—but that would be impossible! the faithful affection of Syphax and Bella, both to him and myself, I can never forget; and I now wished to live only for my children; and in pursuance to his injunction to exert myself for their sake; but alas! they were too soon taken from me!—but why do I say too soon? did not the Almighty who gave them, know the proper time? Oh! that I could cease to murmur. I lost them both in the small-pox within the year after their dear father; during which Bella and Syphax attended them with unremitting attention, and had it not been for them, I must have been swallowed up with excessive grief.

"I looked around, and the world seemed all a blank to me, not one relation whom I could love, when but a few months back I had an affectionate husband, and two children, whose ripening years seemed to promise me every comfort."

Tears now interrupted her speech, and her auditors felt too much to offer a word of consolation, poor Anna wept aloud, and throwing

her arms around her neck, said in broken accents, "Oh! my dear mamma, I can never be to you what these were;—but all my life—every thing in my power,"—sobs and tears prevented her uttering more.

"I know what you would say, my Anna," returned her weeping patroness, "but let me not distress you and all my friends;—alas! what does this melancholy retrospection lead to, but sorrow on every side, and impious murmurings on mine! let me draw my melancholy tale to a conclusion.—Having seen the last duties performed to the remains of all I held dear, who were buried at Coombdale, and where, my friend;" addressing Mr. Campbell, who could only bow his assent, "if you survive me I hope you will see me buried also; I left the place where every thing reminded me of my heavy loss, and after a visit to London for a few weeks to settle, and regulate my affairs, I determined to seek the place of my childhood, and if among my first friends I could find any who could in any measure fill the vacancy made in my affections; for to have no one to care for, and no one to care for us, is dreadful. I accordingly took my journey hither; and have found that

quiet retirement, and a sincere desire to add to the happiness of others, will make sorrows even like mine supportable."

Here Mrs. Meridith ended her narrative, and the swoln eyes of her auditors gave a proof that they had been attentive to it, their silence also was far more eloquent in her opinion than all the professions they could have made. Each looked at her with pity and admiration: and Anna thought she could never do enough, or be sufficiently attentive to such an excellent woman, who had encountered so many sorrows, and had been so good to her.

Supper was now brought in, but neither of the party could eat any, and they tried in vain to obliterate from Mrs. Meridith's mind the recollection of what she had related, the retrospection of her many trials had been too much for her, and she remained absorbed in silent grief. After her uncle and aunt had left them, on finding her friend did not retire to rest, Anna asked if she should read to her, "or would you like a little music, mamma?" said she having heard that was sometimes effica- in expelling melancholy.

"Which do you think," said Mrs. Meridith, "is most likely to sooth grief like mine."

"Reading, mamma, from what I have heard you say;" replied Anna, "I am sorry I mentioned music."

"And what book can offer *me* consolation?" said Mrs. Meridith, with a dejected air.

"I know but of one, mamma, and that is the Scriptures," replied Anna, "shall I read in them."

"Do my child," replied Mrs. Meridith, "and there let me learn that the best of men are not exempt from affliction; why then should I repine at it, but I am an ungrateful creature."

The next morning Anna rejoiced to see the countenance of her kind friend restored to its usual tranquillity, and after breakfast they walked to the farm, as Mrs. Meridith was anxious to see Mr. and Mrs. Campbell after her late recital. When they arrived neither of them were at home, and they were told that one of the labourer's wives had been taken ill in the night, and Mrs. Campbell was gone to visit her.

Thither also Mrs. Meridith and Anna bent their steps, and met her just come from the house, her eyes full of tears, "what is the matter, my dear aunt?" asked Anna, "is dame Lewry very ill."

"She is just dead," returned Mrs. Campbell, "and has left a distressed family indeed: her husband has such bad health, that for more than half the year, he can do no work."

"What family has she left?" asked Mrs. Meridith, "she was always a very civil woman, and seemed industrious."

"She was," replied Mrs. Campbell, "which will make her loss more severely felt, she has left six children, and most of them too young to do any thing."

Mrs. Meridith entered the cottage where the poor man sat surrounded by his children, with looks of the deepest sorrow. "Here is a case worse than mine," thought Mrs. Meridith, "poverty and ill health I never knew." She did not attempt to offer any comfort to the man at that time, but putting some money into his hand she promised to call again.

He would have thanked her, but his countenance seemed to say, "*this* will not restore my wife to me," and then looking at his children he repeated with tears, "if it had been *me*, instead of her, *she* could have done something, I shall never get over this stroke."

"The Almighty is able to support both you and them," returned Mrs. Meridith, "do

not despair," and her eyes expressed the feeling of her heart.

On their return to the farm Mrs. Campbell, ever ready to assist the distressed, said she intended taking the eldest girl, then about ten years old, into her family, and lest her father should feel the want of her at home, (she being the only one who could be of any use in the house,) Anna proposed their sending an old woman in the village whose home was not very comfortable at her son's-in-law, with whom she then lived, to take care of Lewry's family, this arrangement was not put in execution till after the funeral, and they had consulted the poor man upon it; who readily acceded to any thing they mentioned; and was very thankful that his girl should get into so good a place as farmer Campbell's.

The old woman to whom Mrs. Meridith allowed a weekly stipend readily undertook the care of the younger children who were chiefly girls, saying "I knew their poor mother well, and a kind neighbour she always was to me, and *he* too, I shall be happy to do him some good, and I'll take as much care of his children as if they were my own."

Mrs. Meridith and Anna frequently called at the cottage, and the smiling face of one of the

little girls, then about six years old, always attracted their attention; and Mrs. Meridith asked her daughter if she would like to have her to Rosewood, and instruct her in what was necessary to make her a servant to herself.

"Nothing would please me more, mamma," returned Anna, "and under your guidance, and with Bella to teach her what I do not know, I hope I should not spoil her; and Bella will be quite delighted, for she is already very fond of her."

"But your attention to your little favourite must not withdraw your affection from *me*, my dear Anna," said Mrs. Meridith.

"Oh! my dear mamma, how can you think she will?" replied the affectionate girl, "can I ever love *her* as I do *you*, who have done so much for me."

"Nor is she to be made our companion," continued Mrs. Meridith, "only when we chuse to be amused by her; but she shall always be with Bella and Syphax, and never in the kitchen if they can help it, and though from her coming so young we must expect her to treat us with familiarity, if we gain her confidence and esteem, and teach her rightly to

appreciate her own character, we need not be afraid of disrespect. I should wish a servant to be well acquainted with me, and to believe that I would not betray the trust she reposed in me; and it is desirable this confidence should be mutual, though I am sorry to say there are but few servants in whom it can be placed, yet, I think the manner I intend little Betsey to be brought up, would be the most probable way to obtain such an one; Time will shew whether I am right or not."

CHAPTER X.

The next week little Betsey was brought to Rosewood, by Anna, with equal delight on both sides.

"I am going to be Miss Meridith's little maid," said the delighted child; "and I shall have all new clothes; but don't let the little ones," (meaning her brothers and sisters still younger than herself) "cry after me Dame, I *must* go to wait on Miss Meridith you know, she has been so good to all of us," this was said with such an air of importance that the whole party laughed at her, while little Betty walked off, quite satisfied as they did not oppose her going.

