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SHERWOOD
CLOAK

[1836]



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David Goff,
from his dear Sister
Sarah Jane Goff
1838

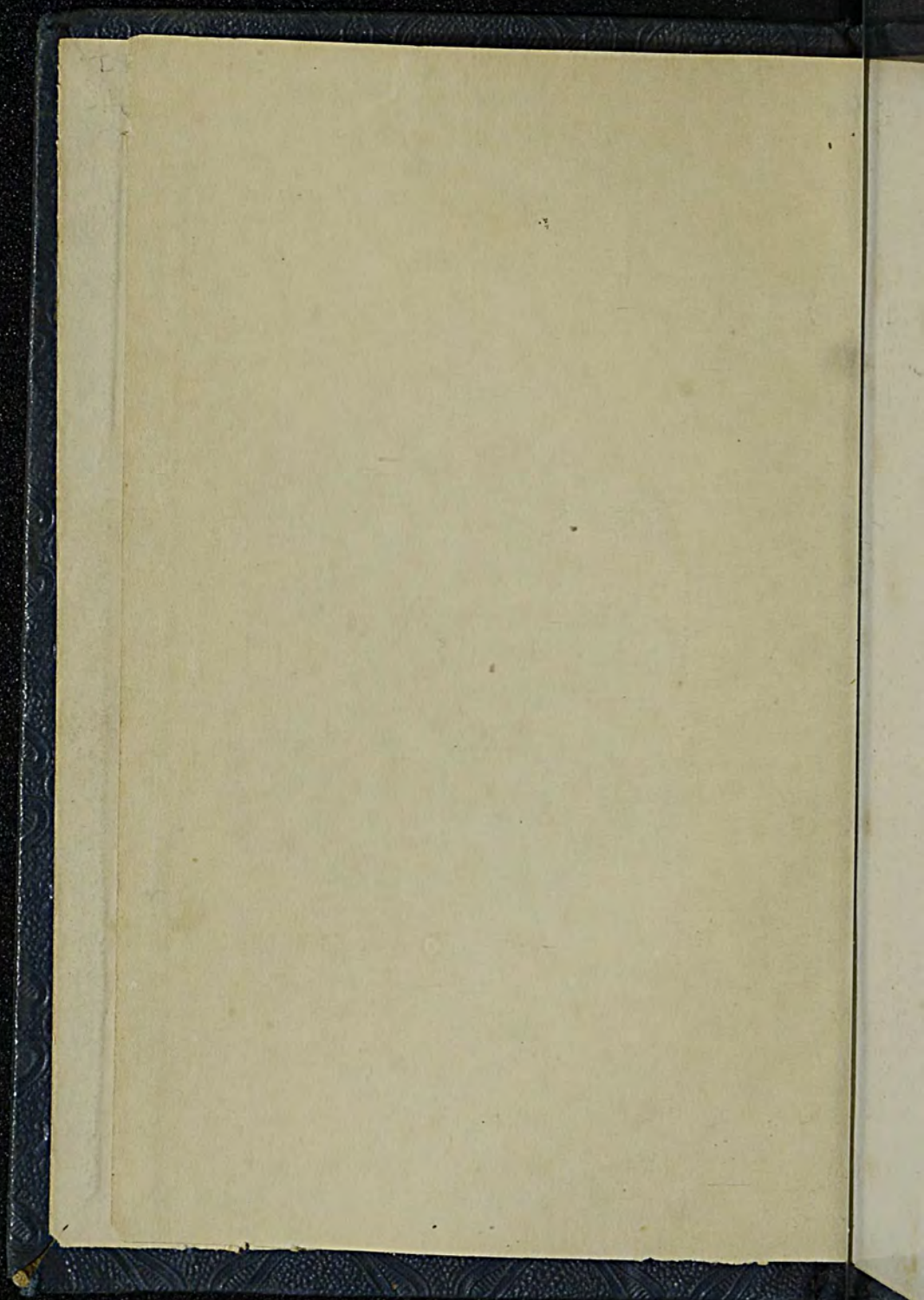
Eliza Leslie

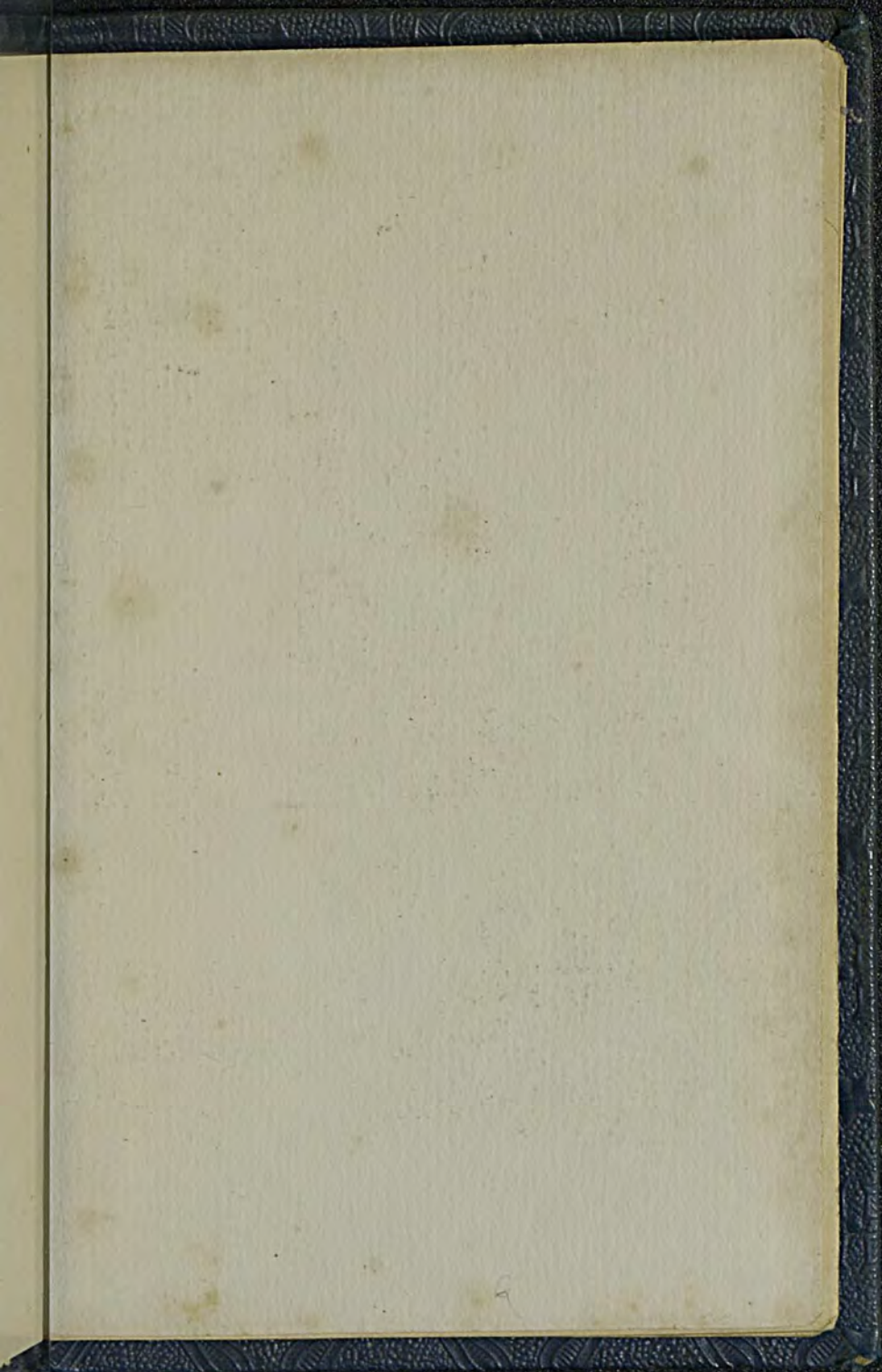
wrote

Girls Book of Devotions,

1832 (Boston, Mass.) under title

American Girls Book)







Or twist them in garlands round their hats

Page 19

Hester Goff
THE CLOAK:

