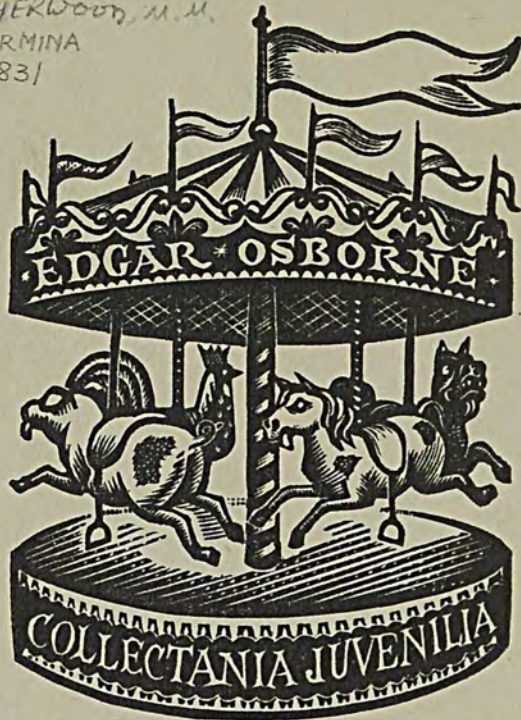
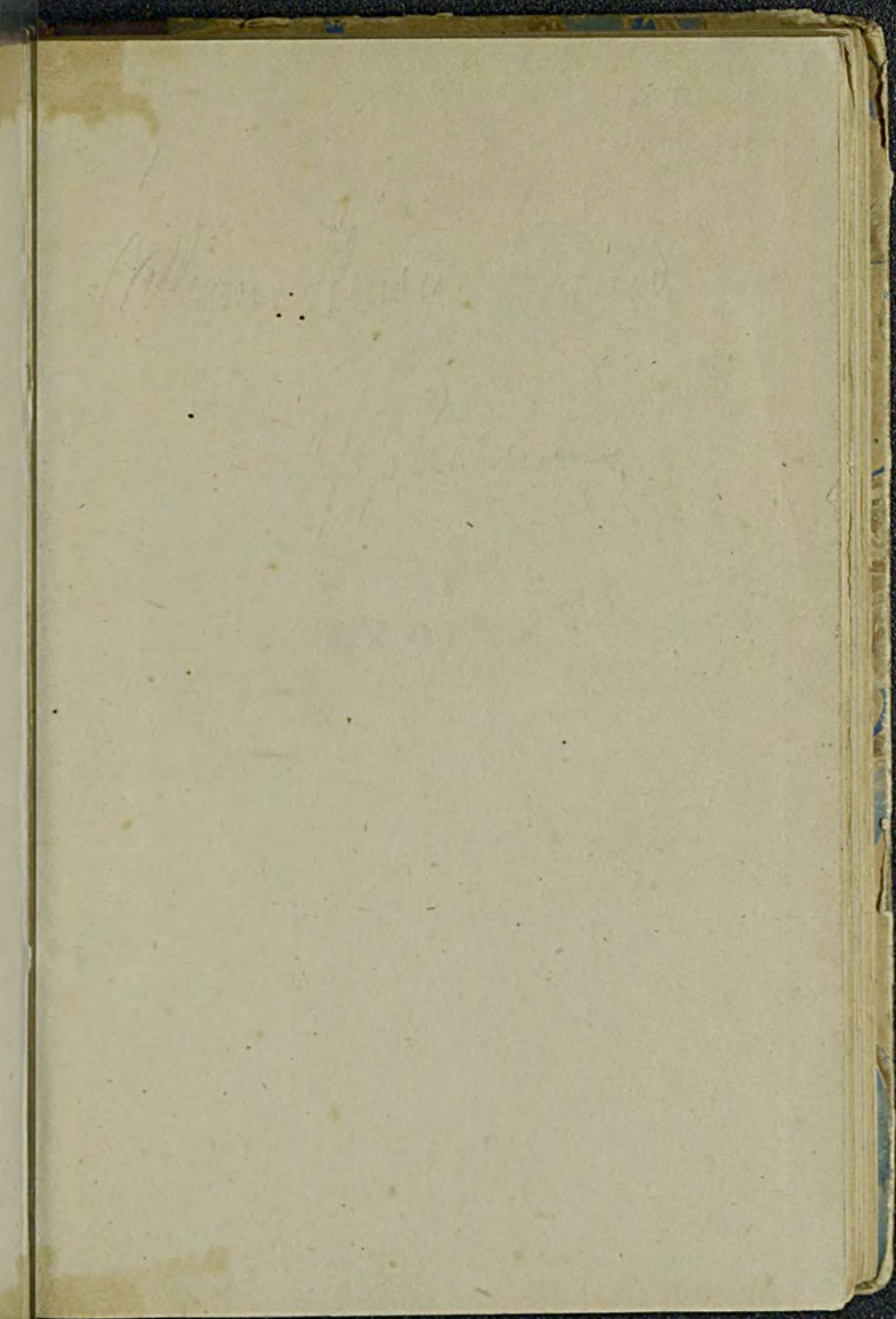


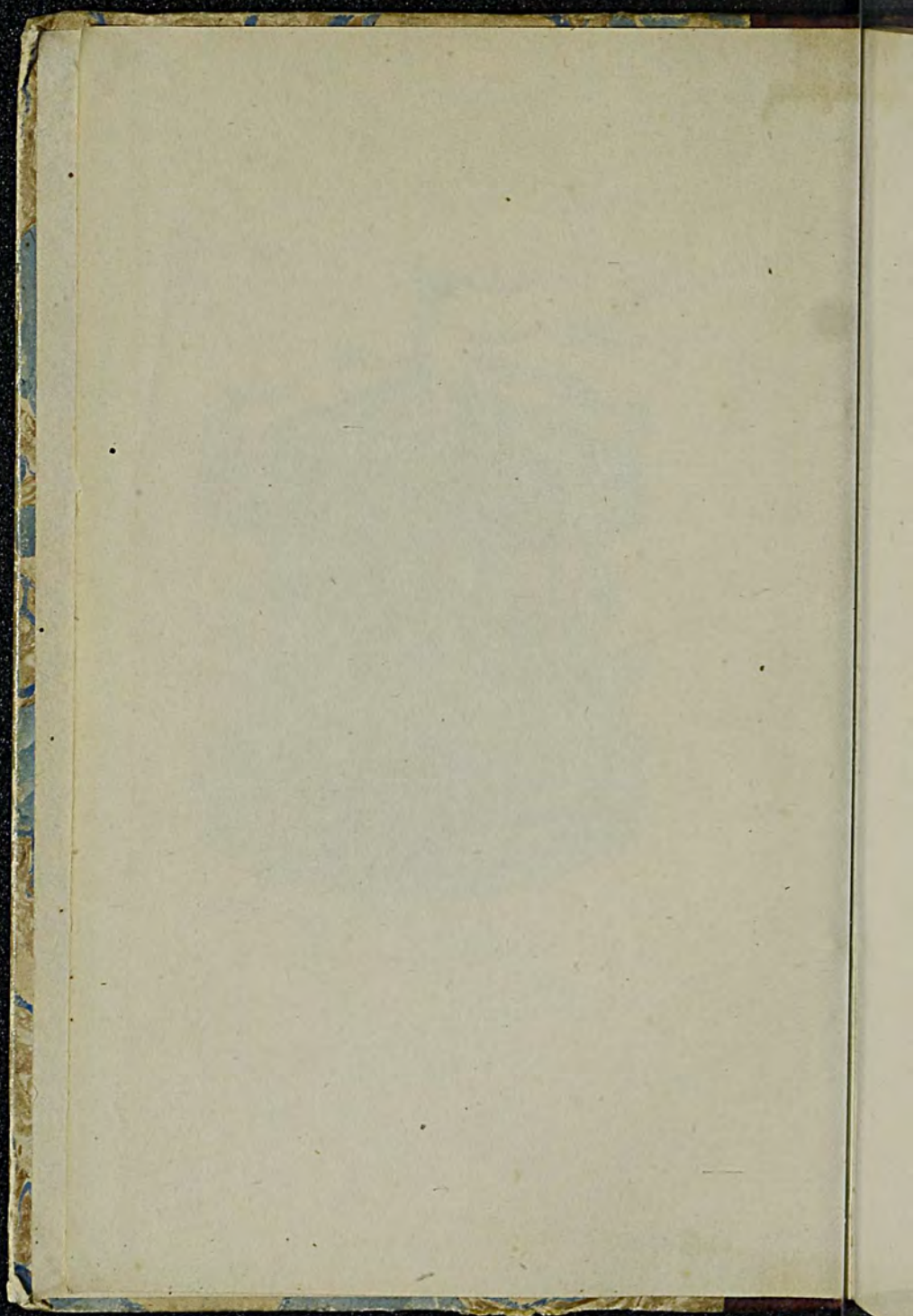
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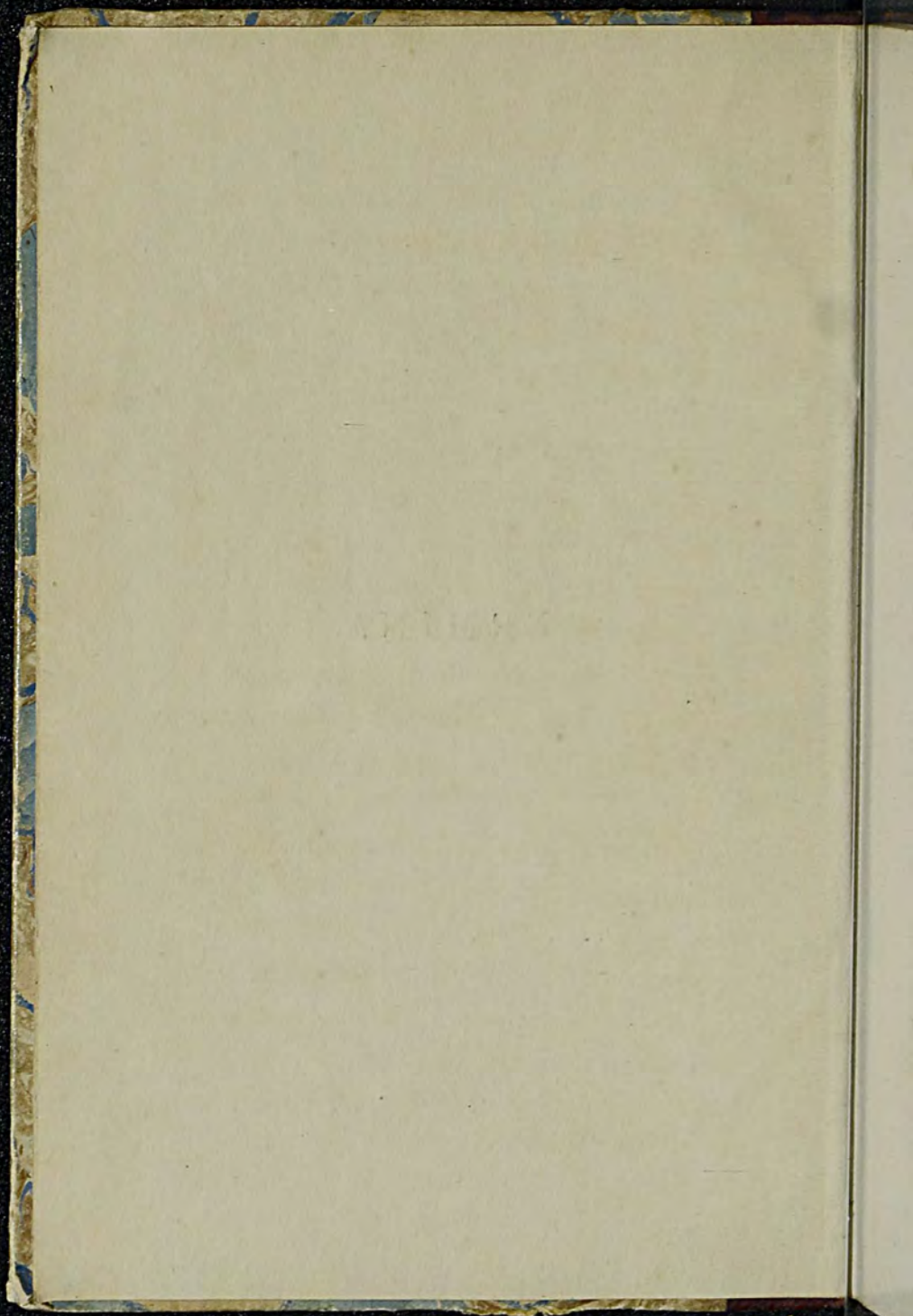
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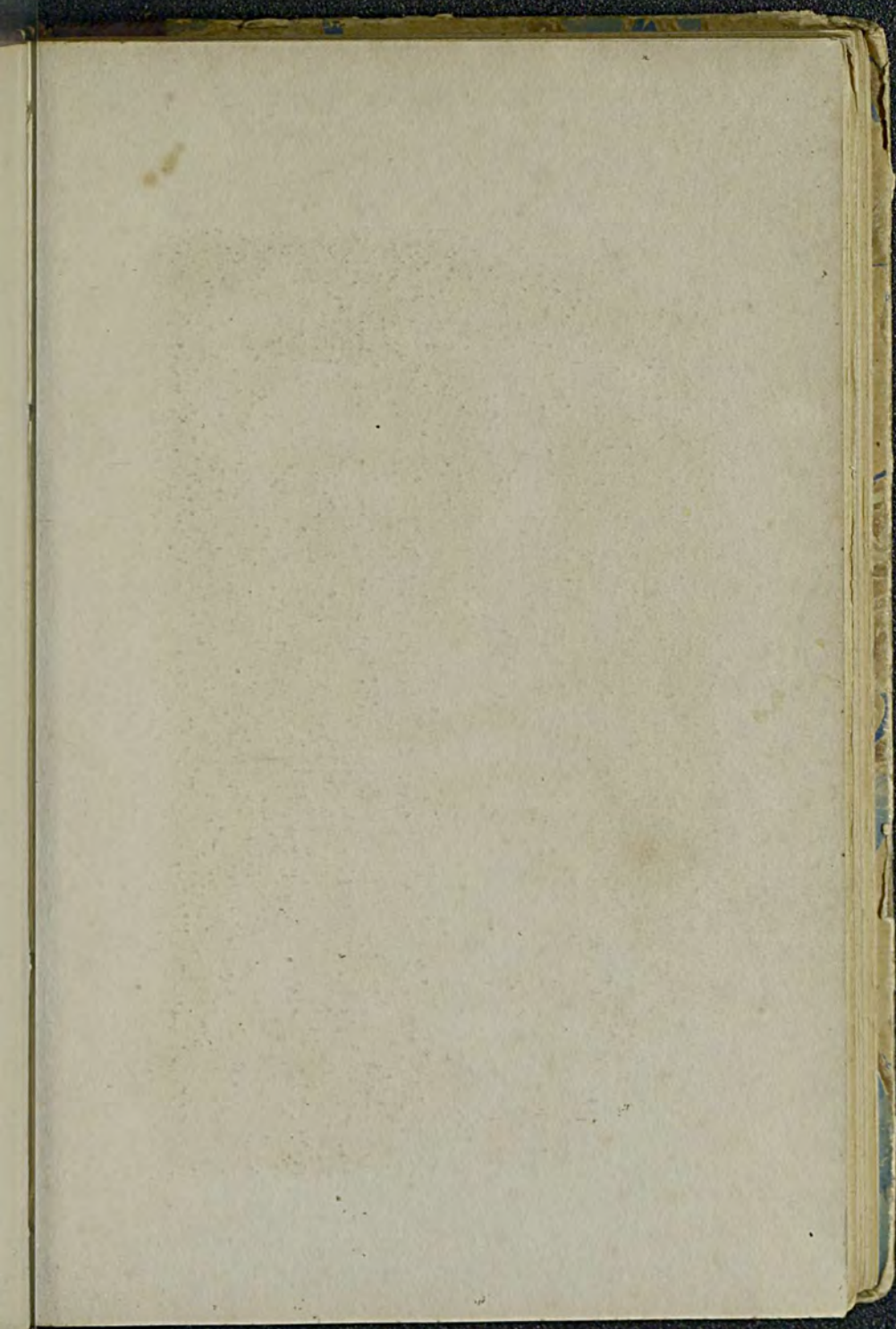
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ERMINA.







TERMINA LANDING IN INDIA.

Published by Houlston & Son, 65, Paternoster Row, London,  
and at Wellington, Nepal, June 1, 1851.



# ERMINA.

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD.



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HOULSTON AND SON,  
65, PATERNOSTER ROW; AND AT WELLINGTON, SALOP.

1831.

CHISWICK :  
PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM.

EMERSON

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DEVELOPMENT

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## ERMINA.

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IF any of my present readers have read the history of JULIANA OAKLEY, they will undoubtedly recollect the lovely ANNA, and the little MINNY; and though the younger was then far inferior to the elder, yet I trust that what has lately come to my knowledge respecting these young persons, may not be without interest to those who are already in some degree acquainted with their history.

The sequel of their memoirs was conveyed to me in a course of letters, written

by Ermina herself, at that period of life in which she was enabled, through grace, to meditate with advantage on her past experience. And, as her account of herself contains some notices and particulars of a foreign mode of life which is little understood in Europe, I no longer hesitate to make it known to the little community of young readers who have hitherto accepted, with so much apparent satisfaction, my humble endeavours to amuse them.







## CHAPTER I.

*Ermina's Account of Herself.*

THE history of Miss Juliana Oakley, my former companion, having been lately put into my hands, and having there seen my own name, and the name of my lovely and beloved Anna, I have been led to look back upon my past life, and have at length resolved to send

my friends in England, some recollections of my former days, which I trust may not be wholly uninteresting.