"Now you must be very good," said Anna, "and mind what Bella says to you."

"And what *you* say to me, Miss," said the child, jumping along, "for I am to be your servant, and I will wait upon you by night and by day."

"Oh you must not promise too much at present," returned Anna, "you are but a very little girl."

"But I shall *grow*," replied she, "and then I shall learn, and I shall be able to work soon and make all your clothes; see if I don't now."

"All I expect of you at present," said Anna, smiling at her childishness, "is that you will be a good girl, and mind what Bella says, and be very quiet in the house."

"Yes, I was quiet when my poor mother was ill, and so I *be* when father is bad," returned the child, "and so I will when you are ill."

"And at all times," replied Anna, "or Mrs. Meridith won't like it, and then perhaps she may tell me to turn you away, and I shall always do as she desires me."

"O, I will be as still as a mouse," cried little Betsey, putting her finger on her lips. "I would not be turned away for ever so much;—and then she began a long story how one of their neighbour's girls was turned away from her place, because she was not a good servant, and another girl turned out of the school, "so I know it is a very bad thing to be turned

away," said she, "and I will try to keep my place now I have got one."

The simplicity of the child, and her rusticity of manners, amused Mrs. Meridith and Anna for some weeks, but there was about her a conceit, and high opinion of herself, which kept them from extolling her simple attempts to please, too much; though they gave ample credit for "doing the best" as she called it.

Bella was busy the first month in making her an entire new set of clothes, which were plain and neat, and suited to the station Mrs. Meridith intended her to fill.

When Bella went to visit her father's cottage it was some time before Betty could be persuaded to accompany her, lest she should be left behind, or the little ones should cry after her; but on being assured that she should return again, she ventured to pay them a visit, and found her brothers and sisters quite reconciled to her absence, and though they expressed great pleasure at seeing her, they did not desire her to remain with them. And Bella amused her young mistress after her *new servant* was put to bed, with the account she had given to her father, and the

old Dame of her place, and the variety of things she had to do in it

From this time the little girl began to conform to their ways which were at first so strange to her, while her affection for Mrs. Meridith and her young lady daily increased, and Bella took every opportunity of reminding her how much they deserved it.

Sixteen years of Anna's life had now passed away, and her understanding and manners improved every day William Campbell still continued in the farm, and often supplied the place of his father at the neighbouring markets; but John, who was of Anna's age, had for some time expressed a wish for another employment, and Mrs. Meridith proposed his being articled as a clerk to a lawyer in the neighbouring town, and who conducted her affairs in the neighbourhood.

"I look upon your children," said she to Mr. Campbell, "as my relations, and mean to assist them as far as is in my power, if you approve of my plan, Anna; and I will go over to L and speak to Mr. Mansell, and perhaps, for the sake of the young man, we may remain there a few months, in which time he will be introduced to those few ac-

quaintance I have there, and I hope his behaviour will be such, that for his own sake they will notice him after we come away."

Mr. Campbell expressed his thanks, "would my son take my advice," said he, "he would prefer the happy country life to the toils and puzzles of the law; but he is now old enough to know his own mind, and if he prefers it, I will wait on the gentleman you mention, and both John and myself will thank you, madam, to speak in his favour." John was delighted, it was what he always wished, and if Mrs. Meridith would be so kind he would endeavour not to disgrace her recommendation.

The nearness of L. to Downash also made it desirable, as his father or brother visited it every market-day, and he should not feel it as any separation from them; but his three sisters were of a different opinion, they said he would soon become a gentleman, and forget them, and none of the family liked to lose his society.

Anna was surprised to hear Mrs. Meridith talk of spending a winter at L. as she had often heard her rejoice that her residence was not nearer to it.

"I do it," said her friend, "to shew *you*

something of society; the world is much the same every where, only as the circle advances in higher life, dissipation, and dissoluteness of manners too often increase; you have read a great deal of what this world is, but it is necessary you should see something of it also, as your years increase, and not gather *all* your information from books. I know the society in a country town is not considered either very agreeable or improving, yet there may be some families at L. with whom you may form a pleasant acquaintance, and I wish also to show the neighbourhood that I do indeed look upon you as my daughter."

"It is for *my* sake then, mamma, you are going to L." returned Anna, "I can hardly bear you should leave Rosewood on my account."

"I do not expect to meet with any thing which will compensate for the change," said Mrs. Meridith, "but a little variety is necessary for *you*, and after the seclusion I have lately lived in, I could not bring myself to venture farther from home at present, neither would it be prudent for you, who must be gradually initiated, if ever you join the giddy round of of gay life, or it might be too much for you."

Anna replied that her whole desire was to live as she hitherto had done, and to follow the example of her kind friend in every thing, "if indeed, my dear mamma, you intend me the privilege of standing in your place hereafter," said she, "what ought I to be? and how far short shall I fall of *your* goodness? it was that alone which first made you think of *me*; and whatever I am, all I have, and know, I owe to your kindness. Oh! continue to me your instruction and advice, that I may be become more and more like you."

The winter was now fast advancing, but Mrs. Meridith would not leave Rosewood before Christmas; that she might enjoy the festivity of the season with her poor neighbours, who were fed and clothed as usual. On Christmas and New Year's day, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, and *all* their children dined at Rosewood; and on the evening of twelfth day, the three elder girls with William and John and a younger brother about nine years of age, were again invited to partake of a cake. It was Anna's treat to them, and they amused themselves by singing, dancing, or whatever she thought most agreeable to her younger cousins, who never visited her except

at these times, and on her's and Mrs. Meridith birth-day, which both happened in the summer months, lest, as their father said, "it should make them dissatisfied with their situation at home," where they were constantly engaged in domestic affairs. The eldest managed the dairy under the direction of her mother; and the youngest the poultry; and the care of the needle-work for her brothers, and the younger children, chiefly devolved upon the second girl, who used regularly to bring what wanted mending to her mother, and after receiving her directions, supply her sisters and the female servants with work. Mrs. Campbell had two other boys who supplied the place of William and John at school, and there was a little boy and girl still younger at home.

After Christmas, John, having been introduced to Mr. Mansell, and all preliminaries settled, removed to his house; and it was agreed on that he should board with that gentleman; and in a few days after, Mrs. Meridith and Anna, with Syphax and Bella, and little Betty with the other servants, went into a ready furnished house for the winter, determined to be sociable with the inhabitants, and to be pleased with all that was intended to

please them. The estate which Mrs. Meridith possessed in the neighbourhood made her of consequence in L., and the most respectable families made a point of calling on her after her arrival; and when they had been only one week in the town, Anna was surprised to find they were engaged every evening. Mrs. Meridith attended the balls with her, which were once a fortnight, and several private dances were given at different houses, and where Anna was never in want of a partner. Mrs. Meridith's patronage was enough to bring her into notice, and had she not a mind well stored with antidotes against it, and the repeated cautions of her kind uncle, not to be imposed on by all their adulation, poor Anna would have been in danger of losing all her steadiness of mind, and the humble opinion of herself which was founded on propriety.