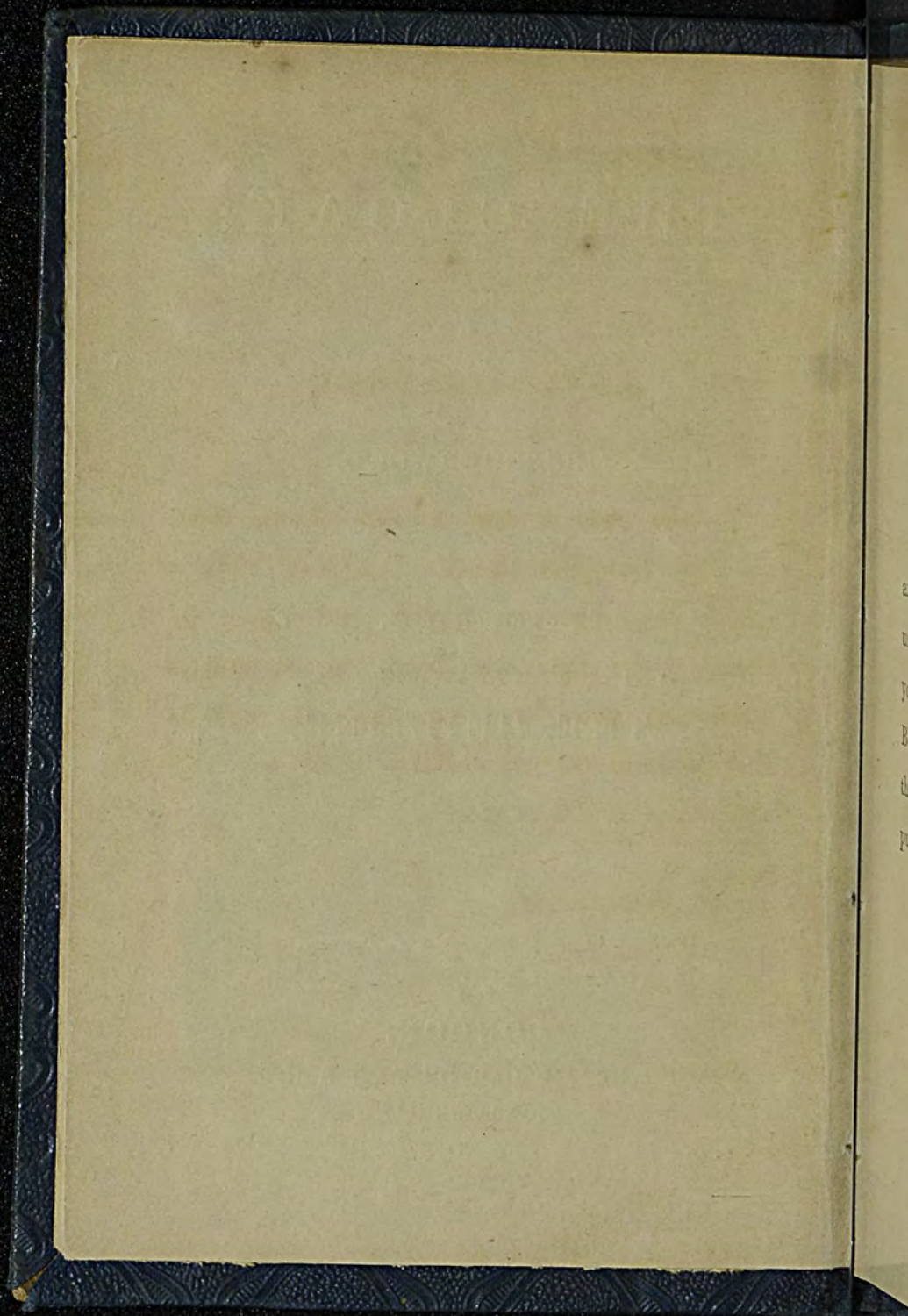
BY

MRS. SHERWOOD.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE QUILTING.

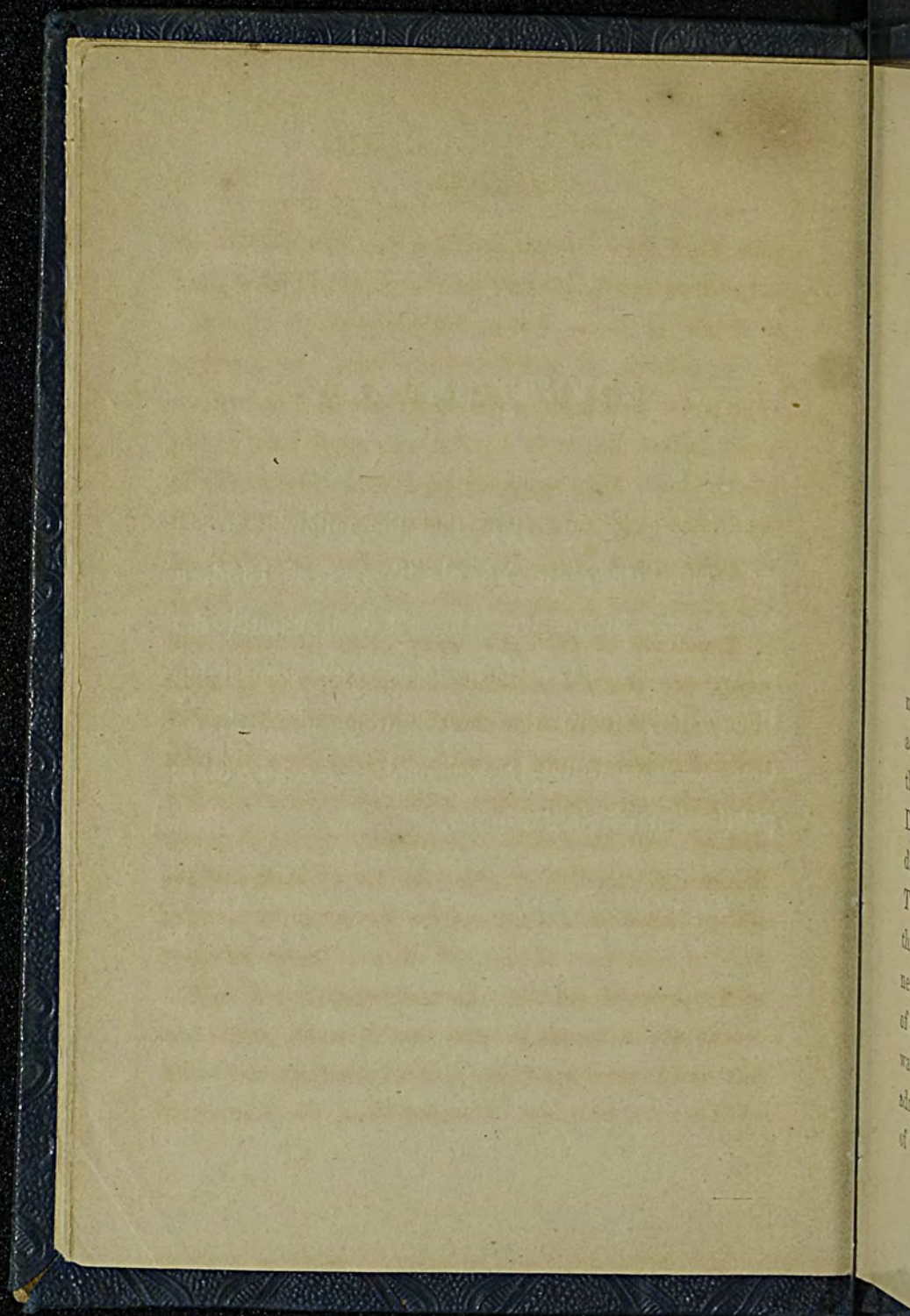
LONDON:
WILLIAM DARTON AND SON,
HOLBORN HILL.



ADVERTISEMENT.

It is but right to state that the following Tales are from THE NEW YEAR'S TOKEN of 1835, a useful and instructive Annual; and should the young reader have that Book, any respectable Bookseller, where this was purchased, will, on that account, willingly exchange it for any other publication of similar price.

58, Holborn Hill.



THE CLOAK:

BY MRS. SHERWOOD.

THE title of my little story may, perhaps, lead my young friends to think I am about to give an account of some such wonderful garment as rendered the hobgoblin prince invisible in the palace of Calm Delights, or adorned the persons of those peerless damsels who abound in the renowned histories of the Thousand-and-One Nights; but My Cloak had nothing remarkable in its form or texture: it was neither composed of silk nor embroidered stuffs, nor of fine lace—it had no external beauty; but it was warm and substantial, and was as much prized and admired in its day as ever was mantle from the looms of Tyre or Babylon. Nevertheless, the history of

this Cloak will not want its interest with those who have a delight in observing that simplicity of thought and act, which prevailed in the family to which it appertained ; and, surely, it will be painful to my readers to consider how very seldom that same simplicity and ignorance of the vain and foolish ideas of the world prevail in these present days among the children of religious persons, as once exhibited itself in the little society of which I am about to speak. I say, once ; for assuredly the world has not failed to do its utmost to disturb the minds of those young people, now advanced to maturer age—filling them with far other cares than those which then only occupied their calm and peaceful breasts—namely, how best they might attain unto that rest which is prepared for the children of God, and be made partakers of that glorious inheritance which is assured to those whose anchor is fixed on the rock of ages.

But I will now proceed with my history. Mr. and Mrs. Seward had been married many years. Mr. Seward had been a military man from the time when he had become of age ; and, in conse-

quence, had led a wandering life, seeing much of the world in various points of view, and being thus enabled to estimate the real worthlessness of earthly pomp and earthly glory; for they who live always in one place are apt to look on the great man of their own town or village as an Alexander or a Julius Cæsar; whilst those who travel have an opportunity of judging of the little importance of any one individual, and of the smallness of the circle over which the influence of any one man is able to extend.