I remember little of my life before I began to reside with my governess, or, rather I should say, my second mother; for she found me a little friendless orphan, and took me to her own house, where she treated me with all the kindness of a parent. My governess was paying a visit in Cornwall, where my parents resided, at the time of their death, and I never knew any other relation than an uncle, who being wild in his youth, ran from his father's house, went to sea, and was not heard of for many years.

I shall say nothing more of the happy days I spent in the house of my governess, than that they were a period which was blessed to me through life, and will be so through all eternity, for it was in that blessed abode

of peace I acquired my first correct ideas of religion; and though my serious impressions seemed to wear away for a time, yet they were never entirely erased.

After the death of my beloved governess, I was left altogether destitute, and should have been without a home, if an old aunt of my dear Anna, who was a sister of my governess, had not taken pity upon me. This good woman came from Cornwall immediately on hearing of her sister's illness, but arrived only in time to close her eyes. Immediately after the funeral she returned; taking Anna and myself with her to Falmouth, where she resided; and I recollect, we made our journey in three days, on the outside of a heavy coach.

I endured much fatigue on the road, and when we arrived at Falmouth, late one dark evening, at the end of autumn, young as I

was I felt shocked, not only by the dirtiness of the streets, but still more by the appearance of the house into which we were conducted. There was a little low shop, furnished in the roughest style, and containing the wearing-apparel of sailors, by the making of which, Mrs. Finchley, for such was the name of my new protectress, obtained a scanty living; and behind the shop, was a small dark kitchen. John Finchley, the master, was busy at his counter, serving two rough-faced sailors, as we entered the door, carrying our own baggage.

I had been accustomed to humble, but not to sordid life; and being wholly overcome with fatigue, and the circumstances of my present situation, I burst into tears the moment I sat down in the kitchen.

Anna on this occasion looked at me sorrowfully, but did not speak; and Mrs.

Finchley's daughter, who was, as I afterwards found, the wife of a sailor then absent on a voyage, endeavoured to comfort me, saying, that I should soon be used to them all, and then I should be as happy as I had been before.

I however thought that this was impossible; yet I tried to hide my tears; and after having been refreshed with tea, I was shewn to my bed-room, where I was rejoiced to find that Anna was to be my companion. The way to our chamber lay up two pair of dark and narrow stairs; the room was very small, and its floor and ceiling were uneven. It contained only half of a window, the other half being cut off by a partition to give light to the next room; this window was a small sash, and as there was no curtain, admitted the light of a candle from an upper room in the opposite house. In one corner of the room stood our bed, the curtains of which

being of tarnished green stuff, were nailed to a lath, fastened on the ceiling. A cracked looking-glass, a walnut chest of drawers, a deal table, and two broken chairs, completed the furniture of this wretched apartment; where, instead of being regaled with fresh breezes from the woods, mingled with the breath of delicious flowers, or entertained with the song of the nightingale, the hoot of the owl, or the murmur of the waterfall, we were continually dinned with the oaths and songs of drunken sailors from a public-house in the court below, and nearly suffocated with the poisonous fumes of tobacco.

When Anna and I found ourselves shut up in this place, we looked at each other for a few minutes in silent despondency. At length Anna began to shed tears, and I threw myself upon her bosom and wept with her till I could weep no longer; at length, being quite worn out and sick, I was obliged to

undress and get into bed, where I presently found some relief in sleep.

The light of morning was so much obscured by the dinginess of the glass in the window, and the smoke and fog of the town, that we were not aware, till a late hour, that the sun had arisen. At length Mrs. Finchley entered our room and kindly assisted us to dress; then, leading me by the hand down stairs, she brought us into the kitchen, where our breakfast was waiting. She then sat down by us, and while she used her needle with diligence, she thus addressed us: "My dear Anna and Minny, I am sorry I have no better home to offer you, I am sensible that this must appear a shocking place to you after your former delightful residence; but, such as it is, I am thankful for it; I know many better persons than I am, would be glad even of such a resting-place as this; and, thank God, I live in hopes of a better

home, even an eternal one. Finchley and I have seen many sorrows, and endured many losses. It was thought when I married, that my husband was a thriving man, for we possessed a handsome shop and a good business in a clean and airy part of the town. We then looked forward to finishing our days in ease and affluence, but Providence ordained otherwise; for we suffered many losses, and were at length reduced to live as we now do. Of six children who were born to us we have only one living; four died in infancy, and are now in glory; and our son, our hopeful and beloved one, perished in the Eastern Seas as much as three years past. We were in the dark concerning his fate for many months, but at length were assured of it by a comrade who saw him fall overboard. It was a severe blow to lose our child in such a way, but it was a kind one," added the poor mother, "it has been blessed to us, it has driven us to seek comfort where



we never sought it before, and we have been brought to say that which no man can say without divine help, *Thy will, O God, be done!*"

In this part of her discourse Mrs. Finchley wiped her eyes, and then turning cheerfully to Anna, she added, "And now, my dear niece, having told you my story, I must be plain with you on other matters. I shall not ask you, my child, to go into the shop, for you are too young for such services in this place; but you must not refuse to help me with your needle, and in such household duties as can be performed in private, and I hope this little miss will assist you, for the truth is," and she burst into tears, "I cannot, however willing, keep you, my girls, unless you can help to keep yourselves."

I forget what answer we made, indeed I believe we made no answer whatever, but we

both ran into her arms and all wept together, and from that moment we felt ashamed of expressing our uneasiness at our situation, even by a look; and, what is more strange, after a time we became wonderfully reconciled to it; and though we remembered our happy home, from which we were now for ever parted, with a degree of sadness which we could never overcome, yet we were blessed with a peace of mind while at Falmouth, for which I could never account. Our feelings, nevertheless, at times partook of a degree of sadness, and our spirits were always in a state of considerable depression; for we enjoyed no pleasures, and were almost wholly confined in the dark kitchen before mentioned, where we spent our time in making shirts for sale, at the same time committing hymns and portions of Holy Scripture to memory. Yet, although we seldom tasted the fresh air, I have often looked back on that period as one of the most blessed of my

life. I have often asked myself how I could possibly have been contented under such circumstances; and have often enquired whence that peace proceeded which I then enjoyed. The answer which I have constantly given to this question, was this, that at the period I speak of, I had, in the first place, been thoroughly humbled, for young as I was I had been made sensible of the desolate situation to which I must have been reduced, had not Mrs. Finchley taken pity on me; and in the second place, my only companion (for I seldom met the rest of the family, excepting at meals) was my lovely Anna, whose sweet and pious discourse was ever tending to raise me above this world, and to give me interesting and glorious views of the next. Sometimes, indeed, we indulged ourselves in speaking of former days, in calling to mind our birth-day gambols, our garlands of roses, our violet banks and primrose beds, the sweet stories our governess used to read

to us in the long winter evenings, and the still more interesting tales which she was accustomed to recount when we gathered around her in the dusk, and when I, as being the youngest, was permitted to sit upon her knee. But we did not often allow ourselves this sort of discourse, because these indulgencies always ended in tears, and unfitted us for our duties. On this account Anna would frequently interrupt me, when I desired to introduce these subjects, saying, "Let us look forward, and not backward, my dear Minny, for we are assured, that the pleasures we have already tasted are not to be compared with those joys which are to come, when we may hope to meet our departed friends in the glorious presence of our beloved Saviour, and shall be no longer subject to sin or sorrow."



## CHAP. II.

*Character and Conduct of Mrs. Finchley...Her Delicacy and Benevolence in the midst of Poverty...Anna's Distress during the Walk on the Seashore...Mr. and Mrs. Finchley discover the Cause...Their generous Resolution, followed by the Arrival of two Strangers.*



SPENT nearly two years at Falmouth in this manner, during which time I rarely enjoyed the fresh air, excepting sometimes on a Sunday evening, when Mrs. Finchley used to take us to walk on the sands, for, with a

delicacy rarely to be met with in persons of her condition, she seldom permitted us to go out alone. It was certain that our health suffered from the close confinement, but our morals would probably have suffered more, had we been left entirely at liberty, because in towns on the coast, and where seafaring persons resort, there is often much to be seen which is greatly injurious to the minds of the inexperienced. Mrs. Finchley often lamented that she could not turn us out to play in the green fields, but, as she used to say, she had only a choice of evils for us, and she endeavoured to choose that which was the least.

I have often, on reflection, admired the character of this poor woman, who, though not a loud professor, nor one who talked much of religion, yet I believe was influenced, in every action, by religious principles, her whole life being one continued act of self-denial. She hardly ever seemed to think of

herself, or provide for her own comforts, and although she had much to endure from a certain irritability in the temper of her husband, and much to suffer from real poverty, yet she was always calm and resigned, and whenever the subject of her afflictions was particularly pressed upon her, she invariably expressed herself as being thankful for the comforts she still possessed, and as being happy in the prospect of a future union with that dear Saviour whose presence she then felt, and whose secret consolations enabled her to go on rejoicing under circumstances which most persons would have thought truly miserable. I have little doubt that there are many characters which resemble that of Mrs. Finchley among the lower ranks of Christians in England; and yet these perhaps are not the persons most highly esteemed and best known in the professing world; but the Almighty knows his own, and the time will come when the secrets of all hearts will

be made manifest. O may we all, in that dread hour, be found to have received renewed hearts, and to have been made one with Him, of whom it was justly said, *He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.* (Isa. liii. 9.)

We remained nearly two years with Mrs. Finchley, and one circumstance which took place about the end of that time I never can forget. I had grown very rapidly, and my little wardrobe was nearly exhausted; when one day, poor Mrs. Finchley produced a gown of her own, and cut and tucked, and new arranged it till she had fitted it for my wearing. She had but little stock, no doubt, for she dressed very shabbily, but she could not bear to see the friendless orphan in a ragged state, and I can well recollect the pleasure with which she tied this frock upon me on a Sunday morning, and turned me round to see how well I looked.



Why should the recollection of this circumstance bring tears to my eyes, even at this remote period? But there is something so inexpressibly affecting in works of real love and pure charity, something so divine in the nature of unostentatious benevolence, that that heart must be hard indeed, which can contemplate it without some tender feelings.

At length the time of our residence at Falmouth was drawing to a close, though we were not aware of it. I have before mentioned, that Mrs. Finchley had a daughter, who was married to a sailor, and that her husband, whose name was Wilmot, had sailed, a little before my dear governess died, in an East Indiaman, bound for the Chinese Seas. From the circumstance of his absence, (and we did not expect him back in less than two years), and from our having increased the number of the family, there was evidently a considerable shortness of money, and

though Mrs. Finchley and her husband, and Mrs. Wilmot and Anna, all worked hard, it was evident that it was often with difficulty that common necessaries were obtained. From Mrs. Finchley, however, I never heard a murmur, and though poor John sometimes looked blank when counting up his gains at the end of the week, he never seemed for a moment to grudge the food which fell to my share, and for which I could not then make any remuneration.

Such was the state of things, when one Sunday afternoon in autumn, Mrs. Finchley proposed that we should walk out on the sands, before the evening service, for we always attended a chapel, which was situated very near our house, at six o'clock.

It was a dry fresh afternoon, and though the sun was low, yet it cast a cheerful glow over the town, the bay, and the sands which extended themselves before us. When we

were clear of the suburbs, Mr. and Mrs. Finchley walked a little before us with their daughter, and I followed with Anna. We went on for some time without speaking; and, as I rather wondered at Anna's silence, for she was generally cheerful on occasions of this kind, I looked up in her face, and saw that she was remarkably pale, and had tears in her eyes.

“Dear Anna,” I said, “what is the matter?”

“O, Minny,” she replied, “I am unhappy. Look at my beloved aunt, see how shabby and patched her clothes are, and her bonnet, how brown it is! and her shawl how old! and my uncle also, look at his clothes! his Sunday clothes too!—Oh, Minny, dear Minny, I fear that they are very poor and that we are a heavy burden to them, and I cannot bear the thought.” And her tears, which had first fallen drop by drop, now ran like torrents from her eyes.

I was quite old enough (for I was then nearly eleven) to sympathize in her feelings; so we both wept bitterly, and I do not know that I ever felt more unhappy.

At length, however, we tried to compose ourselves, and I was much comforted by a quotation from Scripture, which my beloved Anna brought forward, viz. *Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* (Psalm xxxvii. 3.) While we were thus engaged, our elders, who were considerably before us, suddenly stood still; and Mr. Finchley, who had lived long enough near the sea to have some knowledge of maritime affairs, called to us to hasten to see a large ship, which was sailing with a favourable gale up the channel.

“Depend upon it, Martha,” said he to his daughter, “that vessel is an East Indiaman;” and he mentioned some indications by which he knew it. He also added, soon afterwards,

that he could plainly distinguish a boat coming from the vessel towards the bay.

This was an interesting sight to Mrs. Wilmot, and we stood and watched the boat till the sun was set, and we could distinguish it no longer. We then returned home, and sat down to tea; but I was no sooner in my usual place, than Mrs. Finchley discovered the traces of tears on my cheeks, and the excellent woman asked me, in sudden alarm, what could be the matter. I was then in a humble, and, consequently, in a pleasant state, and on her putting the question to me, I ran into her arms, and sobbed and wept upon her bosom.

She was alarmed, and begged me to explain the cause of my distress. I then told her all that had passed between me and Anna during our walk; on which Anna began to weep, and John Finchley extending his big broad hand to her, at the same time drawing me to

his heart, said, "Dear girls! dear children—wipe away your tears, fear not for yourselves, you shall never, never want a home; we will stand and fall, live and die together, so God have mercy upon us."

"O! we don't think of ourselves; indeed, indeed, we don't!" we both replied; "we think only of you, our dear father and mother; we are only sorry we cannot help you."

I cannot express our sensations, but, surely, this exercise of tender feelings converted our dark and miserable kitchen into the ante-chamber of heaven.

We had however scarcely recovered any thing like composure, before we heard a loud knocking, which was repeated again and again till the whole house shook.

We looked one at another with amazement; Mrs. Wilmot turned pale, Mrs. Finch-

ley set down the tea-pot; and Mr. Finchley stood up and did not stir. The knocking continued, and then followed loud whoops and cries, like that of a sailor calling to his companions.

“It’s some wild chaps in a drunken frolic,” said Mr. Finchley. “Is the door barred?” and he rushed into the shop, followed by us all.

“Are ye all dead and buried?” exclaimed a voice from without; “but I see the blink of a candle, too.”

“What voice is that?” said John Finchley; “I don’t know it.”

Violent thunderings at the door again followed, after which came another cheer, and then the words, “Father—mother—Martha;—are ye all dead and buried?”

“What voice is that?” said the mother, and she looked the image of death.

Fresh thunderings at the door then followed, which, however, ceased the moment Mr. Finchley, with trembling hands, endeavoured to undo the fastenings; and he had hardly effected this, when two young men, followed by an elder one, burst into the shop, and were saluted by a loud shriek on the part of the mother, who fell senseless the next moment into the arms of one of them.



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## CHAP. III.

*The Strangers' Account of themselves, and the kind Providence of their Arrival explained to all the Parties.*

**W**HAT followed after this violent shriek I can hardly describe; for all seemed to be confusion to me —one and another were embracing each other, neither could I understand whether the tears which I saw were tokens of joy or sorrow, for I had never before wit-

nessed a scene like this. The rough father groaned—the daughter sobbed—and the mother long remained insensible, and at length when she opened her eyes she cried out again, and sunk on the breast of the young man who had first supported her. After a while, however, she spoke, and looking up in his face, “My William,” she said, “can it be? O no, no; it cannot; my old eyes deceive me, and yet it is my William, my long-lost William; my child whom I have mourned as dead and gone. God be praised,” she added, “but,” clasping her hands and looking upwards, “but, he knows my gratitude; words cannot express it!”—and she became so agitated, so hysterical, that they were obliged to carry her into the inner room, where she was with difficulty preserved from another fainting-fit, by opening the windows, applying water to her temples, and adopting every other plan which could be hastily devised.

In the mean time the whole party became more composed, and I was enabled to discover that the two young men whose arrival had so affected the family, were no other than William Finchley, who, we all supposed, had perished some years since, and James Wilmot, the husband of Martha. But there was a third person, a middle-aged man, who was dressed like a gentleman, and who seemed to be no uninterested spectator of the present scene. He had taken Mr. Finchley's great chair in the kitchen, and there sat down, taking now and then a pinch of snuff, quite at his ease; till, at length, seeing Mrs. Wilmot so much recovered from her agitation as to be able to give some attention to ordinary things, he took two gold pieces from his pocket, and shewing them to her, requested her to go to the next inn and order as good a supper for eight persons as that money would fetch. "And let it be brought here," he said, "for we will have one meal together, at least,

before we part; and mind," he added, "that we have no salt meat, nor ship provisions, but good Europe beef-steaks and fresh potatoes. Let us have some porter too, and English cheese; none of your Dutch pine apple, but good double-Gloucester, if any is to be had."

I heard all this, and saw Mrs. Wilmot go out with her husband, and could not help wondering who this good gentleman was, who called about him so commandingly, yet so good-humouredly. But I soon forgot him; for my attention was again drawn to William Finchley, who being seated by his mother, and holding her hand, was telling her how he had been saved from the waves, after he had fallen from the ship's side, by a small country-craft belonging to Madras; relating many other circumstances of his story, which were very interesting to his parents, and to all who heard him.

William's narrative was not, however, half finished, when he was interrupted by the re-appearance of Wilmot and his wife, followed by two waiters bearing trays. And then we were all in a bustle, removing the tea-cups, setting out a large table which had long stood disregarded under the kitchen-shelves, and putting all things in order for the feast; while the old gentleman before mentioned, gave his directions, and called about him in such a manner, that even Mrs. Finchley herself began to notice him.

