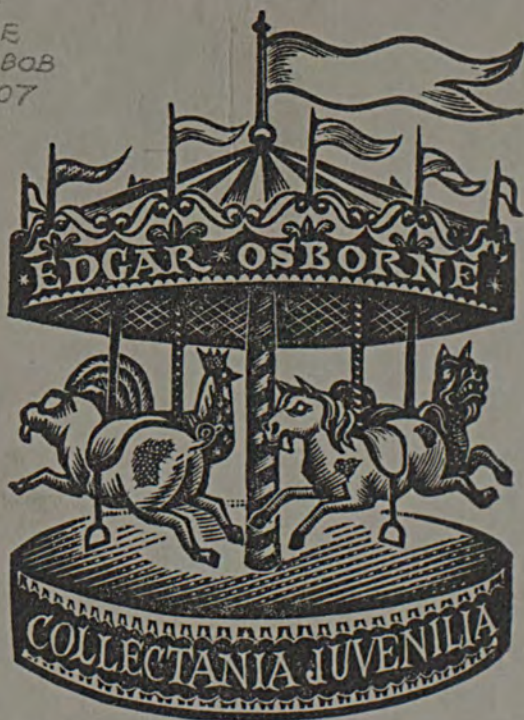


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PAGODA LODGE.

Published by M. Hoge, Newark Sep 5 1866.

THE  
N A B O B :

A Moral Tale.

==  
BY MRS. RICE,

*Author of The Deserted Wife, Monteith, &c.*

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LONDON :

Printed for J. Harris, St. Paul's Church-Yard ; and  
Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster Row ;

*By M. Hage, Newark.*

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## CHAP. I.

HAPPINESS THE INMATE OF LABOUR  
AND INNOCENCE.—SKETCH OF AN  
ESTIMABLE COTTAGE FAMILY.

FARMER Wilson had dwelt three and twenty years in the village of N—, in Shropshire. In his youth he married, because it was his good fortune to meet with a young woman who cherished and returned his love, and though she possessed no property, and he depended on the cultivation of a small farm, which he only rented, their united industry enabled them to

live decently, while their manners obtained them the good will, and even the respect of their more wealthy neighbours.

They had had several children, who all, except two girls, Mary and Catharine, died in their infancy.

They were early accustomed to the same industrious habits, which had been so successfully cultivated by their parents; and being now arrived, the one at sixteen and the other at seventeen years of age, they relieved their mother from many of the labours of her domestic concerns.

As they kept no female servant, the employments of the house were divided between them. Each in her turn,



rose at five in the morning, to milk the cows and attend to the dairy.

During their hours of leisure, they cultivated their little family garden, which produced abundantly every kind of useful fruit and vegetables, and what they had to spare after the family were plentifully supplied, they were prompt to bestow among their indigent neighbours.

Occupied as they were, in *house affairs*, they still found time to acquire useful and necessary instruction. The village schoolmaster instructed them in all the ordinary branches of education. They could read and spell with fluency and correctness, write a fair hand, and perform all the more common rules of arithmetic.

As their attention to instruction was earnest, their improvement was rapid, and they quickly knew as much as their mother could teach them.

Accustomed to bodily exertions from their childhood, and inured by necessity to frequent exposure to the sudden changes of the weather, they grew up hardy, healthy, and well formed. The rose bloomed on their cheeks, and the tranquillity of their countenances indicated the purity of their hearts, and the hitherto unruffled happiness of their lives.

Health, comfort, and content, in short, cherished by labour and innocence, had established their abode in the cottage of farmer Wilson.

Mary and Catharine attracted and retained the regard of their neighbours in general. Their hearts overflowed with the milk of human kindness, and to every human creature within the circle of their knowledge, they would have communicated good, had their power equalled the measure of their desires. The wants of a poor neighbour they were ever prompt to relieve to the extent of their abilities, and they never heard the cry of misery without dropping the tear of sympathy. As they grew into years, the respectability of their demeanor procured them the notice of the principal inhabitants of their neighbourhood, and they were always invited to join the most respectable parties of their neighbours when they occasionally

met. Even the consequence of the Squire's lady, would sometimes condescend to request their society, when she could engage the company of no more distinguished persons, to fill up the chasms in a private dance. The modesty of their deportment, on these occasions, forms a striking contrast to that fashionable assurance, and apparent grossness of manners, by which many young females, in the higher circles, are at present distinguished.

## CHAP. II.

A NABOB FROM THE EAST, BECOMES  
AN INHABITANT OF THIS COUNTRY.  
MANNERS AND CHARACTER OF A  
FAMILY, WHICH DISGUST A COUNTRY  
NEIGHBOURHOOD.

ABOUT two miles from the village where farmer Wilson dwelt, were an elegant mansion and domain, but their owner, Sir Charles B —, had for many years been a resident on the Continent. Domestic uneasiness had originally induced him to seek a voluntary exile; and, as there was at this time no probability of his ever returning to his native country, his

steward had recently received orders to sell entire, the house and estate, whenever he could meet with a suitable purchaser.

The purchase was sought by many persons of rank, as the house and property were equally desirable, and scarcely surpassed by any in England. On the estate were several well cultivated farms, one of which was occupied by farmer Wilson.

Among the competitors for this envied possession, was one who had been a Nabob of the east. His family, which consisted of a wife and three daughters, had now been exhibiting in England, tokens of eastern magnificence, nearly five years.

Though the offers of the Nabob had not actually exceeded those of other persons, he, however, became the purchaser, because he agreed to pay the whole price within a month after he had taken possession.

Had the present state of the Nabob's affairs been positively known, he would probably have found it more difficult to have concluded the bargain.

Rapine was the Nabob family name. Mrs. Rapine had originally prevailed on her husband to reside in England, for the purpose of educating their children; her own inducement principally was, to display her magnificent style of living among the women of

her native country. She was of obscure birth, descended from parents who were venders of small-wares, at a petty town in the west of Yorkshire.

In a menial capacity she originally attended a lady to Bengal. There fortune, with a form and features fitted to excite notice, concurred to obtain her her present husband.

On her arrival in England, she appeared in a style of pomp, and her establishment was formed on a scale of grandeur, rarely rivalled, and never surpassed. Her appearance in public, always dazzled with a profusion of diamonds. Her attractions were literally confined to the *ornaments* of her person, for her substan-



tial charms had long began to be in their wane, or rather to wax gross. Her stature was low, but abundantly compensated by the corpulence of her bulk; indolence and luxury had bloated her body, as much as pride and ignorance had inflated her mind.