Mr. Seward had been in countries where death—untimely and sudden death—lurked beneath every circumstance of pomp, and where infidelity and contempt of religion went hand in hand with pride and fulness of bread; and he had occasion to bless that fatherly mercy by which he had been redeemed from amidst the thousands of careless ones with whom he dwelt, and compelled, as it were, to take heed to the interests of his immortal soul. He had, therefore, been brought early in the career of his military life to determine that, if ever he married, to choose a wife from among those who, like

himself, desired to enter through Christ the heavenly gate, and to follow that narrow path which leads to the Shepherd's tent. In consequence of this, he neither made beauty, riches, nor talents his chief object; but being, we trust, divinely led, he obtained a help-meet fitted for him in every way he could desire.

Mrs. Seward was the daughter of a pious clergyman, who had, with the greatest care, bestowed on his children that best of earthly gifts, a good education. She had been taught to endeavour, as far as in her lay, to promote the glory of God, and to advance the kingdom of Christ upon earth. It is but little, nay, it is nothing, that any of us can do. Nevertheless, as a good tree cannot bear evil fruit, neither can those who have been adopted into the family of Christ delight in the pomps and grandeurs of this wicked world, or take a delight in its vain pleasures and idle and empty distinctions. On the contrary, such persons cannot but endeavour to serve their God; and if they have been made the humble instruments in the hands of their heavenly Father, of doing any good to their

fellow-creatures, they cannot but consider the promise that they that "be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever," as being infinitely more worthy of their consideration than any assurance which could be given them of any earthly inheritance, however magnificent and glorious.

But my young reader may, perhaps, inquire what is intended by the words, "adopted into the family of Christ?"—To *adopt*, means to receive a stranger into a family, and to give him the privileges of a son. We are all by nature the children of the evil one, and the heirs of hell. Those who are of the number of the blessed are adopted by the Father, and admitted to the privileges of children: a new nature is given to such persons, and every means are taken to fit them for their glorious inheritance. Hence, those who are adopted by the Father are never permitted to rest in sin, but when they do wrong, they are chastised, and made to suffer, as the Bible says:—"For whom

the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

But I am making the beginning of my story very long, and I doubt not but my young reader wishes to hear about the Cloak. Well, I will hasten on with my history, and we shall soon be made acquainted with this wonderful Cloak.

As Mr. and Mrs. Seward agreed so well in their ways of thinking, it cannot be doubted but that they were very happy in each other; and though for many years after their marriage, they never had a settled home, but were constantly moving from place to place—being at one time the inhabitants of beautiful mansions, among groves of oranges and bowers of jasmine, in places where palm-trees lifted their tufted heads towards a cloudless sky, and again shut up in the dark cabin of a ship, and tossed on the troubled sea—yet they found comfort in every scene, and under every trial, for their God was with them and with their little ones; and they used often to join together in singing the traveller's hymn, whilst their eyes

were filled with sweet tears of heartfelt love and gratitude.

How are thy servants bless'd, O Lord!
How sure is their defence!
Eternal Wisdom is their guard,
Their help Omnipotence.

They did not expect perfect happiness in this world; therefore, if they met with some thorns in the hedge which bounded their path, it was no more than they expected, and no more than they felt needful for their everlasting welfare; therefore they did not murmur—nay, they sometimes found sweetness in that broken and contrite spirit which the divine blessing (shed on their afflictions) not unseldom produced within their breasts. It is only those whose hearts are fixed on things present who can complain; for they have voluntarily given up the joys of a future world for the chances of happiness in that which is present; and if such are disappointed, as they surely will be, it is strange if they do not murmur. But I am wandering again from my story. I will, therefore,

proceed without loss of time to say, that Mr. and Mrs. Seward finding, after many years of wandering, that their family was becoming too large to be carried about with convenience and profit, resolved to give up the army and return to England.

I shall say nothing of the long journey by land, and the still longer voyage by sea; but hasten to the period in which they settled themselves in their native country.

The spot which they chose as a home and resting-place, after their many wanderings, was a beautiful cottage, beautiful as to its situation among fair fields and gardens, in England, that country which is, perhaps, unequalled by any other, when all its advantages are duly considered. Mr. Seward's household consisted at this time of his wife, four daughters, one son, and two little orphan girls, whom he had brought with him from his last residence, some thousand miles removed towards the rising of the sun. Mr. Seward's fortune was not large; and inasmuch as those who depended upon him were numerous, it was needful for the family to study economy. It might be asked, Why, then,

did he burden himself with the children of strangers? But these were the adopted ones of Mrs. Seward: she had taken them from the arms of dying mothers, and she had taught them to go;—could she, then, have forsaken them, and could a kind and pious husband have required it of her? It was, however, out of Mr. Seward's power to keep many servants, or to receive many visitors, neither did he desire it. He soon found abundant employment in working in his garden, and in visiting a Sunday and day-school, which he established in his immediate neighbourhood; whilst Mrs. Seward undertook the instruction of her children, who were at that time very young.

And now she found the advantage of that education which her beloved parents had given her. She spent nearly the whole of every day with her little fair ones. Neither was there an advantage of instruction, or a single pleasant scheme, in which Maria and Susan, the little orphans above mentioned, had not their part. Much reason had these poor children to thank their God, "who is the father of the fatherless, and without whose

knowledge not even a sparrow can fall to the ground," for his providential care in finding them such a home. These orphans were not sisters, neither in any way connected with each other, excepting by being members of the same little flock, which included all the children of the family into which they were adopted.

As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Seward found themselves established in their house, they laid down for themselves a certain set of rules, by which, with the blessing of God, they hoped to regulate their family; and, in the first place, I must inform my little friends, that from the daily study of the Bible, Mr. and Mrs. Seward had learned that the whole race of mankind inherit a corrupt nature from Adam, who, by disobedience to God's commands, fell from his original righteousness;—that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually; and that, as one of the articles of our church affirms, "man is very far gone from his original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil;" therefore every person born into this world deserveth God's wrath, and is, in

fact, condemned to eternal death by the justice of God; which justice, being perfect in its nature, cannot so far depart from its perfection as to forgive sin—having no other means of escaping the divine vengeance, but in that way which the divine mercy has prepared, namely, by a close and entire union with Christ our Lord; who being God, paid the price of our transgressions to divine justice by his own perfect obedience and sufferings;—thus opening a way for us to escape; causing those who died in the first Adam, to live again in Him, the second Adam; he being to those who are brought to believe in him as a head, and they being as the members; and thus, as the head cannot be exalted unless the members partake of the exaltation, ensuring our everlasting happiness, as long as his glory and exaltation shall continue, and that is for ever and ever.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Seward had been brought, through the influences of God the Spirit, to understand the truth, and thus they taught their little ones; for they considered themselves as accountable to God for those children whom he had placed

in their hands; and knowing that "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but that the rod of correction shall drive it far from him," they neither refrained from precept nor needful chastisement. Yet that which, perhaps, was more remarkable, and more peculiarly blessed than any other mode of instruction or management which they were led to adopt, was the extreme care which they took to preserve their children from imbibing worldly principles, or entering into the vain gossip of worldly persons, whereby any confusion might originate in their minds between the importance of temporal and eternal things. There was no conversation in this happy family in those simple days about fortune, or beauty, or high rank, or fine clothes, or coaches and horses, and magnificent houses and furniture. Mr. Seward's own children, and the little orphans, who were nearly of the age of the elder of these, never had a pleasure or possession in which all, if possible, did not share; they, therefore, neither on one side, nor the other, comprehended the difference of their respective ranks; neither would the Bible

teach them wherein the child of a humble person might not be equal in the respect of the world, if the education and conduct were equal. This was a lesson which both parties had to learn in after life—a bitter and a painful lesson; but one which, perhaps, was necessary in the present order of things.

Yet there was a sweet and holy simplicity in this ignorance of the world's opinion, and one which at that period added much to the happiness of these blessed children. True religion, in its simplest form, unmixed with the gossip of the religious world, was, therefore, the first object of instruction in this family; but other attainments were not neglected. Some of the sisters learned the ancient languages with their little brother, and they were made useful in various ways, without neglecting the more elegant studies. Mr. Seward's daughters were Harriet, Louisa, Amelia, and Cecilia. The last of these was not of an age to study with the rest of the family, and many of the simple family plans were altered before she entered her twelfth year; for this life is a changing scene; a

rising family soon passes from infancy to maturer years; and if the dear elders of a family are not actually removed by death, they are often otherwise prevented from being the same watchful and incessant guardians of their children which they were in their infant years. Oh! may these views of the shortness and uncertainty of life "teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

It was the custom of this family to rise early, and the passengers who walked by the side of their garden on a summer's morning, might hear the voices of the parents and children all uniting in the sweet morning hymn. All the forenoon was given to study; the dinner was early; and then came the evening walk, when the weather would permit. How sweet were those evening walks! When will that same party meet and walk together again on earth? Never, in this present state of things, we will presume to say—the little flock is scattered, who shall gather them together again? He alone who has sworn that none shall be lost whom his Father has given to him—even the good

Shepherd. How various were the innocent gambols and devices of these little ones as they ran before and behind their parents—sometimes they would vie with each other in collecting the most beautiful assortment of leaves, and sometimes they would assemble round their parents on the grass, to hearken to some story which had either happened to their dear parents themselves, or of which they had heard in their wanderings; sometimes they would run races for nuts, produced from their father's pocket, and sometimes they would load themselves with huge nosegays of wild flowers, or twist them in garlands round their hats.