“Sir,” she said, “I beg your pardon; I hope, however, that you will excuse me, but I did not observe——”

“Ay ay,” said the gentleman, “I thought as much;—you actually did not see me! I thought how it was! very well! very well!—I am half offended, however; and yet you ought to be very thankful to me, for had it

not been for me, you would not have seen your sons for some weeks to come, I can tell you that. And they must be off with me in a day or two for London; but they will not be long away."

"Bless you, Sir," said Mrs. Finchley, "bless you, my dear good Sir,"—

"O! I am a dear good Sir, now," replied the old gentleman, smiling; "but mind this, my good woman; you never noticed me, till you began to smell the beef-steaks!—and here they are, smoking hot!"—and the old gentleman instantly placed himself at the table, and insisting that we should all draw our chairs round him, begged that we would cut away, and enjoy ourselves.

The gentleman had set about his hot steaks, without giving thanks; nevertheless John Finchley would not be bribed, even by the

smoking supper, to follow his example, but, rising up, and calling on his family to join him—"My children," he said, "if we now fail to give thanks for this our happy and unexpected re-union around our table, we shall be undoubtedly without excuse; for never, O, my God, never, I trust, may we cease to be grateful for the happiness of this blessed evening!"

Having thus spoken, we were all directed to sit down again, and, notwithstanding our late violent agitation, we did not discredit our repast, which was such a one indeed as few of us had tasted for many years.

The stranger, in the mean time, seemed perfectly to enjoy himself; and when he had somewhat satisfied his appetite, "Mrs. Finchley," he said, "are not you anxious to know who I may be, who am dropped among you without invitation?—for I am sure you never so much as once asked me to walk in, or even

to stay when I was in. Well, but I won't be offended this time, though if you are not civiller the next time I come, I shan't trouble you again."

"Sir, my good Sir," said Mrs. Finchley, "I am sure I meant no manner of offence, but I was so overcome, and am so still, that I hardly know now what I am doing."

"Very excusable, very excusable," replied the gentleman, "such things as sons coming back after they have been dead three years, do not often happen; and so I believe I must pass over your want of politeness this once, because I know you to be a good woman. But now for my name! If you won't ask it, I must certainly tell it you, as well as my business, without being asked!

"My name, Mrs. Finchley, is Townley." We all started, for that was my surname. "I had excellent parents, and an only bro-



ther," continued the old gentleman. "We lived near this place, and were a happy family; at least, we might have been so; but I was a rebellious son. I desired to go to sea, although my father set his face against it. The consequence was, I ran away, and got on ship board. No matter what I suffered there—not half what I deserved; however, I had many strange adventures, and was in the China Seas for several years. At length, I got a footing in Bengal, entered into some little mercantile concerns, married a woman who brought me some *lacks*\*, and am now as rich a merchant as any in my line.

"For many years I heard nothing of my family; but, at length, after having written to

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\* *Lack*—A term used in India, to denote a sum of one hundred thousand rupees. A rupee is worth about two shillings and sixpence.

my father, I was so happy as to receive a kind answer from him a little before his death, though I knew nothing of my brother's history till I met with your son, Mrs. Finchley, at Calcutta, and hearing that he was a native of Falmouth, I questioned him about my poor brother. I then found that he was dead and had left a daughter, who was at that time under the care of his aunt."

As Mr. Townley proceeded in his story, he had no reason to complain of want of attention, for we all looked at him with the eagerness of anxious curiosity, though none of us spoke.

"As soon as I heard of my brother's child," continued he, "I resolved to come to England and adopt her, if I could find her, for I have never had any child of my own; and accordingly I took my passage in the same ship with your son and your son-in-law; and,

this evening, as you know, I am arrived here, —where, by the bye,” he added with a smile, “I can’t boast much of my reception, for there was not one among you who as much as said ‘Welcome to England, Sir!’”

“O, Sir,” cried Mrs. Finchley, “you must please to forget that; if you had intended for us to make much of you, you should not have sent our dear William before you.” And the good woman, in this part of her speech, was unable to refrain from again throwing her arms round the sun-burnt, yet handsome youth, who sat by her side.

“Come come, Mrs. Finchley, do try to forget that wild boy, and pay some attention to your guest,” said Mr. Townley, “and now, my good lady, can you tell me any thing of my niece? Where is the little girl?” and he looked at Anna and me, and perhaps seeing something in our countenances which indi-

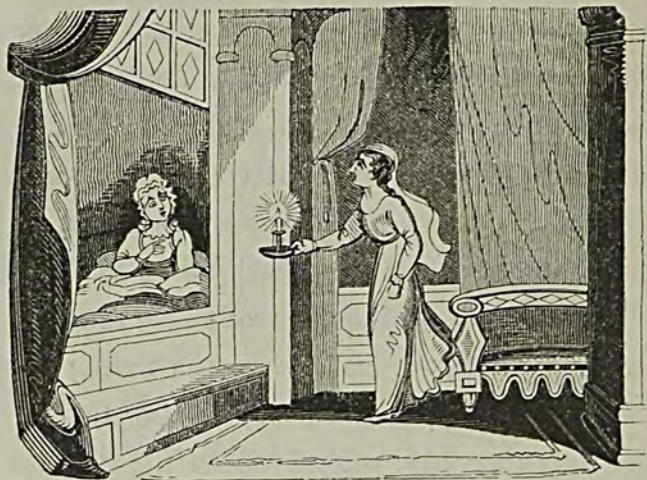
cated more than he quite understood, "Surely," he said, "surely, she is not present!" adding, as he looked at Anna, "My tender lily, surely you can't be my niece! No, I am mistaken I see; then it must be the little dimpled one who clings so fast to Mrs. Finchley. Tell me, my excellent woman, is this little girl my poor brother's daughter?"

"She is, Sir; yes, she is," replied Mrs. Finchley; "this child is Ermina Townley, your own niece, if you are indeed the brother of Mr. James Townley; and you may guess how destitute the poor little thing must have been to have been brought to such a home as this."

"A happy, happy home," I exclaimed, clinging to Mrs. Finchley; "and," I whispered, "don't let them take me away from you, my dear, dear mother."

My uncle seemed instantly to conceive what was the state of the case; for he immediately replied, "Dear child, don't make yourself uneasy, you and I shall be better acquainted by and by; but come to me, my little niece, and give me one kiss for your father's sake; and now back again to Mrs. Finchley's side." He then called for another draught of porter, laid down the money to pay for the supper; and promising to call the next morning, walked off to the nearest inn, leaving us behind to recover ourselves from the astonishment into which the various events of the evening had thrown us.





## CHAP. IV.

*A proposed Voyage to India...Mr. Townley's Generosity to the Finchley Family...Ermina and Anna embark... Their Feelings, and the Subject of their Conversation.*



HE next morning my uncle came again to Mrs. Finchley, and had a long conversation with her, after which I was called, and asked if I should like to go with him to India. The idea of leaving those I knew,

and going with a total stranger, was dreadful to me, and I therefore answered that I would rather stay where I was.

I was then reasoned with, and my uncle promised me many fine things, and among the rest, I remember, a coach and horses, if I would go with him; on which I replied, I would go, if I might take Anna with me, but not without.

“But, perhaps,” said my uncle, “your favourite Anna would not go with you.”

“Then I will stay here,” I replied, and at the same time made my escape out of the room.

In the evening I was called again to my uncle, and he then told me, that he had considered my proposal, and resolved to take Anna with me, adding, to Mrs. Finchley,

that he considered this would be some kind of return to her excellent sister for what she, during her life, had done for me; and your niece, he added, shall fare alike in all things with mine, on this condition only, that as she is much older than Ermina, she shall take charge of her, and instruct her.

“She could do no less,” said Mrs. Finchley, “and the good woman expatiated largely in praise of my uncle’s generosity.”

“I see no generosity in the case,” he replied; “I, who am rich, am doing no more than your sister did in the utmost need.”

“True,” replied Mrs. Finchley, “and yet, Sir, you must allow me to say, that I feel your kindness deeply.”

“And what for?” said my uncle, “I am doing nothing for you, and yet you have



done as much for Minny as your sister has."

"Don't speak of it, Sir," she answered, "I could not have found in my heart to let the poor thing want a home."

"Well," returned my uncle, "you shall be none the worse for what you have done. I am going to London, and your sons must go with me to meet the ship and receive their money, and after that, I trust we shall all meet again in this place, and then we will talk a little more of your affairs. But, in the mean time, there are twenty guineas, Mrs. Finchley; rig yourselves a little better with them; and I shall be obliged to you if you will look out for a good day-school, and let Minny and her friend attend it, for I expect to be in England some eighteen months, or thereabouts, and should wish the girls to have every advantage of education."

The next morning my uncle set off to London in the inside of the heavy coach, while the two young sailors rode on the outside; and Mrs. Finchley immediately set to work to fit us for our attendance on the only respectable school then in Falmouth; where we learned to read a little French, and acquired the rudiments of some other accomplishments which we had not time to bring to perfection.

My uncle was absent about six weeks, and when he returned, he brought with him the two young sailors, who were both anxious to settle at home. And then, the kind gentleman, for he was indeed always kind and warm-hearted, made such arrangements for Mrs. Finchley's family as relieved them at once from all their embarrassments. He settled Wilmot and his wife in the old shop; and having got a situation in the dock-yard for William Finchley, he fixed the old couple in a neat little cottage just out of the town,

which he furnished for them, settling upon them twenty pounds a year for their lives, with which, and a small annual sum, about ten pounds more, which Mrs. Finchley had derived from her father, together with the earnings of her needle, as she worked for her daughter's shop, it was supposed they might live in comparative ease. John Finchley too, would be enabled occasionally to increase their little store, by engaging in some light labour. While all these arrangements were going on, Anna and I were occupied continually with our school duties, and I do not recollect being affected, as I afterwards was, by the prospect of a change in my situation. Indeed, during the eighteen months of my uncle's residence in England, my heart clung so to Mrs. Finchley, that I could hardly bear to think of my voyage, and in addition to this, the truly discreet and pious manner in which this excellent woman always spoke of the continual reverses of fortune, with the

vain pomps and pleasures of this life, certainly was a powerful means of keeping my mind in a state of sobriety.

I have often thought that outward circumstances of pride and pomp affect the mind of youth, much less than the comments which are frequently made on these things in their hearing, by injudicious and worldly persons. Hence the care which should be taken by all persons, who wish to bring up their children in the ways of holiness, to avoid all worldly, ambitious, and covetous discourse.

As I have much to say respecting my life, after leaving England, and as my adventures in a foreign country, though not very remarkable, may probably possess more interest for my young readers than any transaction in Falmouth, I shall not dwell on the scene of my separation from dear Mrs. Finchley and her daughter; nor say much of the tears

of Anna on quitting her native shore; of the blessings bestowed upon us by the worthy old couple; or of the agitations of my young heart when I was lifted into the boat to be conveyed to the East Indiaman. I must, however, entreat my readers, if they can, to conceive my astonishment, when I found myself in one of the best cabins of the ship, surrounded with every possible comfort for a long voyage; with no other sharers of my apartment besides dear Anna and a black woman, whom my uncle had provided as a servant.

At the back of our cabin was a window, in the quarter-deck of the ship, and from thence I beheld the bay, the town, and the little boat which had brought us from thence, together with the figure on the beach of William Finchley, who had accompanied us. Anna stood with me at the window, contemplating this scene, but I should despair of

giving any idea of our feelings. As the vessel was under weigh, we were soon obliged to quit the window by a painful sickness which came suddenly over us, and were forced to lay ourselves on the beds which had been provided for us on each side of the cabin; being thankful at the same time that our black servant was too experienced a sailor to be affected by the rocking motion of the vessel, or by the heavy swell of the sea. From that time we saw England no more; the wide waters soon extended themselves between our vessel and the shore, and before I was able to leave my bed, we were past the latitude of the most southern land of Europe.

My uncle came into our cabin, soon after we were laid on our beds, and, to my great surprise, began to laugh heartily at our afflictions; at the same time saying, "So, Minny, I think you have done well to bring

a companion with you, for at any rate there is some comfort when in affliction, to have a friend that can sympathise with you."

Anna recovered from her sickness sooner than I did, for I remained a long time unable to rise from my bed, and during the whole of that period I felt particularly unhappy. I experienced a peculiar kind of feverishness which I could not overcome, and during that time I had such a longing for the green fields and fresh air where I had spent my early days, as I cannot describe.

During this time the bleating of the sheep on deck used particularly to affect me, as it reminded me of a breezy common near my dear governess's, where we used to walk and play on a summer's evening, inhaling the fresh and balmy air, and therewith imbibing all the fragrance of a thousand spicy herbs. Once in particular, these images of rural life

had taken such possession of my mind, that I started up in my sleep during the middle of the night, and calling some of my old school-fellows by name, said I was ready to go out with them immediately; and then, being half awakened, and hearing the rushing of the waters against the side of the ship, and the whistling of the wind through the portholes, I began to sob violently, and could not be appeased till Anna came into my bed, took me in her arms, and promised to hold me during the rest of the night.

How sweetly, when my recollection returned, did she discourse with me on the presiding care of Providence, and how beautifully did she enlarge on the mighty works of mercy and of love displayed in the salvation of man; and how tenderly did she soothe me to sleep on her blameless bosom. She was indeed a lovely example of all that is rare and excellent in youth; patient in



adversity, moderate and humble in prosperity, ever devoted to the service of others, and never engrossed by self. But are not these the effects of grace? Man is naturally a selfish being, a stranger to that charity which seeketh not its own; and hence we may be assured that whenever the love of self is effectually subdued, the Holy Spirit has not only commenced His work but carried it on to a considerable extent.





## CHAP. V.

*Ermina's Recovery... Introduced to Mrs. Palmerston...  
 Their profuse Outfit... Observations respecting Dress...  
 Anna's Gratitude... Mrs. Palmerston's Affectation...  
 Mistaken Flattery... Her Ideas of Gentility and Love of  
 Finery contrasted with Anna's agitated Feelings and  
 ingenuous Sentiments.*



WHEN our vessel had passed the stormy neighbourhood of the Bay of Biscay and we had entered into calmer seas, I suddenly recovered—became eager for food—

and found myself in a few hours as well as I had ever been in my life.

It was about noon, on the first day after this change, that my uncle came into our cabin bringing with him a Mrs. Palmerston, who occupied the cabin next to ours. She was the lady of a rich civilian in Bengal, had been at home for her health, and was then returning to her husband with a large assortment of the latest Europe fashions, in which she no doubt expected to make a splendid figure among her old friends in Calcutta. "These, Mrs. Palmerston," said my uncle, "are my young ladies. I did not wish you to see them while they were unwell, for you would not have seen them to advantage; but now that they are fit to appear, you will much oblige me if you will take them by the hand, and introduce them to our friends on deck. And if you would add a few hints respecting their dresses, you

would also much oblige me. They have hitherto, I believe, worn only their morning-gowns, for I foresaw how it would be, and ordered the person who made their clothes, in town, to provide a box of these sort of things: but I will order up another box from the hold, and then, if you will see that they are dressed properly——”

“ Surely, Mr. Townley,” replied Mrs. Palmerston, “ I shall have the greatest pleasure in doing all you desire. Only send up the box, and I promise you that your young ladies shall have every assistance from me.” And she seated herself on my bed (which was converted into a sofa by day) with that sort of glee which people evince when they are about to have a great treat.

“ Have we more clothes, uncle?” I said, in a low voice; “ more clothes than there

are in that great box? What an immense quantity we must have!"

"What does she say?" asked Mrs. Palmerston.

"Nothing at all," replied my uncle; "nothing but nonsense." And he gave me a look, by which I was made to understand that I must not say things of this kind again, in the presence of Mrs. Palmerston; but why, or wherefore, I could not imagine.

We had been measured for our clothes at Falmouth, and our measures had been sent to London, and this was all we had known about our sea-stock. Accordingly when we saw one large box full of white linen wrappers, we had thought ourselves very rich indeed, and Anna having counted up the contents of this box had set herself in the

most innocent manner to calculate how frequently we might put on clean things, in order to make our linen serve us for five months. Neither she nor I had ever dreamed of other boxes, containing dress-suits of silk and muslin trimmed with lace, with sashes, veils, necklaces, and all those etceteras which after a while seem to become almost indispensable to the female sex. We had been early taught that our ornaments were not to be those *of gold and pearls and costly array, but those of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.* (1 Tim. ii. 9, and 1 Pet. iii. 4.)

O happy simplicity!—how blessed was I while I retained that simplicity! and O how gladly, in later periods of my life, would I have exchanged all the magnificent circumstances of oriental life, for the simple taste, and innocent delights, of my childhood:—that joyful period in which I had been accus-

tomed to adorn my straw hat with a garland of roses, and fancy myself splendidly decorated, and when a new penny book with a gilt cover excited a degree of ecstasy, which no possessions, however splendid, could afterwards inspire!

How particularly desirable is a humble spirit, and moderate expectations! How many delights are within the reach of those persons who possess a simple and pure taste, from which the worldly minded are entirely excluded! But, although a simple state of mind may be preserved in childhood, in some degree, by judicious management, how is it to be retained in after years, when a person is compelled to see and hear so much which tends to corruption?

Most assuredly by religion only; by a constant recourse to the consideration of those first pure principles which are laid down in Scripture for the benefit of man.