Her daughters, though placed under the care of a governess, and attended by every variety of fashionable masters, devoted but a small portion of their time to occupations of improvement. They were perfect models of their mother; the pomp and parade of the parent, was perpetuated in the taste and manners of the children; and the pursuits of idle pleasure and dissipation, seemed the most serious business of their lives.

Without any respect for the moral obligations of man, they prepossessed almost no one quality of mind which could distinguish them from the barbarians of their native country. By their servants they were dreaded and detested, and by young people of their own age, they were shunned and despised. To the former, they were tyrannical and cruel, to the latter, haughty and insulting.

At length, the dissipation and unbounded extravagance of the whole family, reduced the Nabob to the necessity of parting from all his remaining possessions in the east; for he had there several valuable plantations under the direction of his superintendent.

It was long since he had given orders for their sale, and he now began to expect the arrival of the vessels, which were to furnish him with fresh supplies for his yet unsatiated appetite.

The amount of his debts being extensive, he found it expedient to withdraw himself from the perpetual claims of his creditors; whose impertinent demands disturbed his pleasures and mortified his pride.

The estate he had now agreed to purchase, being at a considerable distance from the Metropolis, made the possession of it still more desirable to him; for here he resolved to retire one half the year, that he might be able to

pass the other half with more eclat in the pursuit of those enjoyments, which often lead their votaries to destruction.

Mrs. Rapine and her daughters, reluctantly left the gay scenes in which they had been such active partakers, yet consoled themselves with the idea that their appearance in the vicinity of a country village, would afford them ample gratification of their pride and vanity.

Imagination pictured in pleasing forms to their weak minds, the astonishment and bustle which their superb establishment and equipage would excite among the villagers, and they delighted in supposing, that they

should be the objects of envy to the higher class of country inhabitants, over whom Mrs. Rapine resolved to maintain her superiority.

Incapable of reflecting on any subject, but of the most frivolous and despicable nature, it never once occurred to her that superior worth might inherit a spot the most sequestered, or that a simple cottager might possess many qualities, which eminently deserve the respect of man. Some who inhabited the village of N —, might have served for a model. Mrs. Maitland, indeed the squire's lady, was a woman of liberal education; her intelligent mind, and elegant manners, indicated that her time had been more honourably occu-

pied, than that of Mrs. Rapine. The rector and his wife, were also striking examples of the happy continuation of religious and moral worth, with superior accomplishments; and in regard to the more humble inhabitants, there were some who vied with the character already described of farmer Wilson.

As soon as the Nabob and his family were supposed to be settled in their new abode, they were visited by all the most respectable families on the spot, or within several miles of Pagoda Lodge, formerly B — Hall. Every one was eager to pay their respects to the new inhabitants, and hoped to find in them an agreeable addition to their society. But how

greatly were they mortified and disappointed in the reception they met with from Mr. and Mrs. Rapine; and, indeed, from the young ladies, their daughters.

Instead of that elegant affability and graceful dignity of deportment, which distinguishes people acquainted with truly polished life, they met with nothing but formal repulsive civility, or a self-confident grossness of behaviour. In short, the demeanour of the whole family so completely disgusted their visitors, that though Mrs. Rapine and her daughters, returned the calls they had received, they scarcely found one person who chose to be at home on that occasion.

Among those who thought proper to refuse the honour designed them, was Mrs. Maitland, who unfortunately was discovered sitting in her parlour, by the haughty inhabitants of Pagoda Lodge, just as they were in the act of leaving their card. The insult was too great to be endured; the card was actually snatched from the hand of the servant, and the coachman had orders to proceed.

The rage and disappointment of the ladies, mother and daughters, was inconceivably great. "A woman of her consequence, the wife of a Nabob, she who had so recently visited, and been visited in return, by people of the first distinction, to be treated with such rudeness by the wife of a bumkin



squire, it was insufferable, it was not to be borne, it should be revenged ere long she was determined."

Such were the angry comments of Mrs. Rapinè, while the coach and four rolled homewards with her and her daughters.

Discontent and ill humour sat upon the brow of the offended ladies the whole of that day, and the subject was discussed over and over by the whole family; the Nabob was reproached for bringing them among such a parcel of detestable boors; and the violence of their rage could only be appeased by anticipating the pleasure they should experience by a suitable revenge.

Some weeks passed without their receiving the least attention from any of their neighbours. In vain they paraded every day through the village, and round the adjacent country, in an elegant sociable, drawn by four bright bays; they neither excited the envy of their equals, nor commanded the respect of their inferiors.

It was at first some little gratification to observe the rustic cottager run to the road side, with a face of wonder and curiosity, and lowly bend at their approach; but, in a short time, they became familiarized to the appearance of the carriage, and at last took no notice of it.

Many poor people who had large families, were at first overjoyed to

think B — Hall would be inhabited; hoping to derive some benefit from the charitable disposition of the new inhabitants; hearing they were rich, they inferred that they were liberal, and thought that they could not disregard the petitions of the poor. A little skimmed milk for their children, or broken victuals, was the most they ventured to solicit, but even of these they were disappointed.

The servants had positive orders to refuse every application of this nature. The milk, which might have nourished many a little hungry babe, was divided between the pigs and the dogs, and quantities of broken meat was thrown on the dung heap, rather than distributed among the poor.

A poor man, who was mowing at home, in one of the Nabob's meadows, adjoining the house, accidentally cut his legs so dreadfully with a scythe, that it was uncertain whether he could be cured. He was the father of seven young children, who, together with their mother, relied on his industry for support.

In vain the weeping wife implored the assistance of the Nabob and his lady; their hearts were shut against the pleadings of the wretched. The unfortunate woman was severely reprimanded for taking the liberty to trouble them with her dismal story; for, if they attended to one, there would soon be more of the same kind pestering them, and they might easily contrive

to wound their legs or their arms, if they found people foolish enough to maintain them in idleness. Such was the disposition of the parents, whose conduct and example directed their children in this, as well as in every other instance.

### CHAP. III.

AN UNFORTUNATE INTRUDER REPULSED.—HELP BY THE HANDS OF OTHER TRESPASSERS.—A SEVERE VISITATION INTENDED.—A FETE THE MEANS TO GRATIFY RESENTMENT.—ANTICIPATION AND DESIRES.—A PRUDENT FATHER'S OBSERVATIONS.—HIS COUNSEL DIRECTS THE CONDUCT OF HIS CHILDREN.