"Consider, my dear child, it is owing to Mrs. Meridith's favour you receive this notice," said Mr. Campbell, "*her* consequence is such that whom she favours, every one who wishes to please her, thinks it necessary to favour also; but let *her* withdraw her protection, and where would your noticers be then.

"Oh! you and my aunt and cousins would notice me," replied she, with an air of gaiety; "even if Mrs. Meridith gave me up; unless I should do any thing very disgraceful indeed, and even then you would care for me, I know."

"And so would I," said John, who was present at this conversation, "my cousin Anna would be always the same to me, let her name be Meridith, or Eastwood, or what it may."

Anna returned him thanks with earnestness, "It is only at Rosewood, and the farm," said she, "that I expect to meet with real friends; and my intercourse with the world has not alienated my affections from them; but, my dear uncle, you would not have me quarrel with these people, because they do not notice me for my own sake? be assured I properly estimate their attentions, and often smile at them all; but Mrs. Meridith has so often cautioned me against giving any one reason to think I treat them with contempt, that I am careful to return their civility: and if we understand each other right, it passes like current coin for no more than it is worth."

"Well, my dear," replied the farmer,

smiling, "don't let it increase in value, and I am satisfied; remember many people have been fined lately for valuing guineas at *more* than they are worth."

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN Campbell continued much pleased with his situation, and all his leisure hours were spent with Mrs. Meridith and Anna, if they were at home, and when they were not, Syphax and Bella were his companions. As he was known to be countenanced by Mrs. Meridith, he would have been invited wherever she was, had not his father positively forbade it, and as Mr. Mansell's was a very domestic family, he was not without agreeable society in their house. Whenever they dined at Mrs. Meridith's he was of the party; and joined what little company they had at home, and this was all the introduction to the world John met with; nor did he wish for more, as the habits of industry in which he was brought up made him attentive to business, and he was very desirous of shewing his father that the money advanced for him would not be thrown away.

Anna became acquainted with several young

people in the town, some of whom she found could be pleasing companions, when the conversation took a different turn than the amusements of the preceding evening; while others could talk of nothing else.

There was only one family who were of equal consequence in the neighbourhood with Mrs. Meridith, but of very different sentiments; and with these Anna could not converse as freely as with the rest of her acquaintance; the story of her birth Mrs. Meridith had not endeavoured to conceal; but it did not appear to affect the behaviour of any one, except the Miss Hunts, who being distantly allied to nobility, could not bear the idea of a plebeian's daughter being on a footing with themselves.

"Her father was nobody," said they to those within their circle, "and I have heard that he is even now a common beggar, and Mrs. Meridith's choosing to adopt her for a daughter, is no reason she should force her upon all her acquaintance."

"She certainly is a very romantic woman; but my mamma says, and I think so too," said the eldest Miss Hunt, "that as she was so fond of the farmers, and country people, she had better have continued among them; and not

after confining herself to their society for ten or twelve years have come forth again, with an attempt to introduce one of *their* family into the world, whom they say she has educated with all the fine sentiments and benevolent ideas which she herself possesses."

Some of Anna's friends now endeavoured to take her part, by saying she was very well bred, and had a good understanding; and that she was not at all vain of Mrs. Meridith's favours.

"I wonder at that," said the young lady, "for mamma says when she called at Mrs. Meridith's, after she had taken her, there was nothing talked of but the *little Anna.* Mrs. Meridith did not return mamma's call for nearly a twelvemonth afterwards; and refused every invitation which mamma sent her; so much taken up with the education of her darling, I suppose, and she has now brought her forth to astonish society."

Those of Miss Hunt's party who wished to please her, laughed at this sally of wit, and those of Anna's friends left them, to join her and Mrs. Meridith, who were at another part of the room.

It was not long before Anna perceived some of her acquaintance change their behaviour towards her, for Miss Hunt was of too much

consequence not to have her opinion regarded, by those who expected more entertainments at the house of her parents than at Mrs. Meridith's, whom they doubted not would soon return to Rosewood, and there continue the same secluded life she had lately lived; so that Miss Hunt's party enlarged, while Anna's lessened, nor did she continue ignorant of the cause. One of her young friends, who still regarded her as worthy notice, took an opportunity to hint at what Miss Hunt had said; nor did Anna affect to misunderstand her.

"I know," said she, "that I am indebted to Mrs. Meridith's kindness for every advantage I possess, and that I have no claim to the title of her daughter; my birth was obscure, and my father, I fear, little worthy of that name, but my mother, deserved a better fate, and her family was respected by every one, though they are in humble life, and the more so, for not wishing to step out of it. My uncle, whose sentiments would do honour to the highest station, was a father to me, till Mrs. Meridith took me under her care, when I was too young to solicit such favour, or even to think of it; nor have I used any arts to have it continued; but the sense I have of her kindness, ought to make me grate-

ful; nor can I think my whole life spent in promoting her happiness, too great a return."

"Are your parents both dead?" asked her friend.

"My mother is," said Anna, "and I have reason to think my father also, as he has not been heard of since I was born, but it would give me great satisfaction to know he was become a better man; and then, let his situation be ever so poor, it would be my pleasure as well as my duty, to assist him, as far as is in my power."

"You are certainly an extraordinary girl," returned the young lady, "but should not you be ashamed to find him a beggar?"

"Not unless his own ill conduct had made him so," replied Anna, "but if unavoidable poverty, or ill health, had reduced him to that state, he should not be a beggar long."

"Mrs. Meridith would *prevent that*," said the other.

"I have no claim upon her, as I said before," returned Anna, "and her kindness to me is no reason she should extend her benevolence to my father; though she never sees any body in want without relieving them; but the education she has given me, would enable me to gain

a support for him; and in *this* light she *would* prevent it."

"Well, I must again say you are an extraordinary girl," replied her visitor, "and I like you better than ever, such sentiments as your's deserve regard—how superior to the vain boast of birth and title!"

"Birth and title without these opinions, lose half their value in my estimation," replied Anna, "but with them they reflect honour on each other; and do not imagine, because I do not possess them, that I despise those advantages; these distinctions in society are necessary, and should very seldom be broke through: yet I am an exception to my own rule, as I am well aware, through Mrs. Meridith's kindness, I am placed in a very different situation from what I should otherwise be in."

Mrs. Meridith's entrance now interrupted the conversation, and Anna's new friend departed with an increased opinion of her understanding, notwithstanding she had heard Miss Hunt's account of her birth confirmed.

The late conversation dwelt much upon Anna's mind, (but whether from pride, or delicacy she could not determine) she did not mention it to Mrs. Meridith; but the next

time she was alone with her uncle, she repeated it to him.

"Well, my dear, I am glad of it," said he, "it will serve to keep the balance even; don't you remember Nancy Ward's remarks on the same occasion? they were of service to you; and these are only the same in higher life, and perhaps in more refined language. Depend upon it, it is a good thing to be made to remember ourselves sometimes; and I doubt not, though you could not see you needed it, and thought you kept yourself in your proper place, such helps as these were necessary, when vanity had got all her forces about you."