He that is impressed with a deep sense of his own depravity and helplessness, must at the same time necessarily feel that all he possesses of worldly goods is more than he deserves, and hence as his expectations will be moderated, his desires will be fewer. He who knows that if he is to be saved, he must be saved through the pure unmerited favour of God, and not through any efforts of his own, must feel a sense of obligation which will tend to the humbling of self in a very great degree. And he whose hopes of future happiness are built on the foundation of Christ himself, will undoubtedly sometimes enjoy such foretastes of future blessedness—will behold such glimpses of future glory, as must, in the comparison, throw all temporal magnificence into the deepest shade. But I must not forget, while indulging in these reflections, to say what my uncle, with the assistance of his man-servant, (who was a native of India), together with two or three sailors, were introducing into our cabin,



namely, one large chest, which he immediately caused to be fastened down to the floor, together with two smaller boxes, one of which he presented to me, and the other to Anna, at the same time giving to each of us a key to these last, which he took from his own pocket.

I received my box with the glee usual to youth, for I was then not thirteen years old; but the tears stood in Anna's eyes; and as she looked up to my uncle, "O, Sir," she said, "how can I bear all your kindness! I have no right to expect that you should treat me in this manner!"

"Peace, silly girl," said the kind gentleman, "will you be content if I tell you that it is a pleasure to me to do any thing for the niece of your two most excellent aunts? And if Minny ever forgets what she owes to them, and to you too, I have done with her; so no more of this."

All this passed somewhat aside, for Mrs. Palmerston and our Indian servant, whom my uncle had taught us to call *Ayah*\*, were busily engaged in opening the great chest.

“I believe, Mr. Townley,” said Mrs. Palmerston, “that I must call upon you for assistance; for this lock is too hard for me;” and she rubbed her hand as if it had been grievously sprained by the efforts she had made; on which my uncle condoled with her, and she assumed the patient sufferer, in a manner which almost made me laugh, as I had never seen any thing of this kind of affectation in any person before. However a grave look from Anna checked me.

When the affair of the sprained hand was settled, and it had been found that the blacksmith must be called to open the box, Mrs. Palmerston again seated herself on the

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\* *Ayah*—The Indian term for *waiting-maid*.

sofa, and began to talk to my uncle. "Mr. Townley," she said, "you must now tell me, which of these sweet girls is your niece. Yet I think I can guess," she added, looking at Anna, who was much prettier and more delicate in her appearance, than myself; "I think I know; I am sure I am not mistaken."

Anna and I were both silent, and my uncle not seeing the direction of her eye, replied, "Don't you think her like me, particularly about the upper part of the face; making allowance for wrinkles and sun-drying?"

"Very like," replied Mrs. Palmerston, still looking at Anna.

My uncle was a dark man with black eyes, and Anna was particularly fair, having an uncommonly soft and modest expression.

However it was no matter what Anna might be, Mrs. Palmerston affirmed that she was excessively like my uncle. But on his calling me to him, and raising my hair from my forehead to shew her the Townley brow, she perceived her mistake and recovered herself with great dexterity, replying that the likeness about the forehead and the shape of the head was very striking.

I remember that when a very little child, my governess had corrected me more than once for a mocking spirit, and I had for some years felt no inclination to yield to this spirit; indeed I had been kept too humbly, and too piously, to admit of any thing of the kind; but at this moment I felt the temptation recur, and though I did not speak yet I looked many saucy things.

“What do you call your sweet little niece, Sir?” said Mrs. Palmerston.

“Ermina, Madam, or Minny, if you like it better,” replied my uncle.

“Ermina! what a sweet name!” said Mrs. Palmerston, “and what a lovely little girl belongs to the name,” she added, caressing me. “But, *ayah*, we must have this pretty hair all nicely curled and parted, in this way. I will shew the *ayah* by and bye; and you must hold up your head, my dear; you have a pair of fine falling shoulders if you would make the best of them; and those sweet coral lips, how lovely they are! We never see such things in India, do we Mr. Townley?” Thus she went on till the lock of the chest was undone. A warmer interest then excited her, for she was precisely the person who delighted in the view of fine clothes, even when belonging to another.

My uncle, when he had ascertained that all was safe, and no damage done to the box,

made his escape; and Anna and I remained perfectly still and stupified, while Mrs. Palmerston and the *ayah* sifted the chest to the bottom and displayed to our view all sorts of gay and rich dresses, for which my uncle must have paid some hundreds of pounds.

I cannot attempt to give any idea of Mrs. Palmerston's exclamations at the sight of this fine thing, and that fine thing; but she covered the whole cabin, every chair, table, bed and couch, with the scattered suits; and looked at us from time to time, exclaiming, "Well indeed, Mr. Townley has provided you well! These things are beautiful. But we know him to be worth an immense sum of money, I know not how many *lacks*; and his house at Garden-Reach is one of the prettiest places in India! Miss Townley, you will live like a princess. I know that Mrs. Townley has a coach of her own, and your uncle his chariot; and I have heard

that no one gives such dinners. Mrs. Townley has the most superb set of diamonds of any lady in Calcutta; they were left her by her father; he was an Armenian, and richer than any Jew. She was one of the Aratoons, and a widow; your uncle did a very good thing when he married her. It was the making of him."

To all this I made no answer. "Well, but, Miss Townley," continued Mrs. Palmerston, looking at her watch, "we must settle what you are to wear to-day. You know that it is not genteel to be over dressed on board ship. Come, what shall we select?" and she turned to Anna.

"What you please, Ma'am," replied Anna; and the tears stood in her eyes.

Mrs. Palmerston looked at her for an instant with amazement, and then said,

“ Why, my dear young lady, what has grieved you? If you are hurt at seeing so many fine clothes, you are the very first young lady I ever met with, who was ever afflicted by a circumstance of this kind. But we shall be too late for dinner, if we do not set about what we have to do.” She then selected two dark lustrous slips from the mass of rich dresses, and directing the *ayah* to dress us in them, and curl my hair, she promised to come again when she was herself dressed, and bring us out upon deck. So saying, she left the cabin.

As soon as Mrs. Palmerston was gone, I proposed to Anna that we should open our little boxes; but she advised me to postpone that job till night, and she immediately set to work to restore the scattered articles to the chest, while the *ayah* was curling my hair. I observed as she was thus employed, that the tears fell, drop by drop, from her eyes,



though she endeavoured to conceal them. I asked her no questions till the *ayah* went to borrow some curling-irons from Mrs. Palmerston, and I then said, "What can be the matter with you, Anna?"

"Indeed, Minny," she replied, "I don't know; but I feel myself quite overpowered with the sight of all this finery, and the great importance which is attached to these things. How happy and easy we were, my dear Minny, with our excellent governess, when we had only one plain white frock apiece, which was kept for Sundays and holidays! and how pleased we were when our dear governess gave each of us a yard of grass-green ribbon to tie our bonnets! And do you remember, when one of the children's parents presented my governess with a present of five guineas over and above what he owed her, how I wished to persuade her to buy a silk gown, and how she resisted my

entreaties, and spent half the money on us, and sent the other half to Mrs. Finchley, who was then in great distress? But if you have forgotten all this, Ermina, you cannot have forgotten how Mrs. Finchley cut up her best gown to make you a frock, and how pleased she was to see you in it!"

"I remember all these things, Anna," I replied, "but I don't understand why they should make you unhappy now."

"I hardly know myself," said Anna; "but the sight of all these things has made me strangely sad. I know, indeed, that it is necessary to dress according to the company we keep, and the fortunes we or our friends may possess; therefore it may perhaps be right that we should have all these fine things, Minny, for I am no judge of this matter, having always lived very humbly till now; but I am sure it is not necessary

to make such a talking and bustle about these dresses. And to speak of the clothes we put upon our poor sinful bodies, as if our eternal happiness depended on the colour and fashion of them, must be wrong, I am sure; and this makes me unhappy, and I can't help it."

She then repeated a part of that beautiful hymn of Dr. Watts, namely,

"How proud we are, how fond to shew  
Our clothes, and call them rich and new!" &c.

"Well," I said, with some tenderness, "there is one comfort. Our dear, dear, governess is now clad even in finer raiment than any which your hymn describes!"

She looked at me as if desiring to ascertain if I thoroughly understood what I had asserted.

“Yes,” I said, “she is; for is she not arrayed in the righteousness of our Saviour himself, which is brighter and more beautiful even than the knowledge, virtue, truth, and grace of the greatest saints now on earth?”

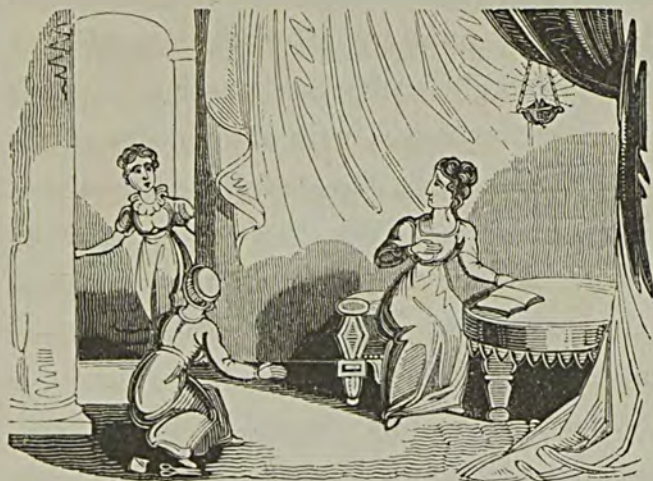
The re-appearance of the *ayah* put an end to this discussion; and here I close my chapter.



Anna a  
on Bo  
...Mr  
Arrive



through  
deck, w



## CHAP. VI.

*Anna and Ermina dress to be introduced to the Company on Board the Indiaman...They differ respecting Dancing...Mr. Townley commends Anna's Prudence...They Arrive at Calcutta...Land...Delighted with the Country.*



ABOUT a quarter before two o'clock, Mrs. Palmerston entered our cabin again, and finding us dressed to her satisfaction, she led us through the *cuddy*, or dining room, to the deck, where she introduced us to our fellow-

passengers, among whom we found several ladies and numbers of gentlemen. Chairs being brought us, we sat under an awning to amuse ourselves with the novelty of the scene. The deck was some hundreds of feet long, reckoning from the stern to the bowsprit. At our end, were all the persons of our own rank, including those who dined at the captain's table; and at the other end sat all the passengers of lower rank, among whom were some private soldiers and their wives, who in such situations are exposed to hardships, such as no cottager in England ever knows.

Immediately on our appearing, my uncle took Anna under his arm, and walked up and down the deck with her; but I was left with Mrs. Palmerston, and as there was no other child on board, every one began to joke, laugh, and romp with me. One asked me where I had got my coral lips? and

another where I had stolen my bright eyes? another remarked the pretty curls on my head; and a fourth asked me if I would be his partner in the next dance, for it had been proposed that they should dance every night on board, now that we had left the more stormy seas.

I was at first confounded with all this; but I presently began to feel myself more at ease, and then my natural character, which, as I before hinted, was that of a little pert, mocking girl, presently began to appear, and we raised such an uproar among us, that my uncle was obliged to call me to order. At length a drum and fife summoned us to dinner, and as all the ladies were handed to table, as if they had suddenly lost the use of their limbs or senses, I also allowed myself to be led into the dining-room with great ceremony, no doubt thinking myself as good as the very best of them.

My reader will perhaps say, Can this be the little simple, humble Minny, who sat but a few years past on her governess's lap, to hear the story of the little *chuckoor*, and the same little modest girl who shortly since spent her whole time in hemming and stitching shirts for sale, and committing portions of Scripture to memory? Yes, it is the same; and if you, my young readers, have never known yourselves, but under the tuition of careful parents, and in scenes of suffering and adversity, learn, from my example, what high prosperity and flattery is most likely to make of you; and join with me in this prayer.—O! Lord, *hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.* (Psalm xvii. 5.)

At dinner I found myself seated near Mrs. Palmerston, and at a considerable distance from my uncle, by whom my beloved Anna had placed herself.



I remember little of what passed at table, where I was all amazement at every thing I saw ; but I know this, that Mrs. Palmerston suffered me to drink wine with one or two gentlemen who asked me, and that before I rose from table I felt it working in my head.

The same scene which had been acted upon deck in the morning, was repeated after dinner ; and when we had taken tea and coffee, as it was a remarkably fine night, we began to think of dancing ; and Mrs. Palmerston insisted that I should dance, to which I willingly acceded. While they were fixing their partners, I ran into my cabin to get a pair of gloves, and there I found Anna seated at the table, reading by the light of a candle which hung from the roof of the ship, while the *ayah* was sitting on the floor at work by her side. “ Where are my gloves, *ayah* ? ” I said, calling about me as if I had been born a princess.

The *ayah* rose and handed them to me; and I was running out again, when Anna said, "Minnie, what are you doing? I wish you would not think of dancing."

"And why?" I asked.

"Because, if my poor aunt were living, she would not have approved it."

"Why what's the harm of dancing?" I said, stopping short.

"There is no harm in dancing itself," she replied. "You may recollect that we used often to dance on the grass-plot to our dear governess's guitar, but then you know that she always explained to us that what might be very innocent among brothers, and sisters, and school-fellows, was not so among strangers. You know that there is no harm in puss in the corner, and blind man's buff

among little children, but such games would be very silly among grown people, and people who are strangers to each other: and dancing is like these plays, innocent in itself, but not proper at all times and in all companies; and I do wish, Minny, you would take my advice for once, and come to bed instead of dancing."

"I can't see the harm now of dancing," I replied pertly.

"Very well," she replied, "and it is possible you may not; but this you do understand, Minny, that it is always right to take the advice of your friends, particularly those who are older than yourself."

"Older!" I said, "dear me! you are suddenly grown very ancient indeed, Anna; and yet you are not four years older than I am."

“There is one thing to be considered, Minny,” she replied; “and that is, that both you and I are suddenly deprived of all our former guides and counsellors, and therefore it behoves us to be directors to each other; and accordingly, in want of a better, it becomes your duty to attend to me; and if I give you bad advice, I am answerable for it.”

“O, as to that,” I said, “I don’t suppose you will give me any bad advice.”

“Well, then,” said she, “that settles the matter, and I will send the *ayah* for your uncle, and we will be guided by him.”

Accordingly my uncle was sent for, and Anna having informed him that she thought we were both better in our rooms at this hour, he commended her prudence, said he entirely agreed with her, and promised to

make some excuse to Mrs. Palmerston for my absence; and, from that time we were not asked again to dance, though, I confess that I was sometimes mortified, when I heard the tabor and fife upon deck.

As soon as my uncle was gone, we opened our boxes, and found an immense variety of all kinds of trinkets, with scissars, needles, pins, thimbles, knives, ribbons, necklaces, &c. &c. and in arranging and re-arranging these, I presently forgot my disappointment.

The rest of our days at sea during the fine weather passed very like this which I have described; but in weathering the Cape we had some severe storms, which shook all vanities out of my head, and no doubt affected many others in the ship in a similar way. And in the Bay of Bengal we were also much tossed about, so that I became heartily tired of the ship; and saw, with no

small pleasure, the Island of Saugur, after a six months' passage.

When the vessel came to anchor in Diamond Harbour, which is at the mouth of the Hoogley, my uncle immediately forwarded a messenger to Calcutta, and in as short a time as possible, a pinnace arrived to convey us to Garden-Reach, where Mrs. Townley then was.

Into this pinnace we were shortly afterwards conveyed with our baggage, and, proceeding with one tide, arrived at Fulta, where was an inn by the water-side. I have little recollection of this inn, though it was the first Indian dwelling I had ever visited. It stood, as well as I remember, in a dry sandy plain, though, in its immediate vicinity, was a garden, which being well watered, produced all the plants of the climate; but the heat was such, and the glare of the

atmosphere so great, that we could hardly amuse ourselves even with looking from the doors. We had a handsome dinner at Fulta, served up in a great hall, where at least half a score of my uncle's servants attended us, affording me much amusement by their turbaned heads, thick mustachios, and muslin habits.

The tide was not favourable again till nearly midnight, when we re-embarked, and, lying down on our couches, enjoyed repose till morning. When we awoke, we found all still around us—the pinnace fastened to the shore, and our windows opening on a beautiful garden, the trees of which feathered down to the water's side, and filled our small apartment with a fragrance which equalled that of the most aromatic spices. At the same time the warblings of small birds, together with the distant notes of the dove, saluted our ears—and O! how delightful, how inexpressibly delightful, were these sounds and odours

to us, who had been so long pent up in an East Indiaman.

I arose, and not having been undressed, immediately put my head as far as I could out of the window, and beheld a variety of the most charming trees and flowers, growing in groups and singly, on a lawn of the richest verdure. I knew not the name of a single tree, being all equally new and strange to me. Some were laden with thick foliage of a dark and brilliant green, and embellished with large spikes of flowers whiter than snow—others had leaves so fine and delicate that they seemed as if they would almost shrink from the touch—some were decorated with golden balls—and some with crimson, and star-like bells—while others raised their verdant coronets high above all the rest, as if they would assert a regal dignity over all the forest.

“O! Anna, Anna,” I exclaimed, “how beautiful, how very, very beautiful! And is



this India? It is surely more like Paradise!" Anna was equally delighted with myself, and understanding that our long, long voyage was at an end, we hastened to change our dresses, in order that we might be ready to go on shore as soon as the summons should arrive.

We were but just ready, when my uncle appeared on the bank, with two servants, carrying immense umbrellas; for as it was not more than seven in the morning, and the garden considerably shaded by the trees, he wished us to walk up to the house; and we were perhaps more impatient to accompany him thither, than he to conduct us, for, as I afterwards found, he had more domestic difficulties than he wished people to suppose.