ONE evening the three Miss Rapines were strolling through the park and pleasure grounds with their governess, who was a French woman, and entirely subservient to their caprice; when, just within the white gate, at the entrance of the park from the high road, they perceived a female neatly dressed, seated on the grass.

A lovely infant seemed sleeping in her lap, over whom she wept bitterly. The paleness of death sat on her woe-worn countenance, for she was at that moment actually sinking under famine and affliction.

As the young ladies approached, she softly laid her child upon the grass, and made an effort to rise, but her strength was too far gone, and she fell to the ground in a swoon.

Here was an opportunity for charity to have stretched forth her supporting hand! but that opportunity was disregarded by the Miss Rapines.

With one voice they exclaimed against the insolence of the creature,

who had dared to enter their park without leave; and, to the disgrace of their sex, or of common humanity, they left her, apparently in the arms of death, while they hastened home for a servant to chastise and drive her from their hallowed ground.

They had not gone many steps, ere they heard a dog bark, and, turning round, beheld two young women in the act of climbing the gate. It was Mary and Catharine Wilson, who were carrying a basket of fruit to a sick neighbour.

They had with sorrow and astonishment observed the unfeeling behaviour of the young ladies, and, though habitually timid and fearful of offend-



ing, the evident distress of the object before them, banished every other apprehension than that which they were under for the apparently expiring female.

They eagerly hastened towards her, and, while one gently raised her in her arms, the other held a smelling bottle to her nose, and she speedily recovered,

The kind hearted girls looked at each other with tearful eyes, when they had contemplated the wasted, but still elegant form of this interesting female.

Cheered by the voice of sympathy, she raised her languid eyes to heaven

in silent gratitude, then turned them on her babe, who was now pressed to the gentle bosom of Catharine.

This scene was beheld by the unfeeling Miss Rapines; who, far from being touched with a sense of shame at the difference between their conduct and that which they had just now witnessed of farmer Wilson's daughters, were exasperated at what they termed the audacity of the creatures, who dared to set them at defiance, by intruding in their premises in so unwarrantable a manner.

They quickened their steps toward the house, often turning their heads to look at the little group, whom it was their design to have driven out with.

some disgraceful chastisement. But, to their great disappointment, ere they could come within call of any of their domestics, Mary and Catharine assisted the afflicted young woman to repass the gate; one carried the infant, and the other supported its mother, to their hospitable dwelling.

Full of indignation, to think the offenders should have escaped punishment, they arrived at home, determined to make some of their servants find out who they were, and then revenge the insult.

As they entered their Mother's dressing room, every mouth was half open to give an account of their wrongs; when, suddenly glancing their

eyes over a number of cards that were lying on the table, they forgot their design, and exclaimed with one voice, "O mamma, a fete! what, are you going to give a fete? Well, thank God, at last, we shall have a little amusement!"

Mrs. Rapine was actually arranging every thing for such an entertainment, for, like her daughters, she began to be weary of solitude.

Her pride having received a painful wound from the neglect and inattention of her neighbours, her mind had for some time been bent on the means which should most effectually press her resentment. At length it occurred to her, that if she condescended to

invite the whole neighbouring circle, who were of the least consequence, they could not, consistently with common good breeding, refuse her invitation.

Prompted by the rancour of her disposition, she exulted in the prospect of an opportunity, which might afford her ample means of revenging herself on every individual, who had given her offence.

Her design was, to make the "country puts," as she styled them, objects of derision and contempt, both for herself and for a large party, whom she proposed to invite from London and its environs.

Cards were accordingly distributed to the latter, and as her house was large, she offered them accommodations for as long a period as suited their convenience.

It must be confessed, that Mr. Rapine greatly objected to this entertainment; the expense of it was by no means suitable to the present state of his finances. The ships, which he had now for some weeks expected, were not yet arrived; this circumstance alone created much uneasiness, as he was not able to make good the payment for the estate. Mrs. Rapine considered nothing but how to revenge herself on her neighbours. Her actions were never the result either of reason or reflection; her unenlightened mind

left her without any resources, in what she called her present frightful solitude. To reading or studies of any kind, she had an utter aversion; in short, the whole of her enjoyments were purchased by the profligate use of wealth. It was a matter of no consequence to her, that her debts were not paid, she was not to be entombed while living, or, in other words, to be deprived of those pleasures, which to her was the sole end of her existence, because creditors were impertinent, and money scarce.

She dwelt with malignant pleasure on the idea of turning her country neighbours into ridicule, and making them the sport of her more high-bred and fashionable guests; and she was

likewise impatient to give a specimen of her abundant taste in a rural festival.

Every objection made by the Nabob was quickly obviated, and preparations went forward with spirit.

Cards having been sent all round within the distance of several miles, she had the pleasure of finding that her invitations were accepted. And, under the idea that it would mortify the squire's lady in particular, she had condescended to solicit the company of the most respectable farmers, with their families, amongst whom was farmer Wilson, known to her as the Nabob's tenant. Little was it imagined that his daughters had that very day



given so heinous an offence to the Miss Rapines. This was a discovery not to be made at present.

Nothing was now spoken of in the village, but the grand preparations which were going forwards at the Nabob's. An entertainment of this kind was so novel, at least to the farmer's wives and daughters, that they could think of nothing else. Not a bit of good butter went to market the whole of that week, except from the dairy of farmer Wilson.

The young women were trying to outvie each other in modern finery, while their mothers unpinned the napkins which enclosed their wedding suits, which had never seen the light, except at some particular festival.

Farmer Wilson alone had determined to refuse the invitation.

Mary and Catharine, when they received their cards, were at first, like most young people, pleased with the idea of beholding something novel, and perhaps, felt a little disappointment when their father objected to their going.

“I don’t believe,” said the sagacious farmer, “that these great folk mean any kindness at all, by inviting people like us; for my part I should think, was I to go, they only intended to make game of me, and I know your mother would never go without me; and as for you my girls, if you were to go without she or I, no good would come of it.

“ No, no, take my word for't, our betters never are so kind and condescending all at once, without something being i'th wind. Why can't we have a merry-making without going to the Nabob's for it? Ha'n't we got as good a couple of pullets in our roost as any i'th county, and as fine a bottle of ale, or gooseberry wine, as need be drank?

“ And then again, can't our neighbour, Harry Woodland, help us to a bit of as nice music as heart can wish? What need then for we to go from home for an evening's amusement? No, no, girls, stay at home wi' your father and mother, rather than go among great folks, who it mayhap, only invite you to shew the differ-

ence between their high breeding and your lowliness."