"I did not think I was growing vain at all," said Anna, thoughtfully.

"Not when Mr. Such-an-one asked *you* to dance," replied he, "and you saw that Miss Hunt had selected him for a partner; and when several other ladies were solicitous for the honour of his hand."

"Dear uncle," replied Anna half smiling, and half blushing, "when did you see this? surely you don't come to the balls?"

"No, indeed," said he, returning her smile, "but I know such things as these; has it not been the case in my younger days, when at some wake or fair the two rival village girls have

played the same part? Oh! believe me, the world is all alike, and what is acted at court or in the higher circles, has its counterpart in this country town, and a second, or third edition is brought forth in a still humbler set."

Anna smiled, and said, "I do not doubt it, my dear uncle; but tell me, was my father an illiterate man? had he at all the appearance of a gentleman? and was he not handsome?"

"These two last questions would not have been asked," returned her uncle, "if you had not been at L.; but I will reply to them as well as I am able. In the first place he was not uneducated, he seemed to know many authors, and was not unacquainted with public and historical events; but he was wonderfully conceited, he called himself a gentleman to your poor mother, though we could never hear of any noble family he was allied to; and it was his handsome person and smart appearance, when in this very town she met with him, twenty years ago, that first engaged her affections."

"And what was his employment here?" asked Anna, who at this time could scarcely bear her uncle's playful manner.

"He told us," said he, "that he was intended for an apothecary, and had served his time to one, perhaps as a boy in the shop to make up

medicines; but I will not say—but he must be more skilled in that art, and more industrious, than in farming, to have had any success in it; but the truth is, he preferred idleness to work of any kind."

"And did you never hear him say who were his relations?" enquired Anna, still more inquisitively, and anxious to gain some intelligence of a parent still unknown to her.

"No," replied her uncle, "he told us he was born in Yorkshire, and that his parents were dead, but once I heard him mention a brother who was, as he said, in business in London, but I have consulted every directory I could since meet with, and could never find his name. But let us talk no more about your father, in all probability he is long since dead; don't you want to hear some of our village news? you seem to have forgot all your country acquaintance; aunt, and cousins, and all."

"No, dear uncle, do not say so," replied Anna, "how are they all? do they wish for my return?"

"We begin to think your absence long," returned he, "and so does all in the village; though your aunt and cousins, agreeable to Mrs. Meridith's desire, are careful they should not want any comfort she would allow them if she

was at home, and it is our little Mary's business to carry round the weekly money to the old and infirm."

Anna said she believed they should soon return, as Mrs. Meridith had not renewed their lodgings; and that lady soon appeared, and confirmed the pleasing intelligence, saying, that in the course of another fortnight, they should again be at Rosewood.

The farmer gladly returned with the welcome news, and the intervening time was spent by the ladies in *take leave* visits, and giving two or three routs at home, to make the visiting account even, between Mrs. Meridith and all her acquaintance.

"And then, my dear Anna," said she, "we will return to our own comfortable home; where, I doubt not, we shall see many happy faces at our approach, and all the beauties of the spring to excite our chearfulness. The gardens will be beautiful in a short time, and I doubt not but the old men have done their best endeavours, as they term it, to make them flourishing."

CHAPTER XII.

At the time appointed, Mrs. Meridith and family returned to Rosewood; every one was pleased at the thought of once more seeing it. The village bells rang as they entered it; and all the women, and children, who were not at work, or at school, were on the road to welcome their kind benefactress home.

Anna shed tears on observing their simple and hearty effusions of joy; and while Mrs. Meridith nodded to one and the other, observed how much superior these congratulations were to all the expressions of form and politeness they had lately witnessed.

"We know the value of each now," returned Mrs. Meridith, "and *these* are endeared to us, from being conscious that we have deserved them, by our endeavours to make the poor people happy."

"*You have*, my dear mamma," said Anna

pressing her hand, "*I* am only an instrument of your bounty."

"And am I any more," said Mrs. Meridith, "in the hands of the Almighty? I am highly favoured to have such a place assigned me, and a heart to fulfil, in some measure, the duties belonging to it."

The gardens and pleasure grounds of Mrs. Meridith were her chief pleasure, and she spared no expence for labour, or whatever might adorn them, or render them productive; but no Conservatory or Hot-house was added to her domains; she was content with the flowers the natural soil would produce, and these were brought to the highest perfection cultivation would effect; her fruit too was of the finest kind, and while she could see every sort which the season produces on her table, she wished not for pines or melons. Almost as soon as they were out of the carriage, she and Anna, attended by Bella, Syphax, and little Betty, visited her favourite seats and walks, and were pleased at finding every thing in the highest order, and the violets and primroses ready to appear at their feet. The most grateful feelings were excited in Mrs. Meridith at the beauties around her.

"Can I complain," thought she, "who have

such a place as this allowed me, and the means in my power to make so many people happy? the affection also of this amiable girl and her family! Oh! why did I say mine was a blank in society;" and she sat down and wept on the first seat she met with.

Anna and her young attendant had strolled farther, but Bella perceiving her mistress in tears, hastened towards her.

"Why do you weep, dear madam," said she, with the most affectionate attention.

"Sit down, dear Bella, and I will tell you;" said Mrs. Meridith, wiping her eyes, "you have witnessed all my sorrows, and much of repining under them; but I weep now from a sense of the blessings I have still left me, and with shame for my former ingratitude."

"Oh, dear lady," said Bella, her eyes overflowing, "and what have I been delivered from? and what dreadful things did I know before I came to you? and yet my heart sometimes complains, because people do call me black woman, but you love me for all that, and I do wish to be more thankful and more useful to you, my dear mistress, I am not too old yet."

"And when you are, my dear Bella, that will not alter my affection for you; have I not re-

ceived your former services? and I can never forget your faithful attachment to me."

"I have seen so much of your goodness, madam," said Bella, "that I do not doubt it, and so has Syphax; we never grieve to know what will become of us in old age, but lest we should forget what you have been to us."

Syphax now brought his mistress the first opening violet, which he had been carefully looking for among the shrubs which sheltered them, and Mrs. Meridith received it with her accustomed kindness; and shaking both her faithful attendants by the hand, she told them she once more welcomed them to Rosewood, with the sincerest pleasure.

"And I am sure I am glad enough we are got back again," said Syphax, "for I do not like the town at all, the boys did all run about me and whisper black man, black man, to each other, not that I did mind that, but so much company, and saucy footmen, and chairmen, that I thought to myself, my good lady will be soon tired of this, and I am glad I was not mistaken."

"But my mistress knew nothing of the footmen and chairmen," returned Bella, observing a smile upon her features.

"No more she did," replied Syphax, "but

unless their masters and mistresses were something like herself, I am sure she could not like *them*; and if they *had* been, I conclude, they would not have kept such a set of unruly servants; and, therefore, I suppose, my lady did not like those *she* met there, any more than I did."

Mrs. Meridith told him, "you are right good Syphax, there was nothing at L. to compensate for leaving Rosewood at this time of the year."

Anna now rejoined her kind friend, and they returned to the house, resolving to visit the other part of the grounds after dinner.