## CHAP. VII.

*Garden-Reach described...Anna and Ermina introduced to Mrs. Townley, and to Company...Mrs. Townley makes them Presents...They ride in the Couch, where Anna contrasts their present and former Situations.*



WE had passed for a short distance under an embowered walk of fragrant shrubs, before we came out upon the lawn, when we saw my uncle's house directly before us, while to the right and left, though at different

distances, stood other stately houses of a similar description, all of which looked like palaces. My uncle's house was a stone building, or at least one that looked like stone, of two stories in height, being encircled by columns which supported the roof. The roof itself was flat, and was guarded by ballustrades. Within the pillars on the ground floor was a *verandah*\*, and on the second floor a gallery, into which every chamber opened by two or more doors. These doors were all latticed with green, and from the centre of the house large wings extended on each side, having also their columns, with *verandahs* and galleries. Had I been a heathen, I should have been almost inclined to have said that Fortune was amusing herself in playing me tricks, and making me giddy by raising me at once from the bottom to the top of her wheel; for great,

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\* *Verandah*.—An open gallery, or passage.

indeed, was the contrast between this splendid habitation and Mrs. Finchley's kitchen in Falmouth. I was, however, too young to meditate very deeply on this extraordinary change of fortune, otherwise I might, perhaps, have been led to apprehend that my new situation might not be entirely divested of attendant evils. But young persons at the age I then was, are not deep or curious reasoners. I felt little but admiration and delight at all that I saw, and, though my uncle walked quickly, I was, I believe, always a few steps before him.

At length we reached the house, and passing through the *verandah*, proceeded into a magnificent hall, which extended the whole length of the building, having large folding doors open at the opposite end, presenting a prospect of many beautiful trees.

There were three rooms on each side of the hall, in one of which was a superb hanging

stair-case, by which we ascended into an elegant upper room of the same size as the hall. This room was covered with a fine matting, and hung with chandeliers of cut glass; and a table of great length was here set out for breakfast in such a style as I had never before even conceived of; for the glass, silver, and china seemed almost sufficient to furnish a shop, and at the upper end of the room sat a lady, who I was made to understand was my aunt.

I certainly was somewhat startled when I first saw her, for I had expected the lady of such a fine house to be something superlatively elegant. I therefore hung back, and required a little encouragement from my uncle, before I could be persuaded to advance.

My uncle had appeared to me to be about fifty years of age, but this lady was certainly sixty. She was extremely stout, as well as

tall, was highly rouged, had very dark eyes, and particularly dark arched eyebrows, strongly marked, which met over the bridge of her nose. Her complexion was not merely brown, but sallow; for she was of Armenian extraction, and her father's family having been long in India, it is probable that she was remotely allied to the natives. Her dress was as singular as her person—it was extremely rich with lace, her hair elaborately dressed, and well powdered, though so early in the morning, her throat bare, with the exception of a narrow black velvet collar, and her hands covered with jewels. She sat on a large chair, with her feet on a *mora*\*, and was engaged at the moment we entered, in giving some orders to a native servant, who was himself covered with silver ornaments, and stood bowing, or rather cringing before her, with his hands in the posture used by little children when they say their prayers.

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\* *Mora*—A footstool.

As we advanced up the room, she put her glass to her eye, to look at us, but did not move; and as my uncle presented me to her, not a single line of her face was changed, but she said she was glad to see me, hoped I was well, and said, I was welcome to India, all of which sentences she uttered in a kind of foreign accent, and in as harsh a voice as ever issued from a woman's lips.

My presentation being over, that of Anna's followed; and I then perceived that my aunt had meant to be gracious when she had spoken to me, for she threw such excessive haughtiness into her manner, when she spoke to Anna, that it was with much difficulty that my lovely young companion could refrain from tears. My uncle, however, seemed resolved that Anna should not be left to doubt that she was welcome, at least to him, for he presently called her to the other end of the room, to shew her the view towards

the river, and then I heard him say to her, "You must not trouble yourself about Mrs. Townley; she is a foreigner, and does not understand our manners; but you may depend upon my friendship."

"I know it, Sir," replied Anna, modestly, "I know your generosity."

"And my gratitude," said my uncle. "You have a right to my gratitude."

While standing at the window, several wheel-carriages drove up to the house, attended by two palanquins; and a moment afterwards, half a dozen, or more, gentlemen were ushered into the room to breakfast with my aunt, who talked and laughed with them with as much vivacity as a girl of sixteen.

The gentlemen were scarcely arrived, and the ceremonies of introduction between our-



selves and them had hardly taken place, before about a dozen servants entered in a long procession, with materials for breakfast. A moment afterwards, the table was covered, and one servant, or more, ranged themselves behind each chair. I think I counted four behind my aunt, and three behind my uncle. My aunt, however, soon directed one of hers to attach himself to my service; on which my uncle sent one of his to Anna, telling him that he was henceforward to be considered as her attendant. I observed all this; but I suppose that it was not generally noticed. We sat a long time, for the gentlemen and my aunt had their *hookahs* \*, and there was a great deal of conversation, very little of which I understood. After breakfast, the gentlemen took their leave, and my uncle then shewed us a long suite of rooms, in-

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\* *Hookah*—A peculiar apparatus for smoking, by which the smoke passes through water.

cluding a sleeping-room, dressing-room, and bathing-room, which he said were to belong to us. These rooms opened into the large sitting-room above stairs. In the bed-rooms were no carpets nor curtains, but the floor was covered with matting, and there were two beds, hung with fine China gauze. The dressing-room was furnished with couches, tables, and *almiras* \*, and commanded a fine view over the gardens towards Fort William. Here the kind old gentleman shook hands with Anna, and kissing me, said, "My children, I trust that you will be happy. You shall fare alike, and be subject to no one's caprices. And you, Minny, I charge to love and obey Anna, for I have had proof sufficient of her discretion." He then introduced two *ayahs* and an inferior female servant, who were to wait upon us; he also told us that there was a *dirge* †, to be devoted to us,

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\* *Almira*—A cabinet.

† *Dirge*—A tailor.

and promised us that when he went to Calcutta he would buy us a little carriage and horses, in order that we might go out when we liked. He then left us, and we looked at one another with amazement, to find ourselves in possession of such indulgences.

Soon after, we heard my uncle talking loudly with his wife in the next room; shortly after which, he left the house, to go to Calcutta, which was at a short distance.

My uncle had not long departed, before we were called into the presence of my aunt, who was much more gracious to Anna than she had been at breakfast, by which I was led to conjecture that my uncle had laid his commands upon her to that effect.

When we appeared, she was very busy with a cloth-merchant, who was spreading before her a great variety of the finest worked

muslins. She immediately presented me with several pieces, and gave as many of the same to Anna, desiring they might be immediately made up for us, and only laughing when we told her that we had already more clothes than we could count. She then dismissed the merchant, and retired to her own apartments in one of the wings of the house, where she spent most of her time with her female servants; but how that time was employed I never could discover; for she neither worked, read, nor wrote, and as to music and drawing, she never thought of such things. She had, however, three tailors always sewing for her, and she was much occupied in directing their employments, and arranging her jewels, trinkets, laces, and ribbons.

We met at two o'clock to a kind of dinner; my uncle was however absent, and we should have been dreadfully dull, had not two

gentlemen dropped in who were distant relations of my aunt's.

After dinner, all our luggage arrived, having been examined at the custom-house; and we busied ourselves in seeing our goods unpacked, and sending our clothes to be washed. When we had arranged the articles in our cabinets, we were utterly amazed to find how abundantly we were supplied.

We, however, were most delighted to find a box of books, which my uncle had provided for us; and though we did not then open it, we set it aside as very valuable treasure.

About five o'clock we were made to understand that we were to dress as smartly as we could, and we then sat down under the hands of our *ayahs*, who arranged our hair most skilfully, and dressed us from head to foot without the smallest exertion

of our own. Being dressed, we walked down into the hall, and there saw several carriages drawn up before the door. One was precisely the same as an English coach, another was a kind of open chair, carried by *bearers*\*, and the rest were variously constructed. All these several equipages belonged to my aunt; and while we were attentively regarding them we received a message from her, informing us that she herself was not going out; but, if we wished for an airing, the coach was at our service.

This was too tempting an offer to persons who had never been in a coach in their lives, as was the case with us, and an airing in an unknown country is possessed even of more attractions, than a ride amidst beautiful scenery, to which we have been long accus-

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\* *Bearer*—A servant, whose work it is to carry a *palanquin*.

tomed : accordingly Anna and I entered the carriage, and were driven away we knew not whither.

“ Well,” said Anna, smiling, as soon as we found ourselves shut up together, and out of the hearing of our attendants, “ so we are riding in our coach, and have our waiting-maids, and our fine dresses, and our footmen ! O, Minny, Minny, what is to come next ? I only wish that my aunt could see us ; it would amuse her above all things ; but I should not be the least surprised, if this time twelvemonth we were both to find ourselves ladies'-maids, or perhaps something lower.”

“ Why, Anna,” I replied, “ what chance is there that we should ever be ladies'-maids ?”

“ What chance, Minny ?” she replied.  
“ There is no such thing as chance ;—every

thing, you know, is ordered by Providence ; and no man is so great, or so sure of greatness, but that he is liable to fall, and no one so low, but that he may be raised ; and this reflection ought always to make us humble in prosperity, and cheerful in adversity. Now, for instance, Minny," she added, "when you and I were making the check shirts in my dear aunt's little kitchen at Falmouth——"

"O, don't talk of that, Anna," I said, "pray don't; you know my uncle does not like it."

"But your uncle is not here," replied Anna, laughing, "and I like to remember these things:—the recollection is now so amusing, compared with our present grandeur. The change at first overcame me, because I could not bear such a waste of good things being made upon me, but now



I see things in a different light, and think it my duty to take events as they come, and try to bear all changes with an equal mind, and ever to recollect that there are valleys as well as hills, in this world, and that we must pass over both, in our way to the celestial city, before we can arrive at that blessed region where the valleys are exalted, and the mountains brought low.”

I remember that I did not at this time at all enjoy these grave discussions: I had lost the relish for them which I had formerly experienced at Falmouth. My mind too had been lately in a state of high excitement: and I could not bear to descend from the lofty prospects which I had been indulging. I therefore endeavoured to divert Anna's attention, by adverting to the objects which presented themselves around us.



## CHAP. VIII.

*The Country near Garden-Reach...Conversation at Dinner,  
and between Ermina and Anna on retiring to Rest.*



HE carriage had now passed the gates, and we were traversing a way between two gardens towards the interior of the country, when we at length reached a shady road of great extent, where new and striking objects met our view at every glance. The

horses' heads were towards Calcutta, though we were at some distance from that place. To our left were the gardens and houses of Garden-Reach, and to our right, many native huts and *tanks*\*.—We also saw many of the native women walking about, without shoes, and wrapped in webs of cloth, which they substituted for petticoats and veils. Some of them were bearing pitchers on their heads and shoulders, as we often see the people of the East represented in pictures—while others were carrying their little naked black children on their hips. We then passed by the door of a great *pagoda* †, wherein we saw a frightful image, somewhat like a monkey, with three faces, and many arms. From this *pagoda*, the light of day was carefully excluded, and we should not have been able to discern the image, had it not been

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\* *Tank*—A large cistern.

† *Pagoda*—The temple of an Indian idol.

illuminated by two lamps which were burning in the front of it.

We were at first much amused by these new objects, but when we reflected upon their true nature, and the deplorable idolatry which they indicated, we became aware of the mental gloom in which these heathen regions are enveloped:—and we could not forbear instituting a comparison between the miserable condition of the poor natives of India, and the happy privileges of our English cottagers. Surprising, indeed, is the influence of their gloomy superstitions, even on the features of the face: and no one who has not visited a heathen country, can conceive a just idea of the human countenance when wholly divested of correct religious feelings!

Our coachman turned his horses soon after we had passed the *pagoda*; but long before we could reach home a heavy fog surrounded

us. This seemed to arise from the swamps, and *tanks*, and marshes; resting like clouds on the thick masses of foliage which lined our road, and attended by a rank and offensive odour, such as is emitted by the woods of Europe at the time of the fall of the leaf.

It was quite dark; for the sun in these latitudes sets at six o'clock during the greater part of the year; and there is little or no twilight, because the sun does not gradually descend below the horizon, as in England, but drops all at once, as it were, into total darkness.

When we arrived in my uncle's garden, the house shone as if illuminated on some festive occasion: long streams of vivid light issuing through every door and window, from the lamps in the girandoles and wall-shades, which were all now lighted. In passing through the hall we were astonished to see

a long table set out in the most splendid manner, and glittering with cut-glass, and gold and silver plate in the greatest profusion. We hastened up to our rooms, and remained there till my uncle came to fetch us, to introduce us to a very large party, which was already assembled in the upper room, but which, as it consisted chiefly of gentlemen, and few young people were present, did not seem to promise me much entertainment. I accordingly sat down, supposing that no one would think of me, but I was mistaken, for no sooner was it understood that I was Mr. Townley's niece, than first one and then another began to address me. I was desired to come forward, and pay my compliments; and in return I had a thousand pretty things said to me on my fine fresh colour, sweet complexion, &c. by which my little head, which was never one of the steadiest, became completely turned. I tripped with short steps through the centre

of the circle, lisped my words in a very babyish manner, and I have no doubt looked not unlike a little simpleton.

We were all handed down to dinner with great ceremony; and I found myself seated between two persons who talked to me as if I had been a little princess, and asked me many questions about England, which country they either had never seen, or had quite forgotten: and I assure you, I was very careful not to say any thing which might lead them to think that I had not been quite as great a person at home as I then was in India.

I have often since reflected how very easy it is to destroy that simplicity which is so natural and so delightful in childhood, and to make would-be fine ladies of the most ignorant and superficial young persons. We sat a long while at dinner, and,

notwithstanding the novelty of the scene, I was at last most heartily tired, and felt truly glad when the ladies rose to leave the room.

We retired to sit with my aunt and the other ladies till after tea, which was served on silver salvers. After tea, Anna obtained permission from my aunt, and we withdrew to our beds.

When in our rooms, Anna proposed that we should read our Bibles and pray, and though I would gladly have dispensed with these exercises, yet I was ashamed to say that I was not in a humour for them; I therefore made no objection, and after our devotions were concluded, we went each to our separate bed, though, as our couches were not heavy, we had previously pushed them so near to each other as to admit of quiet conversation.



“My dear Minny,” said Anna, “I am pleased to find that we shall have a good deal of time to ourselves in this place. I am very glad that we have no young companions: for there is a probability that they might not have been such as we should have relished.”

“But it makes it dull,” I answered, “to see only old people!”

“Dull!” replied Anna. “Did we find it dull, Minny, when we sat working together in Mrs. Finchley’s kitchen? Ah! Minny, it was not dull then, for God was with us, and we were all in all to each other; *we took sweet counsel together, and walked together to the house of our God.*” (Psalm lv. 14.)

“What makes you so grave, Anna?” I asked.

“ I don’t know,” she replied, “ but I am almost afraid that all these fine things may divert us from our duty ; I will tell you, however, what we will do ; we will make ourselves some rules for spending our time, and pray that we may be enabled to keep to them.”

“ We can’t have rules here, Anna,” I replied.

“ And why not ?” she said.

“ O, I don’t know ;” I answered. “ We shall be wanted to go out, and to see company, and those kind of things.”

“ We will see about that, Minny,” said Anna. “ If interruptions occur sometimes, we must submit to them ; but we will have as few as we can. Your uncle told me to-day, at dinner, that we were to have the little

carriage to-morrow. We will get up early, and take a ride; and then we will come home and be dressed for breakfast, and we will read while they are dressing us. We will read the Bible at that time, in order that our *ayahs* may hear it, for they understand English very well, you find, though it is rather an odd sort of English. Then breakfast will be ready, and that will occupy us till nearly nine; then we can come back into our rooms, and we will read, and write, and draw, a little, till one; and at one o'clock we will walk in the *verandah*, or read some of our new books. Then will come *tiffin*\*; and after that, if we find the heat great, we may lie on our couches and read again, and then we must dress and go out, I suppose; and after that come dinner and company,—which are tiresome enough, certainly, for who wants two dinners in a day?—and then

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\* *Tiffin*—Luncheon.

we must spend a little time with your aunt; and after that comes the Bible again, and we retire to bed. This is the way in which we may pass our time very comfortably, if you like it, Minny?"

"I don't know," I replied. "I want to look about me, and to go about; I don't like all this confinement, I want to see new things; I want to see Calcutta, I want—" and here I stopped, for I really did not know what I wanted.

"Well," said Anna, after having waited some time, "please to finish your sentence, Minny, or shall I finish it for you?"

"You may, if you please," I answered.

"Well, then, I will," she said; "you want somewhat of that humble, moderate, and contented state of mind which you enjoyed at

Falmouth, when we sat together working for our bread, and thankful for a few potatoes and a little morsel of cold meat for our dinners—when we should have thought one of our morning-wrappers a superb garment, and our very night-caps the most elegant head-dresses that could be devised! O, my Minny, let us pray that we may be enabled to bear our prosperity with moderation. It is certain that of ourselves we have not strength to do so, but the Almighty is all-sufficient, and he can make perfect his strength in our weakness. Let us pray, that we may be guarded in this hour of trial; that we may be upheld, and enabled to retain our integrity, so that the vanities of this evil world may not have power to seduce us, but that we may hold on in a calm and even course, being always in a state of preparation for the afflictions with which it may please God to try us. This world, you know, my Minny, is not our home. It cannot be a resting-place to any one, because it is a

place of sin; and where sin is, there necessarily must be sorrow, of one kind or other.