Mary and her sister, unused to oppose the wishes and advice of their parents on any occasion, submitted in the present instance without a murmur; and putting their cards of invitation under a tea-cup on the parlour chimney-piece, went to feed the poultry, and thought no more of the fete.

## CHAP. IV.

DESIGN OF A VILLAGE RAMBLE.—EXULTATION OF FANCIED SUPERIORITY. DISTRESS OCCASIONED FROM INDULGENCE OF IMPERTINENT CURIOSITY. DANGER OF UNGOVERNED DESIRES. WIDOW AND HER ORPHAN FAMILY BECOME THEIR PREY.—ACCIDENTAL RESENTMENT OF AN IDEOT BOY. INJURERS ENRAGED AT THE INJURED.—A RENCONTRE TOOTH AND NAIL.—FEELING HEARTS INTERPOSE FOR THE FALLEN.—MODEST REMONSTRANCE REPELLED WITH BRUTAL REVILING.—A CRUEL REVENGE MEDITATED AND ACCOMPLISHED.

IT was now Tuesday evening, and the Thursday following was appointed for the festival at Pagoda lodge.

Impelled partly by caprice, and partly by ostentation, the Miss Rapines suddenly fancied that a walk to the village would afford them, particularly just now, some amusement.

“Come Ma’m’selle,” said Miss Rapine to her governess, “make haste and get ready to walk with us, I dare say we shall see some of the farmer’s lasses making up their top knots and trumpery to come to our fete; and we will all of us put on our last new walking dresses, on purpose to set the girls longing for the fine things they can never get.”

Delighted by this charitable idea, they all three dressed themselves, to use their own expressions, “in the most

dashing style," and off they set, exulting in their proposed evening's ramble, and in their imagined power of exciting envy, astonishment, and homage, by means of their fashionable finery.

When they arrived at the first respectable farm house, they entered it without ceremony; and it actually happened, that here they met with a young woman who was busily employed in millinery and mantua making. At this moment she was in the act of decorating a turban for the farmer's daughter, who was one of the invited guests.

The ladies asked her a thousand impertinent questions, as it happened that she was the only person in the

way, for being evening, the farmer's wife and daughters were engaged in the dairy.

At last Miss Constantia Rapine, the second sister, caught up the turban which lay on the table beside her, and, twisting it carelessly round upon her hand, let it fall on the sandy floor; then bursting into a loud laugh, said to her governess "do Ma'm'selle pick it up, I'm sure it's a very smart affair; pray who is it for?" addressing the young person who had risen at their entrance, and now stood much distressed by their insufferable rudeness. She timidly replied, "it is for Lucy Flowerdale Miss." "Oh! I know the name, is she not coming to the fete at Pagoda lodge on Thursday," said Miss Constantia?



“I believe she is Miss.”

“And I suppose you have been making her that fine turban,” said the former, “but don’t you intend to put feathers in it?”

“You cannot doubt that,” said Miss Augusta, the youngest sister, “do you suppose Miss Flowerdale ever wants feathers when there *is* two such fine game cocks strutting about as I see yonder,” pointing to some fowls in the farm yard.

The sisters and their governess joined in a loud laugh at this piece of vulgar wit, and again taking up the turban, said to the young milliner,

“don't you think Miss Flowerdale would like this better if you was to put some feathers in it.”

“No, Miss,” replied she, “Lucy Flowerdale always dresses very neat, for her parents can afford to buy her the best of every thing, but she never wears finery nor feathers of any kind; and if she did, I am pretty sure that she need not pluck the feathers from the poultry.”

“Well, well, don't be angry, you need not be pert about it, young woman,” said Miss Augusta, highly offended at this reply; and rising to depart, her sisters and their governess followed her example.

“ Will you please to give me leave to call Mrs. Flowerdale and her daughter ladies? ” said the young person.

“ No, ” replied they haughtily, “ we don't want them; ” then again looking at the turban, and at each other, they finished their impertinent visit here, with bursting into a laugh; leaving the young milliner motionless with astonishment at the behaviour of fine ladies.

After this they entered two or three farm houses more, behaving in the same rude manner, and though treated with that hospitable civility which particularly distinguishes the English farmers, they could scarcely confine their ill-timed mirth within the least bounds.

In short, they left every person whom they spoke to completely disgusted with the behaviour of fine ladies; and more than half resolved not to accept the invitation to the fete, which, for the last few days, they had with so much impatience wished to behold.

As the young ladies had not yet sufficiently gratified their curiosity, they pursued their way to the extremity of the village; they presently came to a row of neat little cottages, each of which had a small garden in the front, enclosed by low white pails. The first of these quickly drew their attention, for the front of it was covered by an apricot tree, the fruit of which was remarkably large, and and just now ripe.

The poor woman, who was the owner of it, was a widow. She had been left with a family of six children, the eldest of whom was a boy, not more than eight years of age, and he unhappily was an idiot; another of them, from having his hip put out, was a cripple; and the mother was at this time brought almost to the verge of the grave by an ague. The neighbours were all very kind to her and her children, or they must long ere then have come to the parish.

The yearly produce of her apricots served to purchase a little necessary clothing for herself and her children, during the winter season.

They were always sold to the same person, who kept a fruit shop at a market town some miles off; and by this person they were to have been gathered in the course of a few days.

Our young ladies surveyed the fine ripe apricots with an eye of desire, and though their own garden produced every kind of the choicest fruit in abundance, it was not just then at hand. Accustomed to the gratification of all their wishes almost as soon as they arose, they hesitated not to seize the speediest means for so doing in the present instance. The poor widow was seated in an armed chair just within the cottage door, languid, pale, and so much exhausted by sickness, that she could not rise without assistance. Her

children, who surrounded her, were eating their frugal supper; each child had a piece of coarse bread, a raw turnip, and a cup of water; yet this living picture of sickness and poverty, so interesting to the observing eye of humanity, was unseen by the pampered offspring of pride and luxury.

To satisfy their appetites was at this instant the only object they had in view. Pride raised a multitude of obstacles to any idea of requesting permission of the widow to eat of her fruit; and meanness, which always instigates the private actions of the idle and the luxurious, prevented them from offering to purchase that, which justice would have refused, without the sanction of the owner.

In short, the young ladies, forgetful of their own dignity, descended to throw sticks and stones at the tree; large branches of which they broke, and not only bruised the fruit which fell on the ground, but likewise seriously damaged the tree.

In vain the widow humbly entreated them to desist, and offered to have some immediately gathered for them, if they would only wait a few minutes; her entreaty did but increase the insolence of their demeanor, and the obstinacy of their pursuit.