In the afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell came to express their pleasure at Mrs. Meridith's return; and while they sat with her, Anna went to see her cousins, and give them an account of John. Her absence from them had made no difference in her behaviour, on the contrary, her regard for them was increased, when she contrasted the plain simplicity of their manners, to those of the gay ladies, with whom she had lately associated.

"We shall now have an opportunity of observing," said Mrs. Meridith to Mr. Campbell, "whether Anna really prefers my quiet life, to the pleasures of the town. Before this visit

she knew no other, but now if she does not recur to the scenes she has left with a wish to return to them, she will gain still more of my confidence and esteem."

Mr. Campbell said he thought she would not, and he was not mistaken, for though Anna often talked of the balls and routs, it was only to say how far preferable the woods and walks about Rosewood were; and which were every day improving. Those of her acquaintance in the town, who could properly estimate her character, though she was so meanly born, and "the beggar's brat," which was the appellation she was now generally known by, amongst the opposite party, were happy to accept Mrs. Meridith's invitation to visit them during the summer; and Anna had often one or two young friends to stay with her, though she could never be persuaded to leave Mrs. Meridith, to return their visits. In the course of the next three or four years, Mrs. Meridith and her usual retinue, visited the great metropolis, and almost made the tour of England, in order to shew Anna every thing worth noticing in her native country, and teach her duly to appreciate the comforts and advantages which are attached to it, as well as its numberless beauties, and variety of scenery. William Campbell, and some-

times John, when he could be spared from the office, accompanied them in several of these excursions; they visited the Dock-yards at Portsmouth, and the different manufactories in the towns they passed through, as in whatever Mrs. Meridith proposed, improvement was blended with amusement.

Little Betty now began to be a great girl, and could read, write, and work as well as any child of her age; and she promised fair to be what Mrs. Meridith wished to make her, (after the model of Bella) a faithful and affectionate servant; but she was not allowed to forget her father, (whose health still continued very poorly,) and his family; every present she received from the young ladies who visited Anna, she carried the largest part to them, and when, at ten years old, Mrs. Meridith, wishing to reward her dutiful behaviour to him, allowed her to receive a yearly recompence for her services; he had his share of what she called her wages Her eldest sister continued in Mrs. Campbell's family till she married, and the rest of the family were all put in a way to get their living.

CHAPTER XIII.

We are now going to relate an event in which our heroine had need of all the exertion and fortitude which the education she had received had so forcibly inculcated. Her mother's grave was always an object of attention to her; and though no pompous monument adorned the place, or flattering eulogy appeared on the simple stone which stood at its head, (her name, and age, with the date of the year in which she died, being all that was engraved there) Anna regarded it with interest, because it was all she had ever known of her parent; and never passed it without reflecting on her birth, and thinking of her father; and it was on this very spot she was destined to meet him, whom she had so often wished to hear of, and who for twenty years had made no enquiry after her.

She was one autumnal evening walking through the church-yard rather later than usual, and alone; having left Betty, who had

come out with her, at her father's to assist in preparing her younger sister's clothes, who was just then going out to service for the first time; it was twilight, and she stepped out of the path on perceiving something near her mother's grave which she could not distinguish without approaching nearer. As she advanced she saw a man stooping down as if to read what was written on the stone, and which the dimness of the evening scarcely allowed him to see. His whole attention was engrossed, and he did not hear her footstep.

"Anna Eastwood," said he, "daughter of William and Mary Campbell,—Ah! that is her, but is there no other name? Is there not another Anna Eastwood? did I not hasten the death of my child also?"

Anna heard no more, but overcome by the suddenness of the discovery, uttered a faint scream and fell senseless on the turf—the man started from his reverie, and perceiving by her white dress where she lay, at that moment lost to all animation as the dead by which she was surrounded; he hastened to her relief, and raising her in his arms, without the least idea how near she was allied to him; he supported her and himself against the tomb-

stone, till her faint breathings informed him she revived. At this moment a labouring man passed along the path; and Eastwood called to him.

"Come here, my friend," said he, "and assist this young lady."

"Gracious me!" exclaimed the man on perceiving who she was, "it is Miss Meridith! how did she come here at this time of the night? is she very bad?" continued he, on observing her tremble, and looking wildly around.

"Don't you know me, Miss? poor Thomas; don't be frightened, nobody shall hurt you; did this man attempt it?"

"Oh no," replied Anna, who had now gained her recollection, and scarcely able to refrain from declaring he was her father; but reflecting on Mrs. Meridith's uneasines at her stay, she expressed a wish to go home.

"Can you walk, Madam," said the stranger, gathering from her appearance and the manner in which the labourer regarded her, that she was in a superior situation. "Will you allow me to assist you? I am a stranger here, or I would offer to call some one, but perhaps this man can procure you a conveyance?"

"I shan't leave her alone with a stranger,"

said Thomas, "who knows what you may be?" ("Who indeed?" thought Anna with a heavy sigh) "or what you have done to her? she a'n't used to be soon frightened; Miss Meridith is none of your timid hearted young ladies."

"Indeed I am not," returned Anna, "I am able to walk now, and if you will accompany me to Rosewood I will thank you, Thomas."

"That I will, Miss," replied he, "I will see you safe home; and be glad you *be* a little more like yourself again."

"And will you not permit *me*, Madam, to assist you?" repeated the stranger, "I do not think you can walk without support."

"I would wish,—I should be obliged;" returned Anna, in hurried accents, and her agitation became again so great that she involuntarily rested on his arm to recover herself.

"I fear I have greatly alarmed you," said he "but I am sure it was unintentionally." "I hope that's true," thought Thomas, who stood watching him as narrowly as the twilight would permit.

"How far are we from this lady's home?" asked the stranger.

"Oh not above a quarter of a mile," said Thomas, "if she could but walk."

"I can now," said Anna, "and I will accept your offer, Sir." She then advanced leaning on her father's arm, her heart beating all the way with an emotion not to be expressed, and Thomas on the other side of her.

Neither of them spoke a word till, as they entered the gate which led to the house, they met Syphax coming out in search of his young lady.

"O, my dear Miss," said he, "I am glad you are come; we have been quite uneasy at your staying so late."

Thomas was the only one who could speak, so as to account for it, and his relation was so unconnected, and so full of his surprize at finding Miss Meridith in the church-yard alone with a strange man, that little could be learnt from it, except that as he said he was determined not to leave him with her again, or he would have ran and called somebody; for which he was rewarded with some good ale by Syphax, and a handsome present from Mrs. Meridith.

When they entered the hall where the lamp was already lighted, Anna and her conductor

first saw the faces of each other; but without that emotion on his side which it occasioned on her's; "and *is* this my father?" she was ready to exclaim; but checking herself she desired Syphax to shew him into the parlour, and begging him to wait till she saw him again, she ran, or rather flew up stairs into Mrs. Meridith's apartment, who was anxiously waiting her return; and without giving her time to say a word she threw her arms about her neck, and exclaimed, "Oh! Mamma, I have seen my father!"