“The times of prosperity and of adversity,” added my lovely companion, “are esteemed, by reflection, in the mind of a true Christian, as equally good. For, in periods of sorrow, the child of God often experiences secret consolations from the invisible yet sensible presence of his Creator and Preserver; while his experience of the variableness of human events yields him a prospect of future relief. And, on the other hand, in circumstances of prosperity the believing soul regards the bounteous Giver of his benefits, and is careful so to employ the talents committed to his trust, that should he experience a reverse of fortune, he may be able to look back on his times of elevation with comfort and satisfaction. Now, my Minny, is the time for your exercise of care and moderation; and now you ought to think of what you can do for the orphan and the friendless, not to speak

of those who were your friends when you had no one else to look upon you. And now, feeling your own weakness, and your liability to fall and be carried away by temptation, you should be more earnest than ever in seeking divine assistance, and using your privileges as a child of God, (which I trust you are,) to throw yourself on the divine mercy, and to implore the divine direction.

“ Let us pray every day,” added she, “ let us even now pray, that the Lord may be our guide—that we may be the objects of the love of the Father—that we may be of the number of those who are justified by God the Son—that we may be sanctified by God the Holy Spirit, and finally may be received into eternal glory.

“ If no other consideration can touch us, Minny, let us recollect that we are now in a country and a climate which has been fatal to

many English people—a country over which even now, in the finest season, hang many heavy fogs and damps; where we must expect much severer heat than that we even now endure; and where, if affliction should attack us in no other quarter, it is not unlikely that it may attack us in our bodily health.

“O, Minny, my dear Minny, even now there is much which ought to make us serious, much which ought at least to deter us from yielding entirely to folly and vanity.”

Anna was proceeding, when she heard me sob on my pillow. Then begging me to pardon her for speaking thus seriously, and assuring me that she did so only from motives of real affection, she wished me a good night; and I presently afterwards perceived that she had fallen asleep.



Anna's  
Ermina  
...Mr.  
Ideas  
Days



for the  
diately





## CHAP. IX.

*Anna's affectionate Policy ... Mr. Townley's Advice to Ermina...The Box of Books...Account of Garden-Reach ...Mr. Townley's Seat...The Aratoon Family...Anna's Ideas of them...She reverts with Concern to their happy Days when with their dear Governess at School.*



HAVE some idea that Anna, though unnoticed by me, contrived to gain my uncle's approbation of the plans she had formed for the arrangement of our time: for immediately after breakfast, the old gentleman

whispered to me to withdraw, adding, "And now, Minny, as I hope you have recovered your fatigues, I advise that you should return to your books. You know, that your education is by no means complete."

I coloured at this hint, and looked at Anna, but immediately obeyed, and made no objection to perform the exercises which Anna required of me. This lovely young creature was not herself very accomplished, but she was anxious to improve, and did her best to improve me; and under these circumstances I might have considerably improved myself, and might have attained a much greater proficiency than I have now to boast. And here I may, with advantage, indulge in some reflections on the nature of ignorance, which is personified in its proper colours only by one author whom I know. This author is old John Bunyan, who happily describes the character of Ignorance as a compound of *darkness*, *obstinacy*, *indolence*, and *self-conceit*. On read-

ing the Pilgrim's Progress some years since, I was forcibly struck with the accuracy of this description, and on comparing it with Holy Scripture, I became fully convinced that ignorance is deeply rooted in the human heart; for St. Paul, speaking of the heathen, says, "*They have their understanding darkened, being alienated from the love of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.*" (Eph. iv. 18.)

Obstinacy, therefore, is generally the consequence of ignorance, and a blind determination to reject the truth. Idleness too is, no doubt, the fruit of such a determination, in most instances. Hence it will generally be found, I am persuaded, that an idle child is an obstinate one, however that obstinacy may be veiled by a pleasing exterior, a gracious manner, or a smiling countenance; and this is a hint which, I trust, some of my readers may be induced to improve. But to return to my own history.

I worked with Anna during the whole morning, and at one o'clock my uncle came into our room, and the box of books was opened, where, to our great delight, we found a large assortment of the best juvenile books of the day, comprehending voyages, travels, and histories. My uncle directed us to place these books in one of our cabinets, and then taking us into the *verandah* below, he shewed us our carriage, which stood at the door. It was a kind of little *vis-à-vis*, calculated to hold two persons sitting opposite to each other, and drawn by two small horses. My uncle said, we were to have the sole command of this carriage, but that he wished we would not be out in it after seven in the morning, or before five in the evening, excepting on very particular occasions.

Thus passed the morning of the second day at Garden-Reach. After *tiffin* we reclined

upon our sofas and read our new books, and at five we prepared to accompany my aunt to her town-house, in Calcutta, where she had engaged a few friends to dinner. We were ready a little before six, and we then accompanied my aunt in her coach.

I have frequently spoken of Garden-Reach in the course of my narrative. It now consists of a line of noble houses, standing in gardens along that bank of the Hoogley which lies to your left as you descend towards the sea. When I first went to India, however, there were only a few scattered country-houses along this bank, and these perhaps looked the more beautiful because they stood alone. Fort William, which is situated in a line with these houses, but nearer Calcutta, was then very incomplete, though I believe that its buildings were partly erected. The habitations of the Europeans in Calcutta were also then compara-

tively few, and generally built round the old Fort, which is in the centre of the town, and beyond that part where the English reside. The Black Town, where the natives chiefly resided, lay still higher along the banks of the river: and among these buildings were some scattered houses of Europeans, or half-Europeans, Armenians, and merchants from other countries, some of whom were immensely rich, though they associated little with the English. My uncle was not in the service of the East-India Company, and was therefore not accounted of rank; but he was always highly respected, and his riches and liberality gave him great influence.

The evening was not very light, and therefore I saw but little till we arrived in Calcutta, where our way was sufficiently illuminated by the lights which issued from the houses, all of which were large, and built with open galleries and *verandahs*.

My uncle's house was very roomy ; it was situated near the old Fort, and the whole of the ground-floor was occupied by offices and warehouses. We ascended to the second floor by a wide stone stair-case, as dirty as the streets themselves, and entered an immense range of rooms, which, though handsomely furnished, had a particularly gloomy appearance, and here we were almost devoured by musquitos.

On this occasion we met with a large family of the name of Aratoon, including a father, a mother, several brothers, four daughters, one of whom was married, and another of whom was about my own age, and sundry cousins and relations, who were all connected with my aunt, more or less remotely.

These persons were all of Armenian extraction, yet had somewhat of the appearance of the natives, which led me to suppose that

they were descended from them. Their dresses were very peculiar and very gay, as to colours, but their countenances were heavy, and their features coarse and bold. The mother and the married daughter were heavily laden with jewels.

We had a very grand dinner, but conversed little, and indeed it was impossible to talk much, because there was such a bubbling with the water in the *hookahs*, for almost every one smoked, except the very young girls.

After dinner the ladies did not withdraw, as is customary in England, but the party, being only a family one, they all sat together. The younger girls were, however, permitted to escape; and among the rest ourselves; and we hastened into another room, where Anna and I could have found sufficient amusement in looking out into the street,



gazing by star-light at the tower of the old Fort, which rose directly behind the house opposite, and meditating upon the strange and bloody deeds which had so lately passed there, of which we had so often heard my uncle speak. But Miss, or Mademoiselle (or whatever other title you may please to give her) Almeria Miriam Olivia Sophonisba Aratoon, for the Armenians are exceedingly fond of long and fine names, came to join us in the window, and instantly began a conversation with me.

I should despair of conveying any idea of the figure of this girl, who was probably about two years older than myself. She was, or, at least, appeared to be, very stiffly and tightly laced; and had a very long waist, and a rich gown or frock of splendidly flowered silk. Her hair, which was as black as a raven, was tightly drawn up above her forehead, and she wore a round silk cap. Her

neck was covered, as I then thought, with green beads, but I afterwards understood that they were real emeralds; and she had large ear-drops of the same precious stones. Her complexion was sallow, and her eyes large, black, and bright, but not agreeable in their expression.

At first I could not comprehend what she said, by reason, not so much of her strange accent, as of the entire novelty of the ideas which she endeavoured to express, for she rapidly talked of things and people I had never before heard of, uttering all the sentiments of a worldly old woman in the shrill accents of a girl.

She took little notice of Anna, but insisted upon it that I should come to see her, informing me that she lived at a very little distance from Calcutta, and that I should find much amusement in her father's house. I at first,

as I said before, could not comprehend a word she said, but her elder sister having engaged Anna in conversation, she presently contrived to make me understand her better, and she succeeded, even during this our first intercourse, in putting some notions into my head which I could not easily get rid of, and which worked a more pernicious effect because I could not bring my mind to impart them to Anna. This first want of confidence in my real friend, was the beginning of an alienation from her, which produced an effect very little foreseen by me at that time.

We had been about two hours with these young people, when we were summoned to the coach, for although my aunt possessed apartments in her establishment at Calcutta, she fancied she could never sleep well in the town. We accordingly returned to Garden-Reach, and soon found ourselves again in our own chamber.

When alone with Anna, she without hesitation told me that she did not like the young people whom we had met that evening, and added, that she should do all in her power to avoid an intimacy with them.

I asked her what reason she had for disliking them.

She replied, that she hoped she had no bad feelings towards them, but that she believed them neither to be pious nor even correct young people, and that she felt assured that they would never benefit either me or herself. "And therefore," said she, "I shall endeavour to avoid an intimacy; and I blame myself much, Minny," she added, "for leaving you this evening; but I was off my guard. You and I must keep together, and then we shall be a protection to each other."

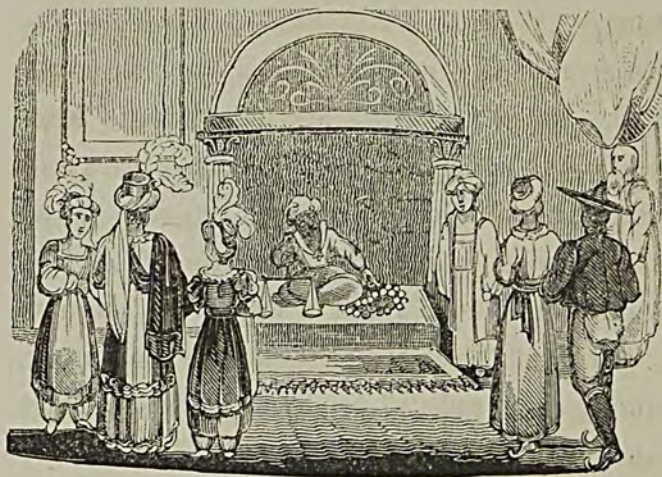
From that period, for several months, things went on with little variety. I remember few events;—Mrs. Aratoon had been taken ill, and we saw no more of the family for some time. My uncle was regularly at home at breakfast and dinner, and supported the authority of Anna. My aunt took little notice of us; but we were both flattered by the visitors, Anna by one set, and I by another. I did not observe that Anna was the least changed by these flatterers, but I certainly from day to day became more full of myself—less occupied by religious feeling,—more indolent, haughty, and conceited;—more dissatisfied under the gentle control of my lovely Anna,—more unwilling either to look back on my past life in England, or to look forward to those things which were to follow at the end of time. Pleasure I had none, in any subject connected with my God, and I was so entirely taken up with my fine possessions, fine acquaintance, and magnificent

modes of life, that the times when things had been otherwise with me, seemed but as a dream or vision of the night.

If ever I was at all softened, it was when Anna reverted to our days at school, to which she used to refer in so artless and tender a manner, that I could scarcely, on some occasions, refrain from tears. Once in particular, in the month of February, she said to me, "I wonder, Ermina, whether our dear governess's mezereon tree is already in blossom!—Does it blossom yet, Minny," she added, "though the hand that used to take care of and shelter it is no more?—Ah! Minny, had we but still that fostering hand, we might hope to flourish; but, alas! alas!" and she sighed deeply, "we are indeed deprived of a mother's care. Your uncle is truly kind, but he cannot protect us from the lesser dangers which attend us in this life. O Minny, I already fear for you, and the more so because

you have no fear for yourself. You are no longer the same child you once were,—the same modest, reserved, and humble little girl,—the same gentle and affectionate Minny!" and so saying, she burst into tears and rested her fair cheek against the side of the couch near which she sat; and though I could not weep, I felt a degree of anguish such as I had never before experienced, though my painful feelings did not remain long enough to be truly beneficial to me.





## CHAP. X.

*The Indisposition of Anna...Ermina's Visit to the Aratoon Family...Their House and its Neighbourhood...Her Indifference to Mrs. Finchley, and Anna's Gratitude... She remonstrates with Ermina on her intended Visit.*



THE weather was now beginning to be excessively hot, at least it appeared so to us. I, however, retained good health and spirits, but Anna was much affected by the heat. Her constitution, it now appeared, had been



considerably injured by close confinement at Falmouth, and, perhaps, by anxiety of mind; but although I saw her becoming more pale and languid every day, I had no apprehensions for her, and attributed what I saw to the effect of change of climate; and as every body about me was pale also, I had no uneasiness on my friend's account. Indeed, my affection for Anna had lost much of its freshness. She who had been my only consolation in adversity, was a restraint upon me in prosperity, and her blameless conduct a perpetual reproach.

It was in the middle of the month of March, that my aunt one day proposed to us to accompany her on a visit to her Armenian friends; but Anna was really too unwell to be able to join our party, and my aunt, I believe, was not sorry to admit her excuses. It was a burning day, and the glare of the sun was so great, that we

were obliged to lower all the blinds of the coach.

We passed all through that portion of Calcutta which was occupied by the English, and at length entered the "native town," where pursuing our way through many narrow streets and between rows of clay huts, we at length arrived at a more open space, of an irregular figure, on one side of which was a *pagoda* of a large size, standing in a court, and having its walls painted with flaming figures of dancing demons. The house of the gentleman whom we were going to visit, occupied another side of the area. This house was encircled on three of its sides by a court inclosed with walls of great height, which wholly concealed the lower parts of the building. Over these walls appeared the long and lofty branches of the bamboo tree, and under the walls was a black and fetid *tank* or puddle, which must have

been a serious nuisance to every house in the neighbourhood.

The fourth side of the house of Mr. Aratoon was open to a lane or little street, of which it formed a part; and there I perceived several irregular windows and balconies, where a person might sit and amuse himself, observing the passengers and the inhabitants in the street below, and hearing their conversation. Altogether, nothing can be conceived more melancholy than the whole appearance of this great mansion, though it was evidently a very large pile of building. We drove into the court, through a wide gateway, and then the whole extent of the chief front of the house appeared to us. It was a building, of irregular height, jutting forward in some places, and sinking back in others; having here and there a balcony, a turret, or a gallery, fixed without any appearance of order or plan in the building, and forming, upon the whole, a figure not

unlike that which we may sometimes see delineated on the surface of a china dish, or at the bottom of a saucer. When our carriage stopped at the door, no one came out to salute us, but my aunt alighted; and being followed by me, entered an immense hall, where a variety of strange figures met my eye. The hall itself was as irregular as every other visible part of the house; at one end was a kind of *dais* or throne, that is, one part of the flooring was considerably raised from the rest, and was covered with striped cotton carpeting: and on this place of honour sat a *circar* or *shroff*\*, weighing money, which lay in heaps before him. Two or three Chinese were jabbering and winking, with their small eyes, in a corner; two *half-cast* † youths, most daintily accoutred in white nankeen, were

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\* *Circar* or *Shroff*—A money-changer.

† *Cast*—The natives of India are divided into various ranks, called *casts*: each cast has respective employments, which descend from father to son.

writing at a table at one end; and native men, of every description, were busy, or pretending to be busy, in every other direction; and going through various door-ways, and evincing by their free and careless manners, that they were not quite under the same awe as they appeared to be under in the houses of the English, where only I had hitherto seen persons of this kind.

My aunt spoke to several servants before she could learn whether her relation was at home. We were, however, at length, conducted up a wide staircase into a room above, which was the very counterpart of the hall, with this difference, that the one was devoted to the master, and the other to the lady of the family; the one being scattered with money, desks, account-books, and papers; and the other with women's works and garnitures; the one being the resort of *shroffs*, clerks, and *circars*, and the other of tailors,

*dhayes*\*, *ayahs*, and children. The same confusion, however, glaringly prevailed in both apartments; and women of various descriptions, some in petticoats of silk, and others in *paunjammahs*† of the same, were seen passing and repassing to and fro, like the men in the room below.

It happened that none of the family were at home, besides the old lady, and some of her grandchildren, who walked in and out with their *dhayes* and *ayahs*, being dressed in thin muslin trowsers and coats, without shoes or stockings, and having nothing whatever to recommend them but their eyes, which were fine; their sickly complexions, and their total want of manners, destroying every preten-

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\* *Dhaye*—A nurse.

† *Paunjammahs*—Ornaments generally worn round the wrists and ancles.

sion to the charms of infancy in these little creatures.

The old lady looked ill, though she was become excessively corpulent. Hot as the day was, she was wrapped in shawls and silks. She sat on a low sofa, and had a *hookah* near it, but she did not appear to be engaged in any occupation. She immediately entered into conversation with my aunt; but I paid little attention to what passed, till I heard my own name mentioned, and an invitation that I might come and spend some time with her daughters, to which my aunt gave no decisive answer, saying, that the application must be made to her husband, whose niece I was. Before we left the house, we were served with chocolate and rich cake, on a massive golden salver; after which we returned home.

After this adventure, I remained at home for some weeks, and things went on as usual,

excepting that Anna became evidently more weak, and my uncle procured medical advice for her.