The idiot child happened to be seated on the threshold of the cottage door, eating alternately of his bread and a large turnip. For some time



he appeared to watch them very attentively, and his mother, who perfectly understood that he was angry, was apprehensive of the consequences. A disposition to revenge any thing that was offensive to him, was unfortunately the only proof he ever gave of the smallest mental resemblance to other human beings; whether he was irritated at the actions and appearance of the young ladies, or whether a glimmering of sense led him to perceive that his mother was distressed at their conduct, cannot be ascertained, but she being sensible that he was on the point of doing mischief, made such efforts as her weakness would permit to prevent it. Before she could reach him, however, he hurled the turnip which he had begun to eat, and which was of a very

large size, at the head of the elder Miss Rapine, with such force, that she staggered a few paces backward, and had not one of her sisters caught her, would inevitably have fallen to the ground. Her left eye instantly was so much swelled as to disfigure her whole face, and the pain being at first very acute, she uttered a yell, such as might have issued from the throat of a native wild Indian.

Severe as her pain might probably be, it could hardly exceed the violence of her wrath, in which her sisters seemed fully to partake. With equal fury they all three fell on the helpless offender, whom they kicked, beat, and trampled upon without mercy.

Their earliest lessons had instructed them how to punish their slaves in the most summary way. The slightest offence or omission was instantly chastised by repeated blows, and injuries too painful to repeat. Accustomed therefore to this exercise of their hands, to which indeed may be added their teeth and nails, it was no wonder that they should deal so seriously with the unlucky idiot, by which they had been so grossly offended.

The screams of the boy, the prayers and entreaties of the mother, added to the vociferous voice of the young ladies, created such a dreadful uproar, that several of the neighbouring cottagers ran to see what was the occasion of it; but the instant they beheld the

scène, they became mute with astonishment; nor once offered to rescue the poor idiot boy, though he still groaned under the hands of the furious sisters.

In the height of the confusion, who should enter but Mary and Catharine Wilson. They had brought a small basket of provisions for the widow and her family.

Astonished at what they beheld, they were also for a few minutes deprived of utterance and the powers of action. But this effect was speedily removed, when the almost fainting mother addressed them and directed their attention to her boy, who was now bleeding copiously from the blows and scratches he had received, while his poor thread

bare jacket and worn out shirt, were torn to pieces and given to the winds.

Such a sight as this was more than sufficient to excite the sympathy of Mary and her sister. They neither waited for explanations nor apologies, but flew to the assistance of the bleeding victim of revenge; and while they lifted him from the ground, they exclaimed, "for heaven's sake ladies, have a little mercy on this poor creature, how can he possibly have deserved your anger? you surely do not know that he is an idiot!"

At this unexpected interruption and remonstrance, the fury of the Indian sisters was turned into another direction.

They surveyed Mary and her sister for a minute in silence, but with countenances in which were strongly painted all those degrading passions by which they were so violently agitated. Though choaked with rage so as almost to prevent articulation, Miss Constantia Rapine said to them:—

“And pray who are you, that dare to interfere with any of our actions? surely you do not know who you are taking the liberty of talking to; but,” continued she, looking earnestly in their faces, “I see now who you are, and therefore am not at all surprised at your insolence.

“Don’t you recollect these creatures, Ma’m’selle?” continued she

addressing her governess,—“they are the very same who had the assurance to come into our park to that bold hussy, who lay there rolling on the grass and shammed illness; but we all saw she was intoxicated, didn't we, Ma'm'selle, and you are no doubt the worthless companions of a drunken wretch; nay, you must even at this moment be tipsy, or you would certainly be afraid of intruding your ignorant observations on us. We are got among a fine set of vagabonds, and if ye stay much longer we shall all be murdered, for who knows how many wild beasts of the same sort this woman keeps? Idiot indeed! a fine excuse for such a savage, to call it an idiot,—but be it idiot or not, we'll take good care to make the owner suffer. Do

Ma'm'selle, be so kind to go home and order the carriage directly, for I'm sure my sister must not walk home as it is, she'll be in a fever to-morrow."

It is scarcely possible to say how long she might have continued in this outrageous strain, if Mary Wilson had not with much good sense and modesty interrupted her by saying—"I am sorry Miss to find that you have so greatly mistaken every thing that has happened, both in regard to this poor widow's unfortunate child, and also to myself and my sister, whom you are pleas'd to call the worthless companions of a drunken wretch. If you did but know either us, or the person whom you thought proper to distinguish by such an appellation, I am



sure you would do us all more justice; and I must believe that if you would permit me to acquaint you with the distressing situation of this poor woman, and her unfortunate child, who has so sadly offended you, you would forgive and pity them.

“You have a greater share of impudence and conceit than I have met with in any one person for a long time,” replied Miss Constantia Rapine, “and I desire to know your name?”

“Thank God, Miss, I am not ashamed of my name,” said the former, “it is Wilson, I am the eldest daughter of farmer Wilson, of Berry farm.”

“ O then your father is one of our tenants? ”—

“ He is Miss, and I hope you will have as much reason to be satisfied with him, as our good landlord Sir Charles B—— has had, for my father never fails to pay his rent the day it is due, and he has lived in the same farm almost three and twenty years.”

“ I care nothing at all about that, ” said the angry young lady, “ he should not remain in it three and twenty hours longer if I could prevent it, and he shall be sure to suffer for his daughters insolence; I heard papa say his lease was almost out, and I’ll see that it shall never be renewed. ”

Poor Mary looked at her sister and turned pale, for she was in reality alarmed, lest the violent young lady should put her threats into execution. But being a girl of much good sense, it presently occurred to her that it would not be for the Nabob's interest to turn away a good tenant, yet she could not suppress the rising tear, when she reflected on the possibility of her father being a sufferer.

During a short pause, the Miss Rapes seemed collecting fresh matter for their malignancy.—“Pray have you not been invited to our fete,” said Miss Constantia.

“We have, Miss, but my parents

thinking it an honour unbecoming in us to accept, will of course decline it."

"So much the better," replied the indian sisters, "and take care that you are never seen to set a foot on our premises, while you remain in the neighbourhood."—Then, pausing a minute, she added, "I protest I am almost sorry that your assurance did not lead you to accept my mamma's invitation to the fete;" then addressing herself to her sister, "what charming sport it would have been, to have humbled their confidence, and treated them like reptiles as they are, when they came dressed out in all their finery, expecting to be permitted to sit in the presence of lords and ladies. It would

have been a fine opportunity to have taught these wenches how to behave themselves; but one thing you may depend upon Mrs. boldface," continued she, turning to Mary Wilson, "that if ever I catch you even looking over the park-gate, I'll have our mastiff dog let loose upon you, he shall teach you how to behave in future."