For a moment Mrs. Meridith was apprehensive that her senses were affected, but when she saw the tears which accompanied her declaration, and her pale, yet expressive face, she could not disbelieve her; but begging her to be composed, she placed her on the sofa, and then shutting the door of the room she seated herself by her side, and desired to hear more of what had passed.

"This is an event," said she, "which was not unlikely to happen, if your father yet lived; but tell me where did you meet? and are you sure it was him?" the calmness with which Mrs. Meridith spoke, extended itself in a little time to Anna, and she related what had

passed at her mother's grave, with as much composure as could be expected.

"Then he does not know you as his daughter," said Mrs. Meridith, "you had great resolution not to discover yourself, and I am glad of it. Is he now below?"

"Yes," replied Anna, "and what *shall* I do? If he makes any enquiry in the village he will soon find out who I am; and then—"

"What then?" said Mrs. Meridith, "he may be a reformed man, and what you have already witnessed seems to promise it; I will go and talk to him, and if by his conversation I find him a different man from what he once was, you may yet have reason to rejoice in your father."

"And may not I go too?" asked Anna.

"If you can command your feelings to hear the account he may give of himself, without discovery, I have no objection," replied Mrs. Meridith.

"I think I can, after what has already passed," said Anna, "pray let me go, I will not say a word," and they descended to the parlour together.

The Stranger rose at their entrance; while Anna shrunk behind her protectress: his ap-

pearance was not uninteresting, and though a deep melancholy sat upon his features, it might be seen he had once been handsome; he looked older than he really was, and his clothes and address evinced him to be above a common person.

"Pray be seated, Sir," said Mrs. Meridith, "I am come to thank you for your assistance to Miss Meridith; I hope my servant has not neglected to offer you some refreshment," and she rang the bell; the Stranger bowed, and declined taking any thing; and hoped the young lady was quite recovered.

Anna's lips moved, but her pale and agitated countenance told him she was not. When Syphax entered he replenished the fire, and placed something to eat and drink on the table, but still the stranger refused it.

"Are you quite unknown in the village, Sir," asked Mrs. Meridith.

"At present I am, Madam,—but I expect to meet—I *have* been acquainted"—here he hesitated, and was again silent.

"You will think my questions very impertinent, Sir," resumed Mrs. Meridith, "if I do not tell you that I take your name to be Eastwood."

"And is it possible any one can know me?" exclaimed the man, and covering his face with his hand, "Oh, do not say you do; for I am truly ashamed of what I have been."

"You *are* the person I took you for;" replied Mrs. Meridith, looking affectionately at Anna, whose tears flowed afresh; "Yet as much altered perhaps in mind, as in person."

"More, more, I hope, Madam," replied he with emotion, "I am ashamed of what I have been, but how could you know me? I do not recollect any one like you."

"Perhaps not," replied she, "but I have heard of you from Mr. Campbell."

"Oh! then you must despise and hate me," said he, again hiding his face, "but indeed I am not what I was: and can you tell me," added he, "who are alive of that family? is there any of my name among them?" and he looked with eager attention for her answer.

"None that I know of," replied Mrs. Meridith, "the old farmer and his wife are both dead; and their eldest son is married, and has a large family."

"But are they *all* his own children?" repeated the man with great earnestness; "has

he not *one* of mine?" his distress was so great that Mrs. Meridith forgetting the caution she had given Anna could not help endeavouring to relieve it by replying—

"No, but *I* have; *that* is *her*."

It was now Anna's turn to support her father, for he sunk back motionless in the chair, only uttering, "It is impossible."

She flew towards him, and bathed his face with her tears, while she hung over him with inexpressible pleasure and emotion. When a little revived, he exclaimed, and have you been a mother to her when through my inhumanity she had lost her own? Oh! what a merciful Providence has watched over my child, when I, wretch that I was! was totally unmindful of her. In this way he kept soliloquising, while he looked first at one and then the other, and then repeated his thanks to the Almighty. "But can my child forgive me?" continued he, very impassionately.

"Do not ask it, my father!" said Anna, then first venturing to throw her arms around him, and call him by that endearing name, "do not ask it, I am only thankful that I am permitted to see you as you are; I have now no other wish but to evince my ardent gratitude to Mrs.

Meridith for all her kindness to me; you must help me to do it, my father."

"And you, my child, must instruct me how," said he, "for till very lately I have been little used to any thing commendable: suffer me to embrace you, and receive a father, who though he has but little to offer you, has an earnest desire to make you all the recompence in his power for his former conduct towards you!"

Anna could only answer him with tears, and while the whole party were thus engaged, Mr. Campbell entered the room, having heard part of Anna's adventure, from Thomas, who on his return home reported it through the village, "how he had met Miss Meridith in the churchyard almost as dead as a stone; and a strange man with her:" and he hastened up to know the truth of it.

On his entrance Anna looked at Mrs. Meridith to announce her father, and then at him to observe if he recollected her uncle, which he immediately did, and turning away his face he uttered in a low voice, "How richly have I deserved this shame! Oh! how shall I bear it!" Mr. Campbell's countenance was all astonishment and anxiety.

"Pardon my intrusion, Madam," said he, to Mrs. Meridith, "but hearing Anna was ill,

I came to see if it was so, I did not know you had company."

"A stranger," replied Mrs. Meridith, evidently much embarrassed.

"Him who was with Anna?" asked Mr. Campbell, scarcely knowing what to think. "Good Heavens! what can be the matter?"

"Oh! my father!" exclaimed Anna perceiving him almost sinking with shame and confusion.

"Your father!" repeated Mr. Campbell in amazement, "can it be him? is it Eastwood?"

"Oh! look not on me," said the humiliated man, "I know you must detest me!"

"Mr. Campbell can *forgive*," said Mrs. Meridith feeling much at his distress.

"Not *me*, not *me*," replied he, "I cannot forgive myself."

The farmer stood in silent astonishment, while Anna took his hand, and with an imploring look, said, "my father is not what he was, my dear uncle, he is sensible of his faults; can you desire more?"

"No, my child, I am not appointed his judge, or his punisher; his crimes have been their own punishment, I doubt not," here a

sigh, or rather groan from the poor man witnessed the truth of his remark.

"Let me then join your hands," said Anna, with emotion, and drawing them towards each other; "my dear uncle, you have supplied the place of a father to me, and now my father thanks you."

"On my knees I do," said Eastwood, "may your kindness meet with its due reward."

"And are you indeed an altered man?" replied Campbell, overcome by his contrition, "then to my heart I can receive you; and let all that is past be forgotten."

"Unless my future conduct should remind you of it," said Eastwood, "and then banish me from your society for ever."

The rest of the evening was spent in mutual enquiries, and Anna listened with an agitated mind to the brief account her father gave of his former life.

CHAPTER XIV.