I still remember this time, when my sweet young friend lay like a broken lily, gradually losing her strength and freshness. I often recollect, with the deepest anguish, my careless conduct towards her at that time, and the efforts she made,—those efforts which were evidently beyond her strength,—to instruct, to guide, and to preserve me, the object of her tenderest affection. Gradually, however, as her strength became weaker, her attempts to teach me began to relax. We were accustomed to translate French together, and I have still her book in which she broke off in the midst of a dialogue in Madame Bonne. And when she could no longer sit at the table and write with me, she used to lie on the couch and make me read to her, sometimes the Bible, and sometimes books of another kind. In my little volume of



Mrs. Teach'em I can still trace the mark of her pencil where I left off, never again to resume the lecture in her hearing.

She had a sweet voice in singing hymns, and she had also taught me to sing. I well remember the last time I sung to her; it was by her own express desire; and it was that sweet psalm of Dr. Watts's—

“ O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home.”

There was no occasion to break off all my occupations with my sweet Anna at that early period: I was not to be parted from my lovely companion, so soon as I expected. A little time yet remained, a *valuable* little interval, which, had I used it well, might have saved me many an after-pang. But my aunt had before invited Miss Almeria Aratoon: to

spend some days with us, and she arrived precisely at this period; on which occasion I devoted myself wholly to her, and hastily formed one of those violent intimacies of which young ladies in their teens are generally so fond.

As to making comparisons between Almeria and Anna, the thing is quite out of the question: but Anna's pious conduct was always a reproach to me and made me miserable, whereas in the example of Almeria I found a more pleasing contrast which set off my own superior good behaviour in a very agreeable point of view, as I chose to think; for I did not consider, that what might be passed over in one so very ill educated as she was, was yet wholly inexcusable in myself.

This reflection never occurred to me, and I accordingly assimilated myself to all I

saw and heard in this young person, however degrading. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe this girl to any one who has never been out of Europe.—A creature so artful, so corrupt, and so full of the lowest information, can scarcely be conceived of in a Christian country. Added to these defects, she was wasteful in the extreme: sometimes haughty, and at other times familiar towards her inferiors, and full of high expectations respecting her future lot in life.

My aunt was pleased at observing my attachment to her relation, and encouraged it to the utmost extent of her power. With this view she invited me and Almeria to her side of the house, shewed us her stores of rich silks, muslin, shawls, and jewels, and made some very superb presents to both of us. When away from my aunt, we used to romp about the *verandahs*, gossip with the

*ayahs*, and sometimes take a turn to Calcutta, to visit some of Almeria's acquaintances, who were not much better than herself.

In the mean time, I saw very, very little of Anna, and as she could neither follow me, nor expostulate with me, my alienation from her became more and more visible.

While affairs were in this state, my uncle was suddenly called up the country on some particular business, and was expected to be absent for some time. He took a very affectionate leave of us; and particularly, as I thought, of Anna, of whom he was very fond, and he informed us, as he was going out of the room, that we might make up a packet for Mrs. Finchley, as a friend of his was going to England, and had promised to convey it for us.

Dear Anna, immediately on this permission, busied herself, as well as she was able, in getting such things prepared as she thought might be useful to her friends at Falmouth; but I am sorry to say that I interested myself very little in this work, and a very few days after my uncle was gone, I left it entirely to Anna; for my uncle was no sooner out of Calcutta, than my aunt gave me leave to visit Almeria. It was on occasion of this visit that my rebellious spirit broke out without restraint towards Anna, and it was then I shewed how thoroughly I had been spoiled by prosperity.

As my aunt never came to Anna's room, and as Anna was not able, from excessive weakness, to visit my aunt, they never met; it was therefore from me that she learned of my intended visit, and it was not till the morning of the day appointed for my journey, that I opened the subject to her.

“ Oh, Minny! dear, dear Minny!” she exclaimed, raising herself from the sofa, “ don’t go—if you love me, don’t go.”

“ O, but I must,” I answered, “ I have promised.”

“ As you value me—” she said, “ as you love me—as you value the memory of your governess, of your country—as you fear your God, don’t go, my Minny. I entreat, I supplicate you——” and she burst into tears.

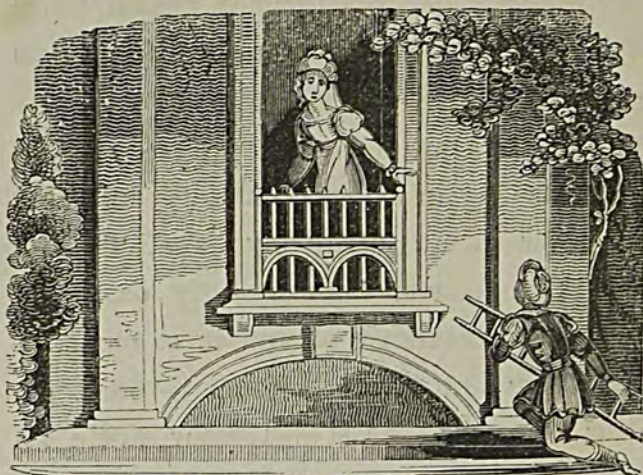
“ But I must,” I replied, “ I have given my word.”

“ It is better to break your promise than to rush into temptation,” she answered. “ Say you will wait till your uncle’s return—say any thing—say I am ill—say you can’t leave me. Oh! Minny, Minny, don’t go.”

“Pshaw!” I replied, “but I must,” (for I had learned to use many contemptuous expressions.)

“Once again let me entreat you,” said my dear friend, taking my hand, “if you love the memory of your early days—of those who took care of you in babyhood—grant me but this one request—don’t go, dear Minny, at least till your uncle returns——”

I now heard Almeria call me, and breaking away from Anna without giving any answer, in a short time afterwards was on my way to Mr. Aratoon’s house.



## CHAP. XI.

*Ermina persists in leaving Anna...Her Visit to the Aratoons...The Society, Conversation, and Amusements there ...Mr. Townley's unexpected Return...Ermina returns home ...Her Alarm and Remorse on finding Anna so much worse.*



CAN hardly suppose but that my readers will have lost all regard for me, before they have arrived at this part of my history; and yet, perhaps, they may wish to know what more I have to relate, if not for



my sake, yet for the sake of my lovely Anna. I must do myself the justice to say, that I was very unhappy, when I got into my own little carriage to proceed to the house of my new friend ; and even as we were going along, when I looked on Almeria as she sat in the opposite seat of the carriage—that seat which had been so often occupied by the sweet companion of my childhood, I could not refrain from many comparisons, to the disparagement of my new acquaintance.

I forget what passed during our drive, for I was not myself; my heart was far away from the scenes which surrounded me, and a thousand occurrences of infancy were continually presenting themselves to my mind, in all of which my Anna acted some conspicuous part. We arrived at Mr. Aratoon's just as the family were sitting down to dinner, for the old gentleman chose to dine at an early hour; but surely such a motley group

as assembled round this dinner-table, in a large shadowy back room behind the hall, had never yet been brought before my eyes. Here were riches without elegance, magnificence without taste, and profusion without order. Every dish was spiced, seasoned, perfumed, and compounded in so strange a way, that I could relish nothing; and though there were so many of us, conversation flagged in a most wonderful manner. After dinner all the family dispersed, and Almeria with her sister next in age to herself, whose name was Sacharissa, or something very like it, led me away to a suite of rooms up stairs, which belonged to themselves, and which was terminated by a little closet where was a balcony which hung over the wall of the house into the *bazar*\* below. This balcony was generally screened by *checks*, which are blinds curiously composed of painted grass. I pre-

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\* *Bazar*—A market.

sently found that this closet was the favourite apartment of these two sisters ; and here we lay down on low sofas, the two sisters having summoned their women to fan them, to drive away the flies, and to perform other services of the same description. Among these women was one of superior dignity, who being exceedingly corpulent came waddling into the closet, and sitting herself down in the circle formed by our couches, began to chew *paun*\*, and to roll it about in her mouth like one perfectly at her ease. I was presently made to understand that this old lady was Almeria's nurse, and a very great favourite of the family : and hence the state which she assumed.

We, the younger individuals of the party, chattered to each other for some time, but

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\* *Paun*—An intoxicating substance chewed by the natives of India.

my reader must excuse my giving any specimen of our conversation. At length Almeria, taking a *punkah*\* from the hand of one of her *ayahs*, tapped her nurse on the back with it, saying, "Well, old woman, have you nothing to say? tell us one of your stories, for the amusement of the little lady." The old lady gave another roll to the beetle-nut that was in her mouth, and then ejecting some of the juice on the pavement, she began her history, and told us a long story, somewhat in the style of, though far more gross than, those Arabian tales so well known in Europe.

As I understood but about half of what she said, she soon talked me to sleep, and when I awoke it was dusk, and Almeria was waiting to lead me to the room belonging to

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\* *Punkah*—A fan.

her mother, where all the family were assembled.

There we found several strangers; and, after drinking coffee, the young people left the old ones to converse, while we, being a motley assemblage of brothers, sisters, and neighbours, withdrew to amuse ourselves in dancing, romping, and various frolics. The day was finished by a heartless form of prayer, by which I was led to discover that I was with a set of persons whose mode of faith differed very considerably from that in which I had been brought up. I slept with Almeria in her chamber, which was next the closet above spoken of, and I was kept awake some hours by the detailed repetition of the *gupgup*, or gossip of the *bazar*.

Of all gossip none can be worse than low Hindoostaunee gossip; and it appears to me that no young person can be even tolerably

free from corruption, who is exposed to the tittle-tattle of Heathen servants.

We did not rise till late in the morning, and we spent much of the forenoon in lounging and looking over the stores of the pedlers who came with boxes to the house. And thus one day after another slipped away with little variation, excepting from an airing now and then, till nearly a fortnight had expired, during which time I had received only one little note from Anna, written in such a manner as rather surprised me, for the hand seemed strangely changed, the lines were crooked, and some words were omitted; it, however, contained only a request that I would return soon—very, very soon.

When, as I before said, I had been about a fortnight with Almeria, one afternoon the old nurse informed us that there was to be a

*putully-nautch*\* at the opposite house, that very evening.

“O!” said Almeria, “then we will go: Ermina has never seen a *putully-nautch*, and go we will.”

The nurse began to expostulate, but her hopeful child bade her hold her tongue; and the next minute the young lady ran out of the room, and did not return for some time.

I heard no more of the *nautch*, till we had withdrawn to our bed-room, and then, having dismissed the *ayahs*, Almeria said to me, “Ermina, I have settled it all. When they are all quiet, my brother Caratoon will come and bring the steps, and we will get out

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\* *Putully-nautch*—A puppet-show.

by the balcony and go and see the *nautch*. Look," said she, calling me to the window, "the opposite house is lighted up already;—and don't you hear the *tum-tums*\*, and the music?"

"Music!" I said, "Do you call that music! It is the most horrid noise I ever heard." "Well, but," said she, "you will go with me." I refused at first, but my refusal became weaker and weaker, and when Caratoon came with his steps, which were those used by the *bearers* to light and dress the lamps, I suffered myself to be lifted down into the street, for the balcony was low, and probably the ground had been raised on that side of the building by the rubbish constantly thrown out into the street. I was certainly frightened, when I found myself in an open

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\* *Tum-tums*—Small drums.



street at this time of night. However, Almeria was presently with me, and her brother led the way, till the next moment we reached the door of the "native house," where were the lights, the crowd, and the music.

We were received at the door by a man who seemed half a European and half an Hindoo. He took us into a hall of a most shabby appearance, where they were playing off some frightful little puppets, with heads as big as all the rest of their bodies, on a little stage which was placed in one corner of the room.

The intense heat of the apartment, the wild appearance of the spectators, the strong smell of cocoa-nut oil, garlic, and tobacco, together with the squeaking of the man who played off the puppets, formed such a complication of disagreeables, that had my conscience been very easy, I must have been

excessively uncomfortable; but as it was I was truly wretched, and, after half an hour, I begged, prayed, and entreated, to be taken back, but all in vain; for Caratoon seemed to be delighted with my misery, and kept repeating in my ears—"Are you frightened, Miss Ermina? Do you think the puppets will run away with you—No fear of that, I assure you."

Never did any thing appear so long, so dreadfully long, as that frightful puppet-show. I verily believe, that I never knew what misery was till that night. It was never, I think, till then, in that apparently unpropitious scene, that all I had learned in my happy childhood seemed really to begin to work within me for my good. The show was at length concluded, some time after midnight; but Caratoon drove me almost to agony by pretending that he did not know where the steps were, although he

had himself seen them stowed away very carefully.

It was nearly one o'clock when I got to our chamber again, and what with shame and terror, I could not sleep till dawn of day; and when I did sleep, my imagination was full of terrors, and I again beheld before me all the serpents and horrible forms which had been represented at the *nautch*.

At length, however, I fell into a deep sleep, in which even these horrors did not appear, when I was suddenly awakened by Almeria, who said, "Ermina, your uncle is below. Make haste and get dressed."

"My uncle!" I exclaimed.—"What, returned so soon?"

"Yes," she replied, "he was not obliged to go so far as he first proposed."

“Is he very angry?” I asked.

“Angry!” she repeated, “what for?”

“For what we did last night?” I answered.

“Why, what does he know of that?” she asked.—“For the world’s sake don’t speak of it to him, or to my father and mother, but get up and get dressed.”

“Is any thing the matter,” I enquired, “that my uncle should come so early?”

“No, nothing; not much,” replied Almeria; “only Anna is worse, and she wants to see you.”

“Worse!” I said, “my Anna worse!” and I burst into an agony of grief. “Tell me, Almeria—tell me, is she dying?”

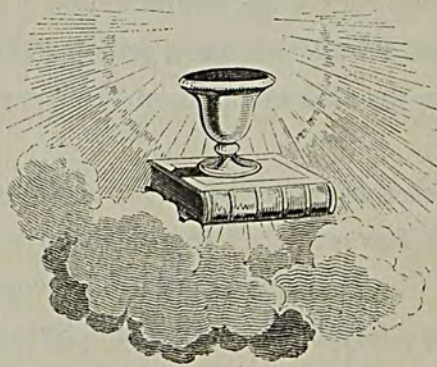
“Dying!” repeated Almeria, “no, I hope not: come, don’t frighten yourself.”

“Oh, my Anna! my sweet Anna! my own Anna!” I exclaimed, and fell back on the bed, and for some moments lost my recollection.

They were obliged to call my uncle to me, before I could be brought to myself; but when I recovered my recollection, and had leisure to observe his countenance, I plainly saw that I had the worst to apprehend respecting my sick companion.

My clothes were, however, at length put on, and I was placed in the coach with my uncle, who had not one word of comfort to give me; for, indeed, he seemed by no means pleased with me, and once, indeed, asked me, How I could have thought of leaving my friend, when she required my most tender care?

I could make no reply—I was self-condemned and miserable. And I was then made to feel, that penury, with all its attendant inconveniences, is by no means the greatest evil to which human nature is subject. What sufferings, indeed, are intolerable, excepting those which arise from feelings of remorse?





## CHAP. XII.

*Ermina terrified and distressed at the Danger of her faithful Friend...Anna's Delirium and Death...Its Effects on little Minny and those who witnessed it...Conclusion.*



**H**, with what terror and anguish did I ascend the stairs to my Anna's room, when I entered the house at Garden-Reach. The first person I met in the saloon above stairs was Mrs. Palmerston, who being at that

time in Calcutta, had, as I afterwards found, been in the habit of constantly attending on Anna during my absence. I had been accustomed to consider Mrs. Palmerston as a frivolous character; but when I then saw her drowned in tears, how did I love and respect her! She took my hand when she met me, and then turned again with me to Anna's room. Indeed, I then wanted some one to encourage me.

Anna was in the dressing-room, where we had so often sat together. They had brought the sofa on which she lay into the middle of the room, and the physician was sitting by it, holding his patient's hand. Several female servants were in different parts of the room.

Mrs. Palmerston drew me gently forward, for I became more and more terrified as I looked on this solemn scene; yet, prepared



as I was for the worst, when I beheld my Anna pale as death, and lying without motion on her back, I believed she was already dead.

“ Oh, my Anna !” I cried, and was pressing forwards to kiss her sweet pale face. “ Oh, my Anna—will you never open your eyes again?—never speak to me more?” But Mrs. Palmerston held me back. “ Don’t disturb her,” she said, “ we think that she is asleep.”

My uncle had entered the room, and stood by the physician. He looked sternly sorrowful, and seemed anxious to conceal his feelings.

Thus a few minutes passed. At length my lovely Anna moved, and opening her eyes, said, “ Minny,—is Minny come?” and she looked up at Mrs. Palmerston.

“ Here I am, my Anna—my sweet lovely Anna—here I am,” I said.

She took no notice of me, but said again, “ Will not Minny come?”

“ I am here, dear Anna,” I said, pressing forward and sobbing.

She again repeated, “ Little Minny— Ah! little Minny!—will she never, never come?”—

I could not bear this. “ I am here, Anna, dear, I am here,” I exclaimed in an agony. “ Place yourself in a light, where she can see you best,” said my uncle.

“ She has known no one for some hours,” remarked the physician. — “ She is too far gone; don’t attempt to rouse her.”

“What!” I exclaimed, “Will she never, never know me again? Oh, my Anna!”

“Yesterday,” said the physician, “she knew us all.”

“And last night, at twelve o’clock, she knew me,” said one of the black women, “and asked for Miss Minny.”

“At twelve o’clock last night!” I repeated; and my reader may guess my thoughts. Our attention was then suddenly called to the lovely creature herself, for she began to start, and slight convulsions to agitate her features. I had never before witnessed convulsions, and was inexpressibly terrified. For a few seconds she seemed to be considerably agitated, and then again closed her eyes and appeared to be sleeping.

“Surely,” said my uncle, drawing a little from the couch, “it was very strange that

they should have allowed this disorder to gain such ground, without sending for me, or at least for Minny."

"You know, Sir," replied the physician, "how rapidly diseases advance in this country.—I had little fear for her till yesterday morning."