"I am sorry to hear you talk in such a manner, Miss," replied Mary Wilson, wiping her eyes, "I can assure you I never intended to give you the least offence, and I think if you were not just now very angry, you would not wish to see me torn in pieces by a mastiff dog; I am sure if I saw you in any sort of danger, I would do my utmost to prevent it."

“ O you are a saint, I dare say,” rejoined Miss Constantia, “ but I should be very sorry to trust to you.”

By this time the carriage arrived, into which the young ladies indignantly flounced, vowing vengeance against the poor widow, her boy, and all who had interfered in their behalf.

The moment they got home, they flew to their parents, complaining bitterly of the insults they had met with, a proof of which, according to their representations, remained on the visage of Miss Rapine.

Insult and blows offered to the daughter of a Nabob, was a crime that required adequate punishment.

Without the least deliberation it was decreed, that farmer Wilson should suffer for the trespass of his children, and in less than half an hour a servant was dispatched to him with a formal warning to quit his farm, on the expiration of his lease.

The next thing to be thought of was how to chastise the widow.

Her poverty already seemed to set her beyond the reach of their punishment, on that score, for in her circumstances they could reduce her no lower.

“If we had her and her boy in Bengal,” said the Nabob to his lady, “we need not be at much trouble about the punishment of such wretches

as these, but in England, where they have the same appeal to the laws as their betters, it requires some management to make them feel our just resentment, without inconvenience to ourselves."

"I have just thought of an excellent plan, mamma," said Miss Rapine.

"What is that, my dear?" replied her mother, "if it be any thing which we can possibly execute, it shall be done out of hand."

"I think then, mamma," rejoined the young lady, "we can do nothing better than to order Domingo to destroy that old creature's fruit tree, it is not treating her with half the severity



she deserves, but it will help to make her afraid of letting that wild beast loose; and she ought to be told that if he is not tied up, to prevent his doing any more mischief, both he and she shall be sent to jail."

Mrs. Rapine applauded the ingenuity of her daughter's contrivance to chastise the widow: lamenting the impracticability of making that chastisement more equal to the heinous nature of her offence.

Domingo, a confidential negro, who was well accustomed to the private torture and open punishment of all, or any one, who had given the least offence to his ladies, was now charged with the ingenious and charitable plan suggested by Miss Rapine.

On that same night, while all the peaceful inhabitants of the village were at rest, Domingo perpetrated the revengeful commands of his mistress. The means he took were unknown, but the purpose was effected, for the tree was withered, root, fruit, leaf, and branch; and when the poor widow arose in the morning, she beheld, with sorrow and dismay, the heavy loss she had sustained.

Some of the neighbours imagined that the tree had been struck by lightning, but the far greater part were of opinion, that the widow might find the true cause, when she recollected the threats of Miss Rapine.

## CHAP. V.

SYMPATHY SOOTHES AND KINDNESS SUSTAINS THE DISTRESSED.—RUIN REVEALED FROM ENRAGED OPPRESSORS. CONSCIOUS RECTITUDE ANIMATES UNDER UNDESERVED OPPRESSION.

WHEN the angry sisters had departed from the widow's cottage, a dead calm for many minutes succeeded the violent storm, which had been raging for more than an hour. Mary Wilson and her sister reflected on the threats of Miss Rapines, and the widow wept in silence at the cruel treatment her poor boy had met with, and at the mischief he had done, and the misfortune he might be the cause

of bringing on her best friends, farmer Wilson and his kind-hearted children. The latter, however, soon recovered themselves, and sought the unluckly cause of the affray, who had been taken into the house of the next door neighbour.

On examination, they found him covered with cuts and bruises, for one of the young ladies not being satisfied with the blows she was able to let fall, unaided by any weapon more weighty than her own hand, seized a pair of pattens which stood behind the door, with the rings of which she beat the boy on the head most unmercifully.

The tears of the mother flowed afresh when she beheld the deplorable

situation of her unfortunate boy ; and heavy indeed would have been her afflictions could she at this moment have foreseen the loss she was, through him, on the point of sustaining.

But the humane attentions of Mary and Catharine soothed her and dried her tears. They procured some spirit to wash the wounds in the child's head and face, and assured her they would soon repair the loss of his shirt and jacket; then emptying the basket of provisions, to bring which was the sole cause of their coming that evening, they hastened home, for their visit had already been prolonged beyond the time they could conveniently spare from their domestic duties.

They gave their mother an account of what had occurred at the widow Franklin's; and though they related the offence they had so unintentionally given to the Miss Rapines, they forbore to mention the threats respecting their father. Their own hearts were indeed far from being at ease on the subject, but they wished to avoid exciting the apprehensions and uneasiness of their parents.

Farmer Wilson now joined his family, his daily labour being ended; and they were just seated round the supper table, when a servant arrived from the Nabob with a letter.

Mary and Catharine looked pale and distressed, while their father pe-

rused it, but the contents were presently known, by the sudden exclamation, which the good man uttered; —“ God’s will be done;” then dropping the letter on the table, covered his face with both hands. “ What can be the matter?” said his wife, taking it up hastily, but the first glance was sufficient, she looked at her daughters, and burst into tears.

The latter too well understood her look. For a few minutes the girls could not give vent to the anguish of their hearts even by tears, but at length they wept bitterly.

“ Oh my dear good father and mother!” said they, grasping a hand of each, “ this misfortune has hap-

pened to you by our means, yet we are innocent, indeed we are, of designing to offend any one, and little did we think of afflicting our parents!" Mary and Catharine had long since related the behaviour of the young ladies in the park, and this evening they had, as we have already mentioned, informed their mother of the scene at the widow Franklin's; the threat which was now put in practice had alone been concealed.

The farmer being now recovered from the surprise and perturbation he was at first thrown into, endeavoured to assume a cheerful aspect; and first addressing his wife, said, in a tone which betrayed at once tenderness and grief, "dry up your tears, my dear-



est partner, why do you weep my children, *there's* more farms to be had when this is taken from me, I've always paid my rent honestly, and I dare say nobody will refuse me for a tenant. To be sure I've lived so long here that I love the little spot, and I have spared no labour to make it what it is; there is scarce such a field of corn in England, as my ten acre field; and when I first rented this farm, that very field would scarcely grow a potatoe.—But what signifies sorrow. To be sure I hoped to live and die here, but God wills otherwise, and it is my duty to submit.