"After leaving Downash," said Eastwood, "I went, as was reported, to sea, and what passed there I would willingly hide from all my friends; suffice it to say, though I always wished to be considered as a gentleman, my manners were so different from what properly belongs to that character, that none would admit me into their company; and I associated with the lowest of the crew, spending my time as they did, and oftener drunk than sober: but let me pass over what it pains me to remember; I was more than once or twice nearly drowned by my own temerity, and two of the ships in which I was were wrecked, from which I narrowly escaped with my life. For nearly eighteen years I lived this miserable life, discharged from ship to ship on account of my behaviour, till at the end of that time I contracted a very severe illness, which brought me a little to my senses. I was confined to my

bed with a rheumatic fever nearly twelvemonths; three of which I was on board a vessel which put me on shore at Hull in Yorkshire, and though it was in this country that I was born, I did not know I had any relations left there, for I am ashamed to say I had never enquired for them. On my first setting out in life, being taken from home very early, and the favourite of my school-master, who overrated my abilities, when he recommended me to a medical friend of his, to teach me the profession; I thought myself much above the rest of my family, and on coming to London with my new master, I soon forgot them all. But I am departing from my story, and relating the follies of my youth instead of those of riper age. Alas! what a retrospection is mine! *You* Mr. Campbell can look back on a well spent life: *I* only on infamy!" his silence spoke his distress; and Mr. Campbell wishing to relieve it, said,—

"I think I have heard you mention a brother."

"And it is to that brother," replied Eastwood, "next to Divine Providence, that I am what I now am; when I first knew you I was ashamed of him, and my pride made me tell you an untruth (Oh, that pride should de-

scend to such meanness!) in saying that he was in business for himself, but at that time he was only a shopman, and not being of so dissipated and idle a turn as I was, we never met during the time I mentioned. When I was put on shore at Hull, quite a stranger, though within a few miles of my native place, very ill, and without the use of my limbs, or any money in my pocket, except a very small overplus of my pay, which was left after discharging the surgeon's bill, who attended me on board, my conduct had not been such as to gain me any friends in the ship, and but for the humanity of one of the common sailors, who got me a lodging at a small public house, I must have perished in the streets: but what I suffered was little, *very* little to what I deserved! and now I had time to look back and reflect on the past, though I would have drowned reflection as I had often done before, had not the people of the house refused to bring me any liquor, I wish to shorten my tale as much as I can and will only say, that my brother, who had opened a shop in Hull, and was very prosperous in business, heard my name, and his compassion induced him to come and see if it was his brother, who was formerly ashamed to call him by that name; but poor and wretched as

I was, he was not ashamed of *me*. He removed me to his own house, where both himself and his wife treated me with the kindest attention.

"Oh! how is it," said he, interrupting his narrative, "how is it that all my life through, I have met with the kindest treatment from those of whom I least deserved it? and now again I experience it, what can I say for myself?

"The best medical aid was procured me, and I had sufficient time, as I said before, to reflect on my past life, and bitter reflections these were! I seemed now for the first time to recollect that I had a daughter, and when sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey, I told my brother I was determined to find her, if she was alive: I preferred coming in person to writing, because I could say nothing good of myself; but my brother told me, that contrary to every appearance in our younger days, my father had prospered in the small farm he rented when I left him, and had left what little property he died possessed of between us. 'Your share, and the interest due upon it since his death,' said he, 'shall be yours on your return to Hull; and should you be so fortunate as to find your child alive, let

me advise you to settle it on her: and if my hopes of your reformation are realized, it may still be in your power to add to it by an attention to business, in whatever line you choose to enter.'

"I thanked him for his generosity and advice, determined not to accept the former, unless I found my child in a situation that needed it.

"I only arrived in this village about six hours back, and ashamed and afraid to make any inquiry, my first visit was to the grave of my wife, thinking that if my child was also dead, I should see her name upon the same stone; and then whether I should have proceeded to your house or not, I cannot tell, but accident threw my child in my way at the very spot I went to look for her, though I had not the least idea of who she was, but thought my appearance had alarmed her, as she was passing by."

"Your words, my dear father," said Anna, "assured me who you were, before you saw me; and it was seeing you indistinctly on that spot, which has always been dear to me, and will *now* be much more so, which led me nearer to it, that I might discover what it was."

And now the father and daughter, and in-

deed the whole party rejoiced at their meeting, and the evening was far advanced before Mr. Campbell recollected that his wife would be anxious to hear who the stranger was, and hastened home to inform her. A bed was provided for Eastwood in Mrs. Meridith's house, and a servant sent to the public house for the things he had brought with him. Bella and Syphax were informed who he was, and it was soon spread through the village, that "Miss Anna's father was come, and that he was quite a gentleman, and seemed very sorry for his past behaviour."

Most of the old folk who remembered his marriage, repaired the next morning to Mr. Campbell's, to know if it was really so; and nothing but his declaring that he had forgiven him, and hoped that he was a reformed man, could have prevented their bestowing some invectives on him for his conduct to such a nice young woman as poor Anna Campbell was, and his neglect of his daughter; but when in about an hour afterwards they saw him walk through the village, with Anna on his arm, and observed his dejected and melancholy looks, they altered their opinion, and thought farmer Campbell was right.

"It is a long lane that has no turning,"

said one old man; "he looks very sorrowful, and may be a good father yet, we have all something to be forgiven."

"But will he take Miss Meridith away?" was the eager inquiry of all the younger ones, "what shall we do then?" and great was the anxiety and consternation in the village, till they knew what would be the result of this strange occurrence.

Anna after accompanying her father to the farm, left him there, and returned to Mrs. Meridith, while all her movements were as minutely watched by the young villagers as those of the Emperor Alexander and our other illustrious visitors, when they lately honoured England with their presence.

CHAPTER XV.

When Eastwood was told by Mr. Campbell what were Mrs. Meridith's intentions towards his child, and that she had really adopted her as her own; he scarcely knew whether to lament or rejoice at it. "It is true," said he, "I don't deserve the comfort of her society, but I had allowed myself to hope, that if she was spared, my latter days would have made up to her my past conduct: but Mrs. Meridith and you have the greatest claim to her," added he with a sigh. "You have performed a parent's part, I only bore the name."

Mr. Campbell then related Mrs. Meridith's history, and that Anna's attention seemed absolutely necessary to make her forget her griefs. "Long may she be preserved to us," continued he, "but I have often heard her say, that at her death this adopted daughter should be the mistress of Rosewood, and of whom can she learn the duties of such a situation so well as from her present instructress?"

Eastwood remained silent, and his mind seemed agitated with a variety of emotions. "Setting interest aside," said he, "my duty and my gratitude would not allow me to take her from such a home: but Mrs. Meridith must not be incumbered with me because she has taken my daughter; and yet I should like to witness her goodness, and to live where I could have such examples before me as you and her. Oh! had I not forfeited every claim to your friendship, I might have been still an inhabitant of this quiet village, and blessed as you are with a wife and family about me."

"Spare these self recriminations, my dear brother," said Campbell, "they are only painful to yourself and me; if you think you could like the situation, you might return to the farm you left."

"Oh! no, not that," returned Eastwood, "the remembrance would be too painful; besides, I am too ignorant of farming, and too old to learn: my brother, likewise, has a claim upon me."

"And a very great one," replied Campbell, "but I suppose him to be indifferent where you settle, so you do not return to your former habits. What think you of your first profes-

sion? I should imagine that study and practice would make it easy to you."