How sweet was the tea and white bread with which they were regaled on their return. The reading of scripture, or of some improving book then followed, and as the day was begun with a hymn, so did it conclude; a hymn in which every infant voice united; Mr. Seward having carefully pointed out that psalmody was an act of worship, in which the expression of a holy and religious mind would be more acceptable to the Almighty, than the sweetest tones of the human voice. Thus

passed many days, yea, months and years, diversified by little else than changing seasons, and now and then a birth-day, or gala-day.

But how shall I describe the various delights of these holidays; and who would comprehend their charms, were I to describe them?

It was a custom of Mrs. Seward, on a birth-day, to give each of her children three-pence, wherewith they were to provide a supper. With this they commonly purchased curds and whey, a penny loaf, and a pat of butter, bought of an old woman, who lived at the bottom of Mr. Seward's garden, and who kept a cow, and a small shop for such articles as are required in villages.

It was a particular delight to these little ones, to fetch the supplies for their suppers themselves, and then to arrange their purchases in much order in their bower or play-room, when the little personage whose birth-day it happened to be, presided at the feast. Again, they had a treat of another kind, when all the children of the village-school were invited, and they waited on them themselves, being provided with work-bags and needle-books for the

girls, and tops, and balls, and knives, for the boys; a feast, the preparation for which generally occupied them for months before, and drained their purses to the bottom. But the galas of which I speak, were chiefly their summer amusements: they had their winter pleasures too—pleasures for long dark evenings, and for those hours of twilight, commonly the dullest of the day.

It was at these periods, the hours between dinner and tea, that their mamma used to come up into the play-room, and then, when the windows were shut, and before the candles were lighted, and whilst only the glowing embers in the room gave light to counteract the gloom, she caused all the little ones to sit down, whilst she recounted some tale, or part of a tale, which her quick fancy and various experience enabled her to invent on the spot. The stories she thus told on a Sunday were always on religious subjects; but on other days she indulged the fancies of her little ones, according to their special desires—sometimes she would carry them into fairy land, and bring before them all the bright visions of that region of imaginary wonders,

where every palace is built with crystal, and set with rubies and diamonds—where fountains flow with milk, and streets are paved with gold.

Again she would tell wonderful histories of thieves dwelling in caverns, and digging under walls and scaling towers; and she had histories of enchanted ladies, in tapestried walls, of knights in armour, and of dark forests and lone hermitages, with dwarfs, and giants, and fiery dragons;

With stories of Cambuscan bold,
Of Cambal, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife:

and then, on another occasion, she would call up the names of real personages, of kings and champions, renowned in ancient records, telling of the histories of Charlemagne and the peers of France, the heroes of Roncevalles; not forgetting king Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table, with the wonderful exploits of the enchanter Merlin; and then the end of this hero, so set forth in fabulous renown, would raise many questions; for we can hardly suppose that persons could ever

have been so superstitious, as to believe that this celebrated champion still hovered amongst his ancient haunts in the variegated plumage of the jay. I say we, for I have been favoured more than once in being admitted to this rare and delightful species of entertainment: there was, it seems, no end of the sweet and wonderful histories which Mrs. Seward was enabled to recount, and it might, perhaps, be apprehended that her religious instructions, when the Sunday evening recurred, might fail of exciting an equal interest in the minds of the young people; but not so, and they indeed must be ignorant of the nature of true religion, who can suppose that it may not be rendered as much more captivating to the young and pious mind, than any the fairest tale of fiction, as the light of the sun surpasses that of the diamond, which shines only with reflected, not inherent splendour. Yet Mrs. Seward, in her instructions, adhered close to scripture, never permitting herself to wander in these subjects into the regions of fancy; nor need it so have been, when she had such materials to work with as those which follow.

On these occasions the children always had their Bibles, to find the verses to which their dear mamma referred; and then it was that she loved to speak to them of that blessed time when Christ shall reign over all the earth, and there shall be but one Lord and one Prince; and when the Redeemer shall speak peace to the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the end of the earth, *Zech. xi. 10.* The New Jerusalem, also, formed a frequent subject of her discourse; that glorious city which was to come down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—at that blessed period when sin and sorrow, pain and death, being banished from the world, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Into this New Jerusalem, she would say, “there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life,” *Rev. xxi. 27.* Let us then, my little ones, beware, “lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should

seem to come short of it," Heb. iv. 1. But we will trust our God; he is faithful who hath called us, and we shall be washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed in his righteousness. I have confidence, and am assured, that none of you, my little ones, whom I have been led to confide to His paternal care, will be wanting in the day of His coming. Such were the happy hours we spent on a Sunday evening, and those blessed periods were always finished with a hymn and a prayer, led by the beloved parent. Oh! those hours of holy and innocent delight! will they not be remembered to the last moments of these children's lives? Yet, I would not have my readers suppose, that sin will not creep into and disturb the peace of the most advanced Christian society. Yes, indeed, sin sometimes busied itself even in this happy family, and disturbed the calm tenor of many hours, which otherwise would have been those of unmingled peace. But, let it not be believed that sin ever had the dominion in that well-regulated family—these children had been brought to see the corruption of their nature in its true

light; and knew to whom to apply in the hour of need.

It was a plan of Mr. and Mrs. Seward, and one which they had observed from the time in which each child could be supposed to be old enough to learn the value of money, to reward their young people for each duty performed by tickets. These tickets, being of a certain value, were changed into money once a week, and as no individual was able to obtain more than two-pence or three-pence per week, it was needful for them to purchase with strict economy, and to be exceedingly careful of those small matters with which they were to supply themselves from their earnings, in order that they might have something to spare to give away; and, more especially, that they might be provided for the annual visit of the children of the village.

And now I am about to proceed to the more immediate history of the Cloak. It was one cool afternoon, in the middle of the autumn, when this little happy party set out to walk. The father and mother were in the middle, the little ones were

running before, whilst Harriet and Maria, the two eldest of the young family, fell behind. I shall not describe those beautiful scenes through which they passed: the fair meadow, rich with the fading flowers of autumn, the beautiful trees, which were beginning to scatter their yellow and brown leaves, or the clear mountain stream which ran roaring and rushing over an embankment, which had been there placed for the convenience of a mill; but Maria and Harriet walked on a while without speaking; at length Maria said, "Look, Harriet, look at mamma; do you not see her cloak? how shabby it is getting! I cannot bear to see mamma in such a cloak; yet I know very well why she wears so shabby a cloak; it is not that she could not afford herself a better, if she were a selfish person, and cared only for her own children; but then she could not do what she does for Susan and me; and you know that she would rather do without any thing than not provide for us. Susan and I were talking about this only last night, and we were thinking what we could do; it is the cloak that vexes us; it is not fit for dear mamma to

wear. We have been planning something ; but I fear that it will be a long time before Susan and I can bring it to pass."

"Please to tell me what it is," asked Harriet. "It is to buy mamma a new cloak," replied Maria. "And we will help—we will all help!" exclaimed Harriet; "I have two shillings: if that will assist, you shall have it."—"And I have a half a crown," returned Maria; "and now there are four shillings and sixpence already;" and her young features brightened with the hope inspired by the addition of the two shillings which were to be added to her own. Nevertheless, the turn which the conversation had taken had rendered both the young people very sad; it affected them to think of the kindness of that dear mother who would deprive herself of things almost necessary to her station in life; not for her own children only, but for her adopted ones. And it brought them, by the divine blessing, to a more clear understanding than they had ever had before of the exceeding love of God for His redeemed ones; as shown forth in that beautiful passage of Isaiah: "Can

a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget thee." Whilst they were speaking upon this subject, three others of the little girls came bounding back to inquire what Harriet and Maria could possibly be doing. Some minutes, however, had passed before the elder girls could make the two youngest understand the subject of their serious discussion; though Susan, who was a warm-hearted child, and had already entered with Maria into the affair, did all that in her lay to facilitate the explanation. But when this was effected, all with one voice promised their assistance in procuring a new cloak for their mamma. It was pleasant to hear their various propositions; and first, Susan spoke, taking, as was her frequent habit, more time for speaking than for previous reflection. "You know that we have all new cloaks; and that we are to wear them on Christmas-day. Mamma shall have mine, and I will wear my old one. Mamma will love me just as well in my old cloak as in my new one. And I do not care what

other people may think; for I am sure, when I was a poor little orphan baby, nobody would have cared for me, if mamma had not made me her own dear child."—"But Susan," said Louisa, "think how little your cloak would be upon mamma: perhaps we could piece my cloak to it, and so make it large enough," remarked Louisa. "No that will not do," said Amelia; "no, we had better put our money together, and try to buy a cloak. Saturday next is Maria's birth-day, and then we shall have three-pence a piece for our feast; seven three-pences make one shilling and nine-pence; and then we shall be paid for our tickets every week; I am sure we shall soon get the money; and we have all a little in our purses."