“ As for you, my girls, I rejoice to think you have hearts to do good, I am proud of your behaviour on this

and many other occasions, and the Nabob can't take half the pleasure in his wealth and his fine jewels, that I take in looking at my children; and all the harm I wish him is, that his daughters may deserve the love of God and their fellow creatures, as well as mine do, and then he may say with truth, he is a happy father."

Here he stopped; and wiping off a tear or two, that rested on his sunburnt cheeks, he embraced his wife and children, bade them be of good cheer, then quietly finished his supper, and went to his pillow, where he reposed with that serenity which can ever sweeten the slumbers of a good man,

## CHAP. VI.

THE OFFICES OF KINDNESS AND SOOTHING STRAIN OF SYMPATHY RESUMED. PROJECTS OF BENEFICENCE.—UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE OF A STRANGER.—GOOD DESIGNS DISCOVERED.—A WELCOME VISIT FROM A LONG ABSENT FRIEND.—GLOOMY PROSPECTS DISSIPATED.

EARLY on the following morning, the account arrived at Berry-farm of the cruel revenge which had been taken on the widow Franklin.

Mary and Catharine Wilson instantly forgot their own uneasiness, and hastened to condole and relieve the poor woman. They found her

surrounded by several of her neighbours. All were pitying her, but none seemed to offer any more substantial consolation.

The tears and lamentations of the widow, greatly affected the kind-hearted sisters, who, however, used every soothing argument to reconcile her to her loss. For a moment or two she was calm. There is always something in the tone of genuine sympathy, which insensibly communicates peace to the afflicted. But suddenly glancing her eye towards her half-naked children, she burst into fresh agonies of sorrow, exclaiming, " Oh! my children, had I but strength to labour, I might be able to clothe your poor half naked bodies before the re-

turn of winter; but I daily grow weaker, and I am only kept out of my grave by your goodness, my best, my only friends," continued she, addressing Mary and her sister, "Oh! were it not for you what would become of me and my children!"

"It is little indeed that we are able to do for you, my poor neighbour," said they, "sincerely do we wish that more was in our power; but if you will endeavour to be cheerful, and try to get well, we will leave nothing undone to procure you a recompense for your loss. I am almost sure, that if the squire and his lady, or our good parson, did but know what has happened to you, that either of them

would do something to assist you," said Mary, "and either my sister or myself will take the liberty of representing to them the accident which has just happened to your fruit tree."

"Ah, my dear Mary," rejoined the widow, "it is no *accident* that has happened to destroy my fruit tree, it is nothing but cruelty and revenge." "Hush, hush!" replied Mary, "forbear to judge too hastily, it is wrong to accuse any one; I perceive you are going to speak of the Miss Rapines, but I would recommend you to forbear accusations, remembering that there is a just God who sees all hearts; they have no need therefore of an earthly accuser."

The generous sisters now emptied the little store contained in their basket, and presented to the eyes of the grateful mother, a decent shirt, which they had mended and prepared, on purpose to replace that which the evening before had been torn from the back of the idiot boy. They had risen at dawn of day, that they might get it ready against the evening; but when they heard of the widow's fresh misfortune, they contrived to finish the shirt, and pack it up together with a large meat pie, a loaf, and other little articles of refreshment.

Having left the poor woman in possession of these comforts, and assured her of their ready exertions to procure her some more lasting aid,

they quitted her much more tranquil than they had found her, and their departure was followed by her prayers and blessings.

During their walk home, they neither thought, nor talked of any thing but the widow Franklin and her children. When they arrived at the stile within sight of their own house, they set themselves down to finish the arrangement of the little charitable plans, which had occupied them for the last quarter of an hour.

Their father and mother allowed them the profits arising from the eggs and poultry, to purchase any superfluous clothing, and to furnish them with money for their pockets.



But this allowance was more frequently applied to charitable purposes than to any thing else, and when they went to the market-town to sell either their poultry or the productions of the dairy, the money was never appropriated to their own use, when the exigences of their poor neighbours required their assistance.

The widow Franklin had been ill several months, and would probably ere this time have died for want, had she not been supported by her charitable neighbours, amongst whom none were so constant or so generous in their contributions as Mary and Catharine. Exclusive of the widow, they had another claimant on their bounty. This was the unfortunate young wo-

man and her child whom they assisted in the Nabob's park, and whom they had ever since contributed to support.

When they had seated themselves on the stile, they sat a few minutes silently, contriving how they should most effectually serve the widow and her family.

“It happens very unlucky,” said Catharine, at length breaking silence, “that we should be just now so low in pocket money; and the bad news we heard last night makes me fearful of asking our father and mother to help us out. What do you think of our going this evening to tell her recent disaster to the squire's lady.”

“I think,” replied Mary, “she would not be angry with us at least; and, beside her, we will go to one or two more of the gentry, I am almost sure that none of them will think ill of us for so doing, and they may possibly serve our poor neighbour.

“But if they should think it too much trouble to hear our story,” continued she, “we must try to do something for her ourselves, for it would be a sad thing to see her poor children naked all the winter; Oh, if my father’s good landlord Sir Charles B——, had lived at the hall as he used to do, there would not be a sorrowful heart in all the village; for both father and mother say, that there never was a poor person went to

the hall that came away empty handed."

"And it would have been a happy thing for us," rejoined Catharine, "if Sir Charles B — was our landlord still, my father would never have lost his farm. But in regard to the distress of our neighbour Franklin, that *must* be relieved; and therefore if we can do nothing else, we will sell our little grey mare that father bought us to go to market on. I am sure he will not be angry at our so doing, and we can walk without much inconvenience."

She was now suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a gentleman,

who stood a few minutes looking at the sisters before he spoke.

They arose in some confusion, when in a voice of kindness he enquired "how far it was to Berry farm?"

"That is Berry farm, sir," said Mary, courtesying and blushing, "that white house just before you, sir."

"Do you know, my good girl, whether farmer Wilson lives there still?" continued the gentleman.

"O yes, sir, my father has lived there three and twenty years come next Martinmas," replied Mary.

"Your father child, is farmer Wilson your father? he is a happy man

then, but if he continues to be what he was, when I knew him, he deserves to be happy.

“I have accidentally overheard part of your conversation, and without any intention to be a listener, your charitable designs are fully known, and it would indeed be a pity if you were not assisted in your laudable intention of relieving the distressed; but come, fair damsels, let us go to your father.”