"I have always thought of returning to that," said Eastwood, "whenever business was talked of; and did I know of any opening, should be glad to accept it."

"If you allow me to advise you," resumed Campbell, "it would be to enter into partnership with some one already established."

This was certainly the best plan, and it was agreed that they would talk farther on the subject another day; in the mean time Mr. Campbell was to make inquiries, and Mrs. Meridith was informed of their intention.

It met with her and Anna's concurrence, who only hoped a situation might be found not very distant from them; and agreeable to her wishes, Mr. Campbell soon heard of a medical man in very good practice at L——, who was desirous of taking a partner who was a few years younger than himself.

Eastwood readily accepted the proposal, the money which he was to advance was agreed on, and this was all he would accept from his brother, (who was made acquainted by letter of all that had passed) as his share of their father's property; intending, if he was suc-

cessful in his new undertaking, to repay it him, as a small return for his kindness in receiving and supporting him during his illness.

Till this was settled Mrs. Meridith's house was his home, and Anna had frequent opportunities of observing that her father possessed both talents and genius, which not even the wretched way in which he had spent great part of his life would obliterate; he had received a liberal education, both from the wish of his parents to give their children that which themselves had felt the want of, and the favour of his instructor, who admired his abilities, and hoped that they would have led him to greater things than his father intended But notwithstanding these advantages, Eastwood had to begin the world when between forty and fifty years old; because he did not properly value them at the first The praises his abilities obtained, gave him a high opinion of himself, but this did not keep him from the most odious vices; he suffered his inclination to shine in company and to appear greater than he really was, till finding that he was not so highly thought of by others as by himself, he sunk into the opposite extreme, and had it not been for the reflections occasioned by

a severe illness, and the subsequent occurrences, he would have remained a disgrace instead of a benefit to society, and among the lowest and vilest of his fellow creatures, instead of filling the place for which his education had fitted him.

In the evening before he left Rosewood to go to his new situation, Mrs. Meridith put an hundred pound note into Anna's hands. "I need not tell you what to do with it, my child," said she, "I hope it will be well bestowed, and we shall then have the pleasure of seeing a fellow creature restored to society."

Anna in trembling accents thanked her kind benefactress, and hastened to present it to her father as Mrs. Meridith's gift.

"I want words to thank her," said he, "but it is too much: do you think I dare be trusted with such a sum?"

"I hope so, my father," replied Anna, "and double that, had I it to give you."

"Oh! my child, money is not what I want," said he; "do you think I am now entering on business with a view to obtain it? No: but from a wish of employment, and of being useful to my fellow creatures. Every thing else is useless to me now you are provided for; and

oh! my Anna, how amply! what a friend have you found in Mrs. Meridith! may you and I be ever grateful to her."

In the course of the next year Anna, with her father and their kind friend Mrs. Meridith, visited Hull, and was introduced to her uncle, whom they found what the former had described, an industrious and benevolent man, plain in his manners, but an honour to the station he filled: and on their return to Rosewood, Mrs. Meridith celebrated Anna's coming of age with all the festivity incident to the occasion.

The poor were feasted, and the bells were rung, but Anna's heart was not vainly elated by the scene; the recollection of her birth, and her father's past life, checked her rising pride; while the calm sedateness which sat on her uncle's brow, and the propriety of the sentiments he uttered, together with her father's humility, and earnest desire to render his later days more serviceable to mankind, taught her the just value of this world's good; and from Mrs. Meridith (whose benevolence entered into every plan she proposed, and every action of her life,) she learnt duly to appreciate it, but as the means of assisting others, or in other words, as she had often told her when a child,

"the way to be happy ourselves is to add to the happiness of others, not to take from it."

In a few years she married a gentleman who was a distant relation of Mrs. Meridith's, and whose fortune was equal to her own; and that lady and her father had the pleasure of seeing her fulfil the duties of a wife and mother, as the education she had received allowed them to expect.

Mrs. Meridith lived to an advanced age, and Anna never forgot the attention that was due to her, and which she hoped to receive from her own children when she most needed it.

Her father never entirely recovered his health, but his character, which to him was far more desirable, was perfectly retrieved; and he died lamented by many who experienced his attention, and was pleased with his society.

Bella and Syphax both died before Mrs. Meridith was taken from the world; and Betsey continued Anna's servant after she was married.

Mr. and Mrs. Campbell lived some years after the marriage of their niece, and had the satisfaction of seeing their three eldest daughters happily married and settled in the neigh-

bouring villages. William inherited the farm after his father's death, and John became an eminent lawyer; while a younger brother was brought up under Mr. Eastwood's care, and supplied his place at his death.

THE END.

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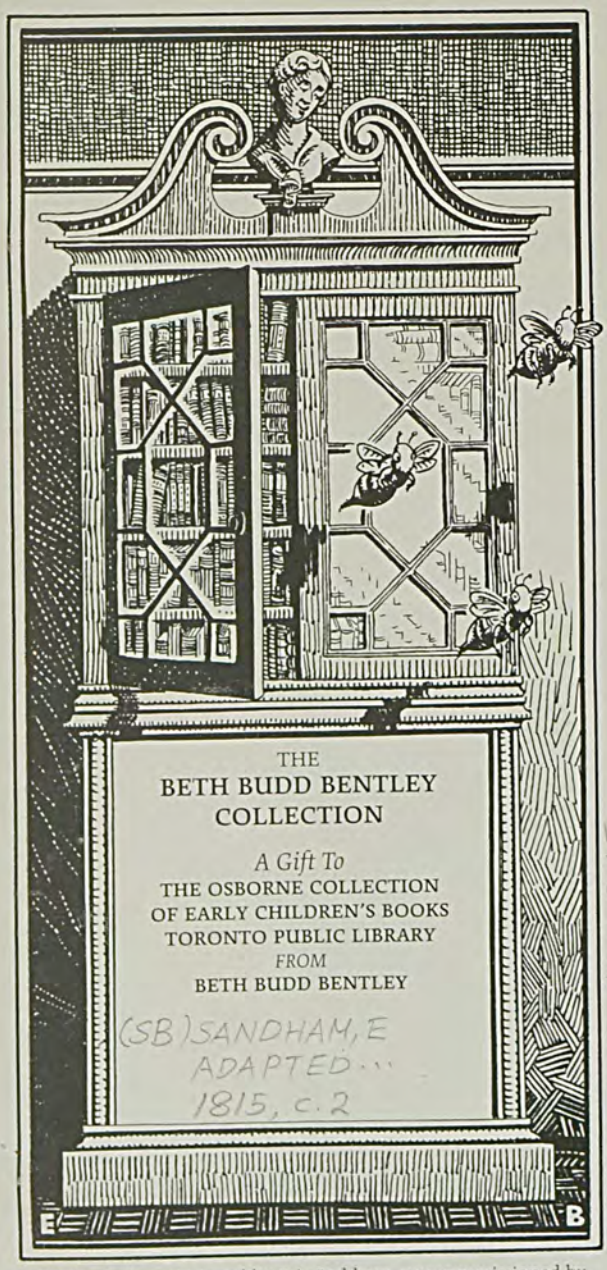

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