We were at this instant again attracted to the couch, where my beloved Anna seemed to be in a dreadful agony, every limb being convulsed. These convulsions, however, soon ceased, and she seemed to wish to be raised, opened her eyes, and, I thought, looked very like her former self.

Mrs. Palmerston was supporting her. She looked up to that lady, and knew her. "You are very kind, Ma'am," she said, "very, very kind, and my uncle too, thank him for all his kindness. When I am gone, you will be

kind to poor Minny; and don't be uneasy about me—I am very happy. I am going to my Saviour.—Yes, my Saviour:” and her countenance changed its expression. A kind of glory, as I fancied, was suddenly shed over it. She looked up as it were to the very ceiling, and, joining her hands, “I come, my Saviour, I come!” she exclaimed; then sinking back on her pillow, her eyes closed, and in a few minutes she breathed her last, leaving me most completely miserable, and utterly incapable of receiving any thing like comfort.

Thus terminated the earthly career of this most lovely young person; and from that period I felt the sentence of death passed on all earthly possessions and honours, a feeling which, by divine grace, has never been wholly removed, though at some periods I have felt myself less affected with it than at others.

I have reason, indeed, to think that the death of my lovely Anna was not only blessed to me, but to my uncle and Mrs. Palmerston.

My aunt, who had fled to her house in Calcutta, the moment that she was apprized of Anna's being seriously ill, did not return till after all was over, and never evinced any sorrow; but my uncle was a sincere mourner, and has often since been heard to say, that his first serious impressions of religion were received by the pillow of my dying friend.

My aunt did not survive the lovely Anna more than two years; and after her death I lived with my uncle, and found increasing pleasure and comfort in his society.

I was married early in life, but still lived with my dear uncle, and he seemed to take

as much delight in my children as if they had been his own. His death did not take place till an advanced age, and it was then most happy.

Neither my uncle nor I ever again visited our friends in England, but we frequently heard of and from them, and every year sent them some portion of our abundance.

Many years are now passed since my Anna was in glory; but my recollection of her is now as fresh as it was in that sad day when I was first parted from her; and to this moment I cannot retrace my conduct towards her, without a degree of anguish which time has not been able to soften.

My gentle reader, be persuaded from my example, not to desire unmixed prosperity, remembering—that adversity is the shining time of the Christian, and the period most

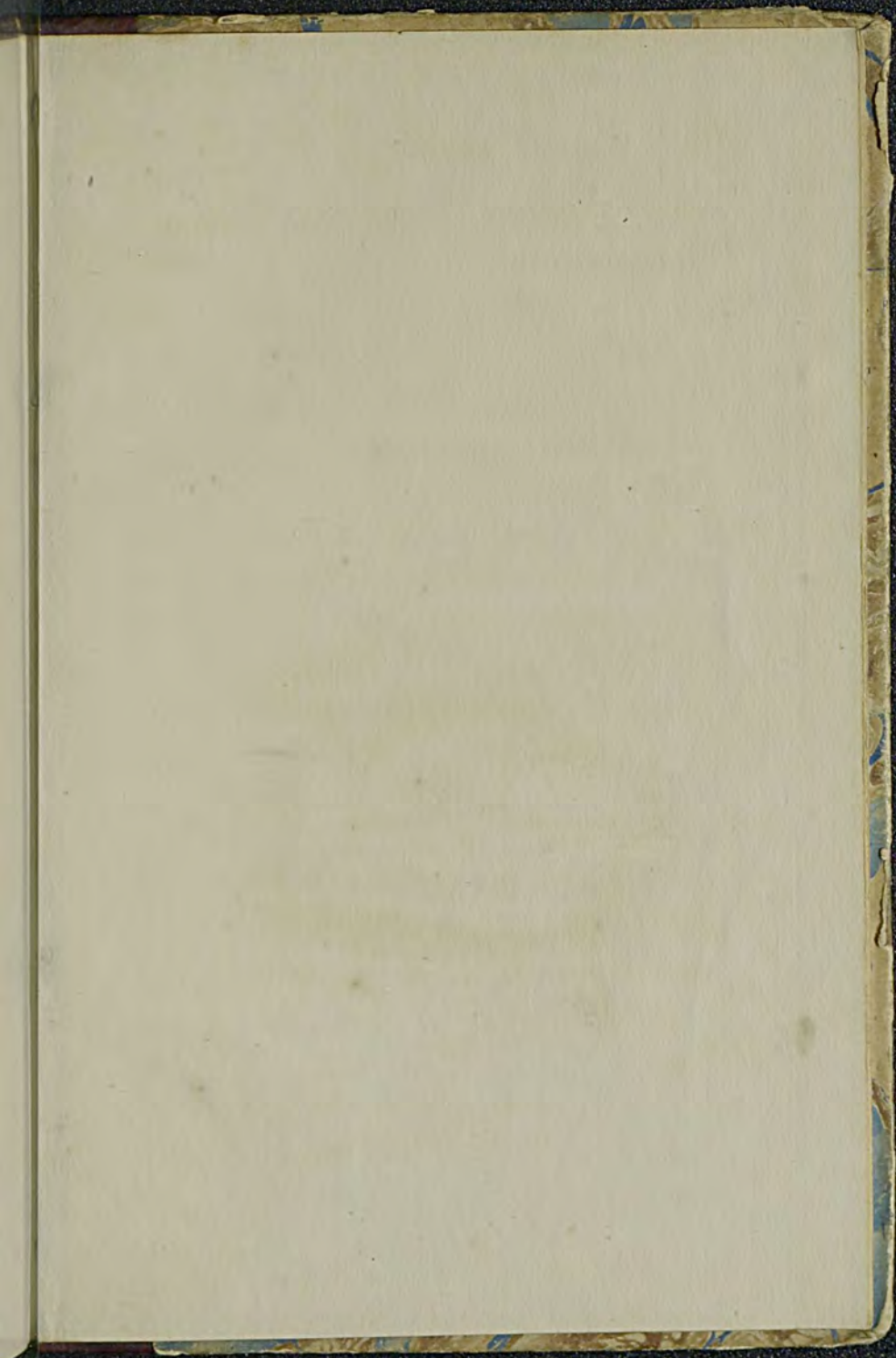
commonly selected for purposes of divine mercy.

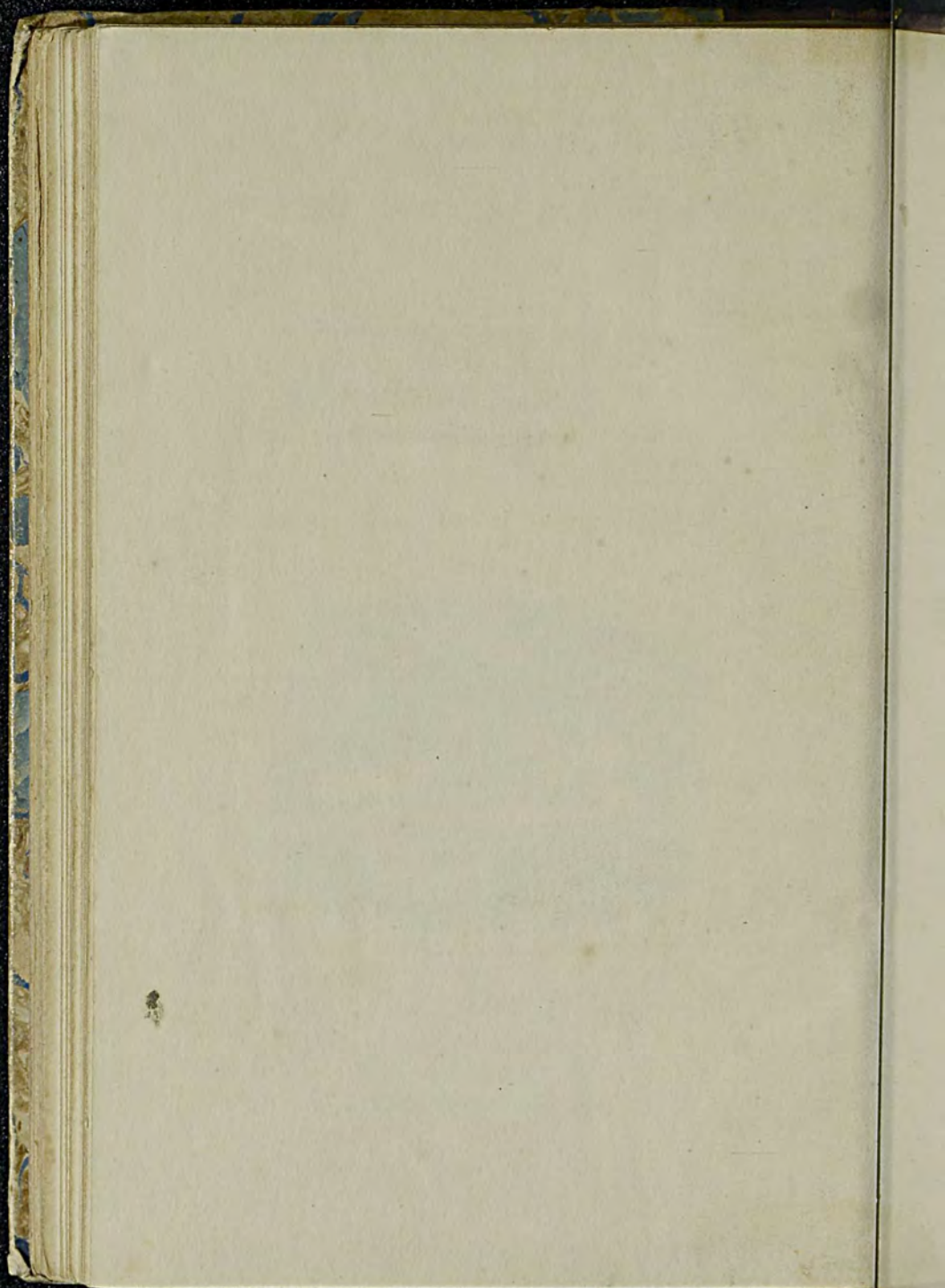
“ Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for his grace ;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.”

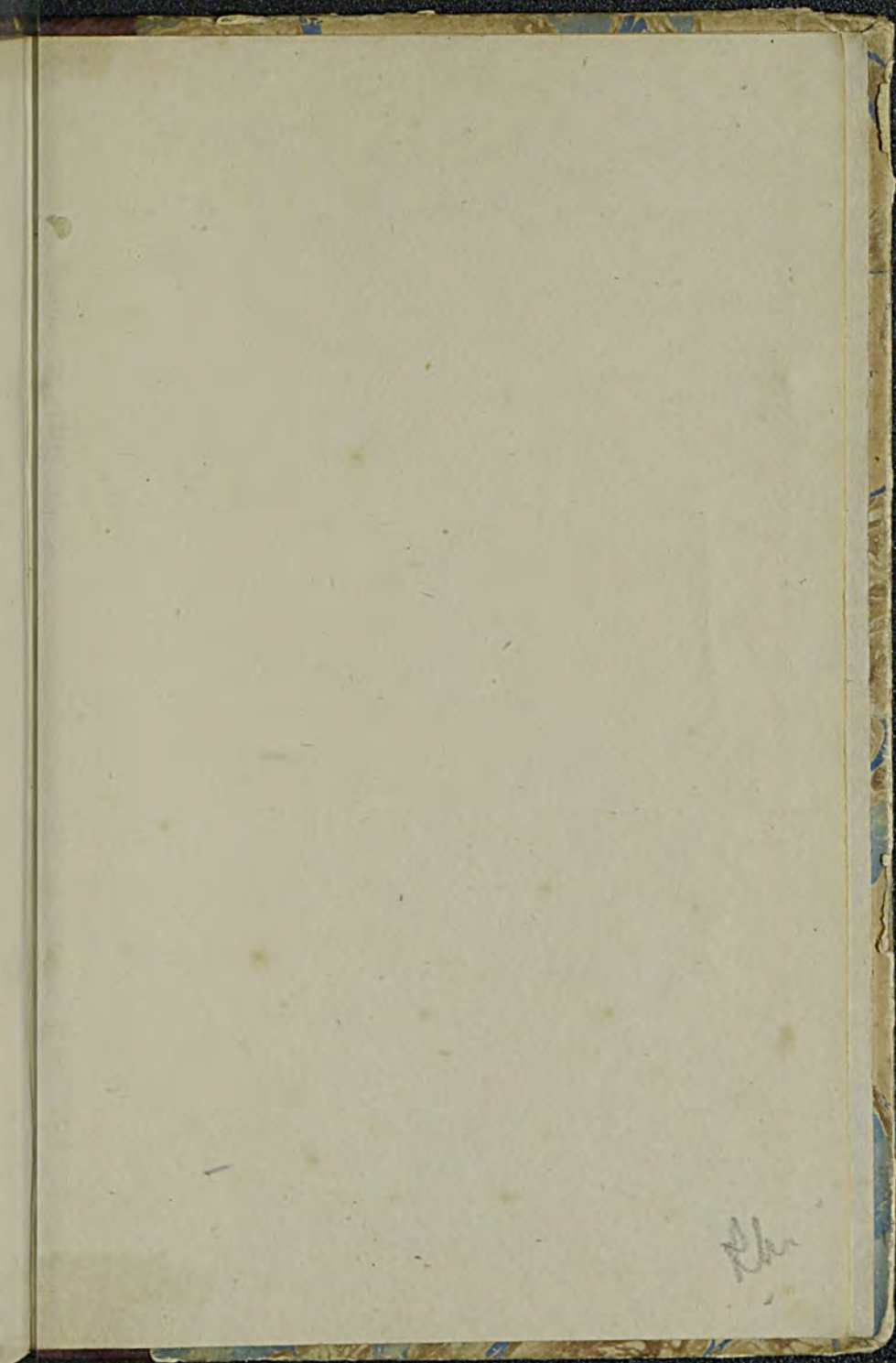


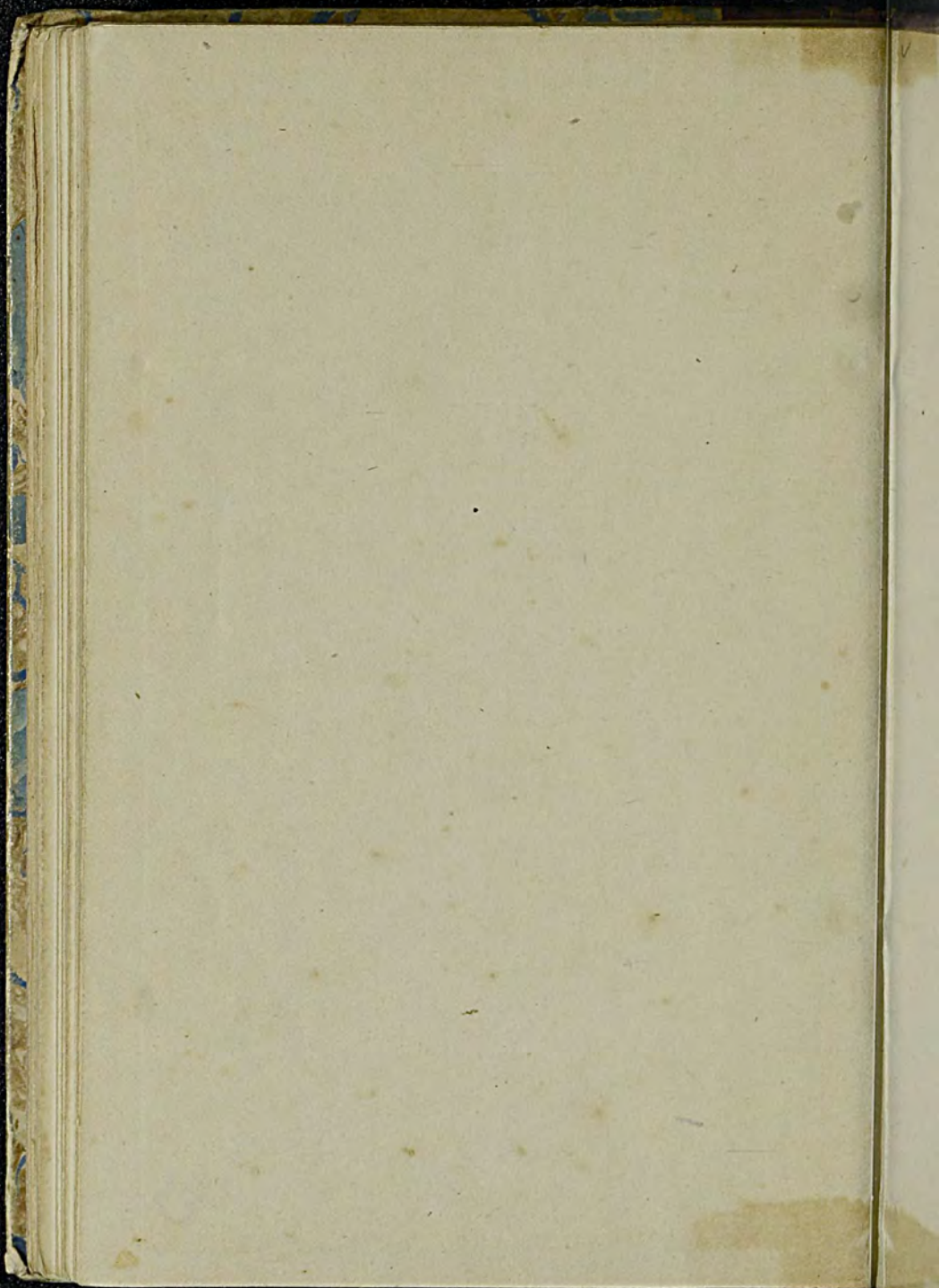
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