"I have only sixpence in my purse," remarked Susan; "I am so sorry; but I was obliged to buy a new thimble yesterday. I ran out from my work to feed the fowls, and I was measuring the barley, you know, Louisa, with my thimble, and I have never seen it since."

"How many thimbles'-full of barley do you give your chickens every day?" asked Harriet. "Do

you remember the story of the Frenchman, who wished to use his horse to live without eating, and he had actually brought him to a straw a day, when he died? Do you mean to give your chickens a thimble-full less every day?"

"Do not laugh at me," replied the little girl, "for I could cry for my own carelessness; as I not only spent my own money for the thimble, but was assisted by Louisa, or I could not have bought my thimble. And now I understand what mamma has often told me, that careless people cannot do half the good to others which careful people can."

"It was fair, that I should pay for part of the thimble," remarked Louisa, "because it was my plan to measure the barley." The little ones then began to reckon how much money they should have when every one had brought all that they possessed; and to their great joy, they found that it amounted to eight shillings and nine-pence.

Nothing more at that time was said on the subject, as their papa called them to run races for a handful of lions' eggs, as the children were in the

habit of calling the sugared almonds, which were often found in the kind father's pocket.

The various little plans for collecting money for this same cloak were put into effect, and the sum which was thought necessary was obtained sooner than had been hoped for. But now a new difficulty arose: they lived some miles from any town, and they were puzzled to know how they could obtain such a cloak as they wished for; but this difficulty also was soon overcome. Mrs. Potter, the person who kept the shop at the bottom of Mr. Seward's garden, informed the family about this time, that she was going to town in a few days, in a market cart, and the good old woman understanding the wishes of the little people, and doubting her own ability to make a proper choice, undertook to persuade the linen-draper to trust her with a few of the desired articles, from which a selection might be made.

Oh, what an anxious and long day was that in which Mrs. Potter went to town, and how was the re-appearance of the market-cart before the cottage-door watched from the play-room window!

When, at length, it was seen, how quickly did all the young party run down the garden! they were at the cottage-door before Mrs. Potter had well alighted; but the good-natured woman did not keep them long in suspense—she presently produced her bundle of cloaks; one of which was scarlet, another green, and a third of a sober grey, bound with a braiding of the same colour. When these were duly spread on Mrs. Potter's counter, and every one of the little subscribers were at liberty to give their opinions, a very warm discussion ensued, and there was some fear lest the various tastes and opinions which each brought forward, with no small vehemence, might have led to the disturbance of that peace, which, as the scripture says, "is more sweet than the precious ointment poured on the head of Aaron," if Mrs. Potter had not proposed that she should take up the three cloaks to mamma, and, saying that one was for a present, use the occasion to obtain her opinion upon the subject.

The cloaks were therefore carried up to the house, and Mrs. Potter showed them to Mrs.

Seward, the young people following and flocking about with such mysterious importance in their manner, that it was surprising their mamma did not suspect some little device. To the amazement, however, of some, and the mortification of others, the cloak of sober grey obtained the favour of Mrs. Seward, and Mrs. Potter, therefore, took occasion before she left the house, to consign it to the care of Maria, having received the money at the same time.

It was tea-time before all this was concluded, and Maria was accordingly detained a little while after the rest of the party were assembled around the table; but when she appeared again, her smiling countenance, indicating that all was as it should be, every young heart was filled anew with joy, and much address and cleverness was shown, as the little people thought it, in the various attempts which they made to look unconcerned, and to speak with indifference whenever Mrs. Potter and her cloaks were mentioned: and yet this cloak was no other than a cloak of grey cloth, of the humblest form; and it was for one who had sat down at the

tables of nobles and princes ; and her simple little ones had no notion but that she would be delighted with it. Neither were they mistaken ; for the next morning, when, at an early hour, George and Clara knocked at her door with a large parcel neatly made up, and directed to her ; and she opened it, and saw the cloak, and learned that it was a present from all her little lovely ones, she burst into tears, and thanked her God for the inestimable blessings she possessed, in these her precious children. It was Sunday morning when this present was made, and it was a cold morning ; and Mrs. Seward gave notice that every one was to put on her new cloak, and George his new great coat, on that happy day ; but which of the little ones thought of his or her new cloak ? Not one of the young party walked before their parents that day to church, but all went behind, in order to see how nicely the grey cloak fitted their dear mamma.

The affair of the Cloak afforded many discussions during that winter ; but Spring, with its flowers arrived at last, and all the transactions and all the innocent excitements which it had occa-

sioned, passed away from the minds of the young people; and were little thought of for months, or even years from that time. Nevertheless, as I happened to pay a visit to Mrs. Seward about that period, I heard the history of the Cloak. It was told me by the mamma herself, one day when I came into her room, just as she happened to be folding it up, with extraordinary care, and laying it in a drawer.

But time went on, and various and rapid changes took place in Mr. Seward's family, ere the Cloak had lost its freshness. Several of the young people married; the son went to the university; and the father and mother, having only two daughters left with them, quitted their cottage, which they began to feel a solitary place, and the little society which was, as it were, a small world of itself. A garden enclosed in the midst of a desert being broken up, its members were compelled to know, what in their happy childhood they had never suspected, that in their intercourse with the world at large, such attention to worldly customs and habits would be required of them, as in the sim-

plicity of their early lives they had not formed the conception of.

It is painful to dwell on these things; and it was particularly painful to the children of Mr. Seward, to find that their adopted sisters could not be received in the world as they were. Yet, no doubt, this painful discovery was good for them, inasmuch as it made them desire more earnestly that glorious time, when every believer shall be united in the Redeemer, and be as the members of one body, of which Christ is the glorious head.

It has often been remarked, that the days of the childhood of our sons and daughters, are the happiest of our lives: and why is this? is it not because we are allowed, by all well-intentioned persons, to keep our children in simplicity whilst they are children? the world allows that there is good taste in so doing; and religious persons judge it right. But when the days of childhood are past, the world will not tolerate simplicity; and even religious persons count it dangerous and unwise. Well, be it so; it only teaches us less to value this present state of being, and to aspire more ardently

after that period, in which "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." Isaiah xi. 6.

I had not been apprised of the entire breaking up of Mr. Seward's family; when, last Summer, visiting a friend who resides about six miles distant from his former residence, I took the first occasion which offered, to proceed from my friend's house to the well-known beautiful cottage, once occupied by this beloved family—where I hoped to find at least the parents, though I did not expect to see the whole assembled group of young people.

I made the greater part of my little excursion in a public conveyance; and being arrived within half a mile of the house, I got out of the carriage, and walked across the fields. Directly before me, on a rising ground, was the house, peeping from among the trees; there was the well known play-room window; but I saw no young faces there, as in past days; yet a sweet odour of

many flowers blew from the garden, as in the days that were gone.

When I entered the garden gate, I thought that there was something in the air of things around, which spoke of the place being in other hands. Yet I could not have exactly said what gave me the idea; however, I went on; and, knocking at the door, a servant informed me that Mr. Seward was gone, and the house occupied by other persons. I asked many questions, but could obtain no information; and I turned away with that chillness of feeling, which every one must have experienced, who has ever found a stranger where he has expected to meet a friend. I quitted the premises; yet I lingered awhile without the gate, to look about me, and recal the days which were past. Where, thought I, are all those little fair ones, whose voices of innocent merriment used to resound through all these scenes? living, I trust, and serving God; yet never, perhaps, all to meet together, on earth. Oh, merciful Father! what would the state of man be, but for thy redeeming love?

My heart was too full, and I turned away and crept down the hill, by the side of a hedge which had been planted by Mr. Seward. Soon being arrived at the end of this hedge, where Mrs. Potter's cottage stands in a garden, I saw that a little habitation, consisting of a very few rooms, had been added to one end of it. This last cottage was more agreeable than the former, inasmuch as it opened upon a field, where I had often walked with Mr. Seward's children; a field which was haunted by the cuckoo in the Spring, and where cowslips grew in rich abundance. I turned into the little wicket which led to this cottage, and coming round the corner, saw a young woman sitting under a large tree before the door of her cottage; she was plainly but neatly dressed; she was busy with her needle, having a table before her under the tree, and a little fair-headed-boy, of about two years of age, was sitting at her feet, with his lap filled with daisies. For an instant I did not recollect her; but looking again, I saw it was Maria. She knew me immediately, and hastened to meet me; I sat down with her under the tree; and

when I asked her after those who had brought her up, she informed me that they were gone indeed, but that she had met with many kind friends; and though living in a cottage, was as happy as any one could be in this changing and imperfect world; for although educated most tenderly, she added, "I was always made to work, and ever taught that happiness does not consist in riches, but in peace of mind, and holiness of life; and, above all, in that dependance on our blessed Saviour, which takes away all anxious thoughts for the future."

She then spoke kindly of her husband; and leading me into her neat cottage, shewed me a lovely little girl sleeping in a cradle. "I see, Maria," I said, "I see you have your comforts; I can believe that you are happy, though in a cottage."

"Do not speak of living in a cottage, Ma'am, as of an evil," she answered. "I should myself have thought it a terrible thing at one time; but thank God, that time is past. I will not hide it from you, Ma'am; but last winter, in the very

excess of the cold, when this my little girl was born, my husband had no work, and we were reduced to extreme poverty; we then knew the dread of wanting bread; but our adopted parents helped us—they did not let us want, and now all is right again with us. And there was one thing, Ma'am, that was very sweet—you will like to hear of it; but before I speak of it, will you please to sit down again under the tree? and if you will condescend to take some refreshment, all that is in this house is at your service."

I did not decline her kind offer; there were young potatoes boiling on the fire, and she added some eggs and a few slices of bacon, which she fried, and with a clean cloth and a loaf of bread, we dined like princes—the baby being on her lap, and the little boy feeding in his favourite place upon the grass. We had our minstrels also; for a black-bird had settled on a neighbouring thorn.

"It was very cold," said Maria, resuming her story, "and the snow was on the ground, and dear Mrs. Seward,—I still would call her mamma,—was then very near to us. Ah, she is not with us

now! I cannot take my babes to her on a Sunday evening as I used to do. And Louisa was there, and little Clara; and my little ones had no coats, neither could I afford to get them any. But my adopted mother would have me come to see her one evening when she had no company, and she brought a cloak from her stores. 'Your babes want warm coats,' she said, 'and this I can spare; let us set to work, and we will see if we cannot make two little coats out of this cloak this very evening.'

"We set to work, whilst one was reading aloud—it was like past hours renewed; our dear parent presided, and she decorated the capes and borders with narrow blue ribbons: and we had nearly concluded the work, when some one asked; 'What cloak was this, mamma?—Where did you get it? How long have you had it?'

"'It has lain by long,' she answered. 'I cannot precisely say where I got it; but the proud world has told me sometime since that I must not wear a cloak like this. And, perhaps, the world is

right in this particular. But, oh! for that simplicity we once enjoyed;—yet it may not be.’

“Then said some of us,” continued Maria, “This is the cloak, the very cloak, the dear old cloak, the lovely cloak! And then, Ma’am, how curious it was, to think that this cloak should have been taken care of, and laid by for my poor little babes; and it looks so well, so handsome, with its little blue border.

“But that evening, Ma’am,” continued Maria, “that was almost the last evening I spent with my adopted mother. As we had not met in this quiet way for some time, we had much discourse of days gone by—of happiness which is now as a dream. For although, (continued Maria), we are assured that blessings are still in store for us, yet they must be altogether different from those which are past. We talked of our walks, our school, and our happy Sundays; when after listening to the glorious descriptions of the New Jerusalem, and the heavenly Canaan—a peace not to be described would take possession of our hearts,

and we would all unite in that beautiful hymn—

‘Distinct, and more distinct, and clear,
Canaan’s purple hills appear;
And Zion’s everlasting light
Bursts all glorious on our sight.’”

It was sweet and affecting to hear Maria discourse to this effect. I trusted that Mr. and Mrs. Seward had not lost their labour with this young woman, although they had not lifted her above a cottage. And when I arose to take my leave, I laid a piece of gold on the table, thanking her for one of the sweetest hours I had spent for a very long time.

THE QUILTING:

BY ELIZA LESLIE.

“ONLY think, Charlotte,” said Marianne Grenville, on entering the room where her sister was endeavouring to get through a warm afternoon in August, by lolling on the sofa,—“Susan Davison has just been here with an invitation for us.”

Charlotte.—And pray who is Susan Davison?

Marianne.—The daughter of farmer Davison, at the Grange farm. We met her at Trenchard’s, the day we were obliged to drink tea there.

Charlotte.—I wonder how you can remember their names, or the people either: I am sure I do not know one of these people from another, and I never wish to know.

Marianne.—But this Susan Davison is really not so bad. She is diffident enough, to be sure; but is rather less awkward and uncouth than the generality of country girls.

Charlotte.—To me they are all alike; I do not profess to understand the varieties of the species.

Marianne.—Well, I was going to tell you, that after a sitting of half an hour, Susan Davison, as she rose to depart, uttered an invitation to her Quilting to-morrow.

Charlotte.—And what is a Quilting?

Marianne.—Now, I am sure you must have heard of Quiltings. It is an assemblage of all the females in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of quilting, in one afternoon, a whole patch-work bed-cover.

Charlotte.—I shall certainly not go. I never quilted any thing in my life, and I hate the sight of a patch-work bed-cover.

Marianne.—But my father and mother were in the parlour, and promised at once that we should both go.

Charlotte.—How vexatious! Was it not enough,

after being educated at the most genteel boarding-school in the metropolis, and accustomed only to polished society, to be brought to live in this out of the way place, where my father has thought proper to purchase an iron-foundry; but we are required also to be civil to the country people; and interchange visits with them? I almost think my father intends being a candidate at the next election, or he never would take the trouble to make himself agreeable to the farmers and their families.

Marianne.—You know, he thinks it is always desirable to be popular with our neighbours.

Charlotte.—That is what I shall never be, unless my neighbours are popular with me.

Marianne.—Now, for my part, I like very well to astonish them by the elegance of my dress, and by my various accomplishments. I am going to put my lace sleeves into my new silk frock, purposely to wear at this Quilting.

Charlotte.—It is well worth your while to take that trouble, when the worst dress you have is too good for such company. I shall do quite the contrary, to let them see how little I care for them.

Marianne.—Then you will displease my father.

Charlotte.—Is it necessary that he should know it? I am sure my mother will never tell him; and for her own part, she never opposes us in any thing. However, if I must be at this Quilting, I shall take care to make the time as short as possible, for I will go late, and come away early.

Marianne.—Susan Davison said, she hoped we would be there by two o'clock, which I suppose will be the usual hour of assembling.

Charlotte.—Two o'clock! Go to a party at two o'clock! Why that would be the height of vulgarity.

Marianne.—Be that as it may—but go we must, as my father and mother at once accepted the invitation for us.

Charlotte.—How unlucky that they happened to be present!

The next day, between one and two o'clock, the Miss Grenvilles saw numerous young girls ride by on horseback, on their way to Andrew Davison's, which was about two miles from the iron-works. "How," remarked Marianne, "these poor girls must have hurried to get their dinners over before

twelve, that they might have time to be dressed and mounted by one o'clock!"

"But, why," asked Charlotte, "do they all wear linen skirts with silk bodies and sleeves?"

"Oh!" replied Marianne, "you surely know that those are their riding skirts; a sort of petticoat made of thick home-spun linen, which they tie on over the skirts of their silk frocks, to keep them clean while riding."

"You seem to be well versed in all their ways," said Charlotte, contemptuously.

It was five o'clock, however, before the Miss Grenvilles were ready to set out for the Quilting, as Charlotte took her usual afternoon's nap, and Marianne occupied two hours in dressing; arraying herself in her straw coloured silk, with lace sleeves, and ornamenting her hair (which was a mass of curls) with a profusion of yellow flowers and gauze ribbon. She put on all her jewels, and sewed her white kid gloves to her lace sleeves, which were confined at the wrists with three bracelets each. She had embroidered silk stockings, and white satin shoes, and threw over her shoulders a

splendid scarf of various colours. This dress she had worn at a boarding-school ball, shortly before the family removed into the country. Nothing could be a greater contrast than the appearance of the two sisters as they got into the carriage: for Charlotte persevered in going to the Quilting in a pink gingham, her hair merely tucked behind her ears with two side combs.

Their mother slightly disapproved of both their dresses, but as soon as they were gone, thought no more of them.

In a short time the Miss Grenvilles arrived at Andrew Davison's, and found the Quilting going on in the large barn, which had been put in order for the purpose. They were conducted to the barn by young Davison, the farmer's eldest son, who had assisted them out of the carriage, and were met at the entrance by Susan, who received them with much respect, as being the two greatest strangers of the party. The guests were all sitting round the quilting frame busily at work. They looked with some surprise at the two sisters so

very differently habited, but no remark was made, even in a whisper.

Charlotte declined taking a chair at the frame, saying, she knew nothing about quilting, and seated herself in a most inconvenient place at the head of the quilt, very much in the way of a young girl, who could not draw out her arm in consequence of the vicinity of Miss Grenville, who saw that she incommoded her, but made no offer to move. Marianne, however, advanced to the frame, and dislodging three or four girls, who rose to make room for her and her immense frock, which was flounced far above her knees, she took out of her reticule an elegant little ivory work-box, and laying down beside it a perfumed and embroidered cambric handkerchief, and a tortoise-shell fan, she most pompously set to work with her gloves on. She found this way of quilting very inconvenient; and, as her gloves could only be taken off by ripping them from her sleeves, she begged, with an air of the most condescending affability, to be excused from the quilting, and then removed to a

seat beside her sister. Charlotte threw herself back in her chair, and putting her feet on the bars of another, sat drumming with her fingers on the quilt, and humming a French song.

The other guests, though they all had too much civility to stare as steadily as the Misses Grenville expected, stole occasional glances of surprise and curiosity at the sisters—one so overdressed and affecting so much condescension, the other insulting them by coming in dishabille, and setting at defiance even the most common rules of politeness.

There sat at the quilt a very pretty young girl, with her dark hair curling on her temples in natural ringlets. She wore a white muslin frock, with a worked cape, and a broad pink ribbon on her neck, which was beautifully white. Her figure was very good, though rather plump than otherwise, and her cheeks had the bloom of roses. She seemed to be acquainted with all the company, and talked pleasantly and sensibly to every one, without any air of superiority, or any affectation of graciousness. She quilted assiduously and

neatly, and assisted with great skill in the various operations of rolling, stretching, and pinning the quilt. The sisters did not distinguish, and did not ask her surname; but they heard every one call her Fanny.

Shortly after the arrival of the Misses Grenville, the two youngest daughters of farmer Davison, on a signal from their sister Susan, went to a table which stood in a corner of the barn, and removing a cloth which had been lightly thrown over it, disclosed several large custards, and three sorts of fruit pies, peach, plum, and apple. The pastry being already cut up, was very soon transferred to as many plates as there were guests, every plate containing a piece of custard and three slices of pie, one of each sort.

These plates were handed to the company on small waiters, by Jane and Mary Davison, while Susan remained near the quilt, and invited her guests to eat; every one being expected to taste all the varieties on their plate. The Grenvilles in the mean time exchanged significant looks.

"Is it puff-paste?" said Charlotte, speaking for

the first time, and touching a piece of pie with the point of her knife.

"I believe not," replied Susan, colouring, "none of our family understand making puff-paste; but I know my mother did her best to have this as short and crisp as possible. Please to try some of it."

"I thank you," answered Charlotte, coldly; "I am very careful of my teeth, and I am afraid to risk their coming in contact with hard substances."

She commenced on a piece of the plum pie, but pointedly avoided the paste, eating out all the fruit, and conspicuously laying aside the crust. Marianne, however, found the paste so palatable, that she could scarcely refrain from eating the whole that was on her plate, and she was not surprised to overhear the young girl they called Fanny praising it to another who sat next to her.

The presence of the Misses Grenville evidently threw a restraint on the whole company, except Fanny; who, to the great surprise of the sisters, appeared perfectly at her ease all the time, and not in the least awed by their superiority.

"Who can that girl be?" whispered Marianne to Charlotte.

"Some vulgar thing, like the rest," answered Charlotte.

"I do not think her vulgar," said Marianne.

"I know no reason for supposing her otherwise," rejoined Charlotte. "You know the proverb, 'Birds of a feather flock together.' See how familiar she is with all of them. She knows every one of their names. She must have been born and brought up with them. By their talk she has been here since two o'clock."

About sun-set the quilt was completed. The chalk-marks, and the clippings of thread, were then carefully brushed off; a dozen scissors were employed in ripping it from the frame, and two dozen hands afterwards spread it to the full size, and shook it till the lofty roof of the barn echoed the sound; which sound brought in near twenty young men, who had been lingering about the barn-door for the last half hour, none of them having courage to venture within, except Susan Davison's two brothers. They were all clean shaved, and in their best clothes; some even had their hair curled, and the Misses Grenville now found occasion to whisper and titter at the costume of

the country beaux, particularly at their very fine waistcoats.

Soon after, one of the little girls came to announce that supper was ready, which intelligence was repeated by Susan to the Misses Grenville: and her two brothers now came forward, each with a low bow, and offered their arms to conduct the young ladies to the house, as they had been previously tutored by their sister. The Miss Grenvilles, however, took no notice of the offered arms, and the young men, much abashed, walked silently beside them. Fanny, escorted by the old farmer, who had accosted her at the barn-door with great cordiality, joined about mid-way in the procession, and they all walked to the house, where supper was set out in the largest room.

The table was of immense size, with a waiter at each end, containing an equipage for tea and coffee; Mrs. Davison presided at one, and Susan at the other. The centre ornament was a roast pig, accompanied by dishes of stewed fowls, and the rest of the table was covered with plates of pound cake, gingerbread, short cakes, dough-nuts,

rusks, preserves, apple-sauce, fried ham, cream-cheese, and sage-cheese; there being always four dishes of each kind, that a share of all the various good things might be within the reach of every one at table. William and Thomas Davison, assisted by several others of the least bashful and most alert of the young men, stood behind the chairs with waiters in their hands, and helped the females; their father being the only man that took a seat at the table.

The Misses Grenville sat together in solemn state; Marianne, carefully employed in defending her finery from the expected inroads of the various things that were handed about in her neighbourhood, but very much inclined to eat heartily of many of the tempting viands that were before her, had she not been checked by the disapproving looks of her sister.

It was with difficulty that Charlotte consented to be helped to any thing, and uniformly, after tasting it, laid every thing on the side of her plate, as if unfit to eat. After she had taken a sip of tea she drew back with a look of horror, and

declaring it to be Bohea tea, and that she would not drink a cup of it for the world, she pushed it away from her as far as possible.

She then requested some better tea, but unluckily there was none in the house; and Mrs. Davison, much disconcerted, apologised in great confusion; saying, that as the very fine tea was not used in the neighbourhood, she did not believe there was any to be had near their house, or she would send and get some. She then asked if Miss Grenville would take a cup of coffee; but Charlotte replied, that though extravagantly fond of coffee in the morning (always drinking three cups), she could not possibly touch it at night.

"Did you never drink any inferior tea?" asked the farmer.

"Certainly," she replied in a disdainful tone, "I drank it always, till the fine teas became fashionable."

"Then," said the farmer, smiling, "if you have been drinking it all your life-time, till very lately, perhaps you might, if you were to try, make out once more to swallow a cup of it on a pinch, and be none the worse for it."

Charlotte looked much displeased, and sat back in her chair, obstinately determined not to touch the tea. Of course all the Davison family felt and looked extremely uncomfortable, and they would have been glad when the Misses Grenville finally rose from table, which they did shortly after, only that the rest of the company thought it necessary to follow their example, and the feast prepared with so much care and trouble was concluded in half the usual time. The female guests were conducted to an adjoining room, while the supper table was cleared away, and then re-set exactly as before for the young men.

Singing being proposed, Fanny was invited "to favour them with a song." She consented at once, and inquired which of her songs they would have. The simple and beautiful Scotch air of the "Bonnie Boat" was named, and she sang it with a sweet clear voice and excellent taste, though with no attempt at ornament. The Misses Grenville exchanged glances and whispers.

The two young ladies were then respectfully requested to sing. Charlotte refused at once, declaring that it was impossible to sing without an

instrument; but Marianne, eager to display her knowledge of fashionable music, complied readily, and gave "*Una voce poco fa*," with what she considered wonderful execution. As soon as she had finished, Charlotte perceiving that the company, though greatly amazed at first, had become much fatigued by this unseasonable exhibition of Italian singing, and that it had not given the least pleasure to any one, ill-naturedly proposed to her sister to try "*Di piacer*," which she also got through, to the great annoyance of the young men who had long before come in from the supper room, and who were certainly not of a class to relish such songs as are unintelligible to the great mass of society.

A fiddler now appeared, and took his seat in one of the windows; there was a reinforcement of beaux, and the Misses Grenville found that a dance was to be the next amusement. Marianne remarked, in a group of young men that had just entered the room, one of remarkably genteel appearance and extremely handsome. "Charlotte," said she, "look at that young gentleman in black, talking to Tom Davison."

"I see no *gentleman* in the room," replied Charlotte, "and I do not know Tom Davison from the other clowns."

"Oh! but this, I am certain, is really a gentleman," said Marianne; "I wish he would ask me to dance."

"What!" exclaimed Charlotte, "would you actually join in a dance with these people? Could you stand up with them and give them your hand? And above all things would you make one in a *country-dance*, for of course they know nothing about cotillons?"

"Yes, I would," answered Marianne, "with such a partner as that young gentleman in black. And then, when they see *my* French steps, how ashamed they will be of their own shuffling and prancing!"

Just then, Tom Davison, observing Marianne's eyes fixed with evident approbation on the stranger in black, brought him up and introduced him to her as Captain Selman; and on his requesting the pleasure of dancing with her, she immediately consented with great satisfaction. Tom Davison then, with a low bow and a look of much embar-

rassment, ventured to make the same request of Charlotte, who refused with an air of such unequivocal contempt, that the youth determined in his own mind to leave her to herself for the remainder of the evening.

The musician made three scrapes on his fiddle, as a signal for all to take their places. "Of course," said Marianne, "we go to the top;" and Captain Selman led her to the head of the country-dance that was forming, while she lamented to him the sad necessity of being obliged to join in such a dance; saying, that she must depend on him to give her some idea of the figure; and adding, that he would find her an apt scholar, as she was always considered very quick at learning any thing.

The musician gave a loud stamp with his foot, and then struck up "New Jersey;" but observing that Charlotte stopped her ears in horror, Marianne begged of her partner to go and ask the man if he could not play something less barbarous. The man replied that "New Jersey" was the dancing tune he was most used to, but that he could play the "Morning Star," and "Fisher's Hornpipe," quite as well. Marianne said, that she had

heard her mother speak of dancing to such tunes when she was a girl, and therefore she was sure they must be abominable.

At last, after much sending of Captain Selman backwards and forwards, and proposing tunes which she knew the poor fidler had never even heard of, it was ascertained that he thought he could play "The Campbells are coming," having *caught* it, as he said, the last time he was in town. Captain Selman undertook to instruct the company in the figure, which he did with great good humour, and they actually learnt it with a quickness that surprised Marianne. She went down the dance exhibiting all her most difficult steps, and affecting a wonderful gracefulness in every motion. However, when she got to the bottom, suspecting that this display had not excited quite as much admiration as she had expected, she professed great fatigue, and threw herself into a chair, declaring she could not dance another step; knowing that in consequence Captain Selman could do no less than stand by and converse with her till the set was over.

"I do not see Susan Davison dancing," said Marianne, "she has been sitting all the time be-

side my sister. She is rather a pretty girl; I wonder none of the young men have taken her out."

"I made my bow to her soon after I came in," replied the captain; "but she declines dancing this evening, alleging that, being in her own house, she is unwilling to take a place that might be occupied by one of her friends."

"I suppose," said Marianne, abruptly, "your next partner will be the young person they call Fanny, as she is certainly rather well-looking. There she is, about the middle of the dance, with a broad pink ribbon round her neck. Indeed, though my sister is of a contrary opinion, I should be almost inclined to think this Fanny something of a lady, only that she is so sociable with these people. To be sure, I have tried myself to be affable this evening, but I find it such an irksome task that I believe it will be my last attempt. Now it seems quite natural to this said Fanny; which proves, as my sister Charlotte says, that she is in reality no better than the rest. We think she must be the daughter of one of these country shopkeepers, and that she has now and then had

the benefit of a fortnight's polishing in London, while her father was buying his Spring goods."

Captain Selman smiled, and was going to reply, when Charlotte joined them, saying in a most peevish voice, "Marianne, do you intend staying here all night? If you do, you must stay by yourself. I have just heard our carriage drive up, for I charged William to come for us early, and I am dying to get away."

Marianne, who would willingly have stayed longer was about to remonstrate, but finding that the Captain had escaped from her side, she felt less reluctant to go. Charlotte made her exit without ceremony; but Marianne purposely loitered till the dance was over, that she might make her departure the more conspicuous, and produce a greater effect by her elegant manner of taking leave. She then walked up to Mrs. Davison, and overwhelming the good woman with curtseyings, bowings, compliments, and flourishes, she left the room, accompanied by Susan, to the chamber in which their shawls and bonnets had been deposited.

They were put into the carriage by Tom Davison, as his last effort of civility. And it was re-

solved next day by the family in council that the Misses Grenville should on no future occasion be invited; for, as Mrs. Davison remarked, they held their heads a deal too high, and their airs were unbearable.

As they drove home, Charlotte, in the most unqualified terms, expressed her disgust at the party, and every thing connected with it. Marianne acknowledged that the whole concern, as she called it, was very ungentleel, but still not quite so bad as she had expected. She said that in her opinion Captain Selman would be presentable even in good society, and expressed her surprise at finding an officer at such a party.

"Pho," said Charlotte, "he is only a militia captain, of course."

"No," replied Marianne, "I am very sure he is no such thing. If he were a militia officer, he would undoubtedly have come to the party in full uniform, booted and spurred, with epaulette, and chapeau and feather, his sword at his side, and his sash spread out over his body as broad as possible, as I have heard my mother describe their

costume. No, no; I know this officer is in the regular army, from something he said."

"Well," said Charlotte, "I doubt his being a man of fashion, after all. I observed him, after he left you, speaking familiarly to that Fanny, as if they were well acquainted. However, he did not seem to ask her to dance, but he paid that compliment to one that sat near the door, a poor bashful-looking girl, the worst dressed and least attractive in the room."

The next day but one was Sunday. The church, which was about three miles off, had been shut up, undergoing repairs ever since Mr. Grenville had removed to the iron-works; but it was now again opened for worship, and the Grenville family all repaired thither in their carriage. On this occasion, Charlotte was as elegantly dressed as her sister; for having satisfied her perverseness by going in *dishabille* to the party, she determined now to astonish the congregation by a great display of finery at church.

As they passed up the middle isle, the eyes of the Misses Grenville were attracted immediately to

a handsome pew near the pulpit; in which pew they saw Captain Selman, accompanied by Fanny, and an elderly gentleman and lady, both of remarkably genteel and dignified appearance. The two sisters, at the same moment, pulled each other's sleeves significantly. They thought the service very long, and as soon as church was over, Marianne asked her father if he knew the occupants of the pew that was lined with blue moreen. He replied, "It is Sir Charles B——, and his family. They have been travelling all the Summer, and only returned last week. I called yesterday to see them as I passed their house, which is about five miles from ours."

"Is it possible," exclaimed Charlotte, "that Fanny can be Sir Charles's daughter?"—"Is Captain Selman his son?" cried Marianne.

"No, certainly not," replied Mr. Grenville. "Captain Selman is the son of Lady B——'s first marriage, and Miss Fanny is his half-sister."

At the church-gate Sir Charles's carriage was waiting beside Mr. Grenville's, and he stopped with his family to introduce them to Mrs. Grenville and her daughters. The Misses Grenville

looked much embarrassed. Charlotte was ashamed that Miss Fanny should have witnessed her unamiable behaviour at the party, and Marianne was shocked at recollecting the freedom with which she had talked to Captain Selman of his step-sister. Their confusion was so evident, that the Captain and Fanny, when introduced to the Misses Grenville, avoided making any allusion to having met them at farmer Davison's.

But little was said on either side, and the disconcerted sisters were glad to take refuge in their carriage.

On their way home, Charlotte expressed her surprise at the condescension of Sir Charles's family, in deigning to be on visiting terms with the farmer's.

"And why not?" said Mr. Grenville. "Andrew Davison is a respectable, sensible, and worthy man; and his children, though he has wisely forbore to make any attempt at giving them what is called a fashionable education, are by no means coarse. The old-fashioned plainness of decent country people is not vulgarity; and if they are ignorant of the conventional forms of society, they generally make amends by having a large

share of that natural civility which springs from good feeling; and it is easy in our intercourse with them to avoid imitating such of their habits and expressions as are at variance with our standard of refinement. As fellow-subjects, their rights are equally sacred with our own.

"Sir Charles has lived in this part of the country nearly his whole life, and is, of course, acquainted with all the old families, of whom Andrew Davison's is one. And he has very judiciously brought up his family in the interchange of mutual civilities with all his respectable neighbours; knowing that nothing is ever lost by cultivating the good opinion of those among whom our lot is cast."

"I suspect, after all," said Charlotte, ill-naturally, "that Sir Charles's affability, and that of his children, originates in the expectation of securing the votes of farmer Davison and his sons at the next election."

"You are entirely mistaken," replied Mr. Grenville. "Sir Charles and the Davisons, though old friends, are of opposite parties. They did not vote for him at the last election, and he does not intend to become a candidate at the next."

Next day, the Grenvilles were visited by Sir Charles, with his lady and daughter. Captain Selman did not accompany them, having set out to return to his station. Mr. and Mrs. Grenville were not at home, but the young ladies overwhelmed their visitors with civilities; Charlotte, in particular, was absolutely obsequious in her attentions.

Upon further acquaintance, they found that Fanny had been educated in the metropolis, and was quite as accomplished as either of themselves, though she had too much good sense to make any unseasonable display. Her example was not lost upon Marianne, who improved greatly by occasional intercourse with this amiable girl. We wish we could say the same of Charlotte; but pride is, of all faults, one of the most difficult to conquer, as it is seldom found except in persons of weak understanding. Sensible people are never offensively proud, nor treat those who may be in a more humble station than themselves with disrespect or contempt.

LONDON:

WM. DARTON AND SON, HOLBORN HILL.

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