Mary and her sister were greatly embarrassed by the praises of the gentleman, whom they accompanied in silence and with downcast looks.

In a few minutes they were at home, and having seated the gentle-

man in the parlour, they flew to seek their parents.

Their mother was busy in her dairy, when Catharine came to her, half breathless with hurry and confusion, entreating her to make haste and come to a gentleman in the parlour, who certainly was somebody that would be good to her father.

This thought operated so strongly on the mind of the affectionate girl, that she cried, laughed, and talked all at once. Dame Wilson snatched a clean apron from the chair back, and in the interim her husband arrived from the hay-field, covered with perspiration, and stripped to his shirt sleeves.

He could not be persuaded to make any addition to his dress, insisting upon it that it was more becoming in him to appear in the habiliments of labour, than in those of rest and leisure. "When Sunday comes," said the farmer, "I have a good coat to put on, and a dry shirt, but there's no need of it now; and if the gentleman be a good gentleman, as Mary says she's sure he is, he won't respect me the less for being in my shirt sleeves."

This argument being over between the farmer and his family, they all entered the parlour together. The gentleman arose, and with a smiling countenance stretched forth his hand, saying, "my good old friend, I am glad to see you, and your worthy



wife, and I heartily congratulate you on being the father of two such amiable children, for I have accidentally become acquainted with your daughters and their worth; but I think you look as if you had quite forgotten me; am I so much changed since I left my native country?"

Farmer Wilson and his wife stood gazing at the gentleman for a few minutes, without uttering a word, but at last the farmer burst into the following exclamation:

“ Good God—surely it is—it must be Sir Charles B———, my dear and worthy landlord; welcome a thousand times, welcome to England, and to Berry farm.”

He would have proceeded, but joy overcame him. His hopes revived in regard to keeping possession of his farm; and this, with a grateful recollection of many an act of past kindness, was absolutely more than he could bear.

He still grasped the hand which Sir Charles had kindly offered, and his lips continued to move, but his voice failed and denied articulation.

Sir Charles was greatly affected at this testimony of affectionate attachment to his person; and after seating the farmer, he addressed his wife, who with her daughters, fully partook in the joy of their former landlord's unexpected return,

“Come,” said he, “my good friend, let me taste your ale, nobody used to brew better in all the country, and I dare say you have not lost your skill.”

“Heaven bless you, good sir,” said dame Wilson, who for the first time had been able to find her voice since the entrance of Sir Charles, “how happy your presence makes us, and yet we forget our duty, and leave you to ask us for what we should have offered. Catharine, who had flown for some ale at the wish of Sir Charles, speedily returned with it, as well as with other refreshments. He partook of them, as did also the honest farmer, who soon after recovered a more than usual share of spirits.

Sir Charles was now informed of the Nabob's resentment, and the consequence which he expected would attend it: "But," said the farmer, "I hope your honour will get possession of your own estate again, for I have heard as a bit of a secret, which I am sure has never been *revulged* by me, that the Nabob has not yet paid for it."

"I do not, at present, know whether I may be able to obtain possession again," said Sir Charles, "but my business in Shropshire is principally on that account. I am now going to call on the Nabob, for if he is willing to yield his bargain, I shall be glad to take it in my own hands, but let that be as it will, you need not be

uneasy at losing your farm, for I doubt not but I have interest enough in this neighbourhood to procure you another; and as for the good girls, your daughters, I shall certainly remember them. They shall not want the power of being charitable, since their hearts are so disposed.

“ But in regard to the poor widow whom you are so anxious about my dear,” said Sir Charles, turning to Mary and Catharine, “ here is a five pound note, which I will have you give to her, and you may truly say, she is indebted to you, and you alone for this small relief. Alas!” said Sir Charles, deeply sighing, “ I have a dear, unfortunate sister, who being married to a gentleman in the army,

has within the last twelve months become a widow, and is greatly reduced in her circumstances. On her account alone I have returned to England; for, though the cause is removed for ever, which originally induced me to be an exile from my native country, yet I had but little desire to return, till I heard the distressing account of her indigence. Mary joyfully accepted the present for the widow: and Sir Charles, after promising to inform the honest family what the event might be of his visit to the Nabob, departed, leaving the whole family so charmed with his condescension and humanity, that they neither talked nor thought of any other thing during the remainder of the day.

## CHAP. VII.

AN INTERESTING OBJECT FORMERLY RESCUED FROM DISTRESS, AND THE TERROR OF RESENTMENT.—AN HUMBLE VOCATION EMBRACED BY AN ELEVATED MIND.—AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY OF AN AFFINITY OF HONOURABLE RANK. JOY AT HAVING UNAWARES AIDED DIGNITY IN DISTRESS.

WE have hitherto omitted any account of the young woman whose entrance into the park had so highly offended the Miss Rapines, yet she is by no means an uninteresting object in our little story.

When the tender-hearted Mary and her sister had restored her to her

senses, they took her home, laid her on their own bed, and nursed her with all the tenderness of near relations. She received the kind attention of this worthy family with the most lively expressions of gratitude, and related to them as much of her history, as was sufficient to account for the deplorable state in which they found her.

She acknowledged that it would be painful to her to divulge her family name, and gave such reasons for wishing to conceal it, as were fully sufficient to silence curiosity. In short, her amiable manners, her superior style of conversing, joined to the short but affecting account of her misfortune, so completely won the



heart of our honest farmer and his whole family, that nothing could ever after induce them to desert her.

For some weeks both she and her child remained under their hospitable roof, but the idea of becoming a burthen to a family, who, though possessing every comfort and necessary of life, were far from being rich, become insupportable to her. It happened at length, that a small but neat cottage in the village became vacant, and as she was incapable of any kind of labour, it struck her that she might open a school to teach the children in the village.

Though it was evident that she might have aspired to something

above this employment, yet in her present indigent and dependent circumstances, this seemed the readiest means of obtaining support for herself and her child.

She communicated her intentions to her generous protectors, who, though they willingly offered her every assistance towards the execution of her little plan, sincerely regretted the prospect of losing her for an inmate, as she had proved to them not only an agreeable, but an useful, companion.

Her education enabled her to impart some instruction to Mary and Catharine, which tended at once to refine their manners, and extend their

views of moral virtues. Hitherto they had been kind and charitable to every human being merely from habit; and their good deeds had often been abused. The conversation of Mrs. Mansfield, which was the name by which the unfortunate young woman distinguished herself, led them to reflect on the worth or utility of the objects they relieved, and to aid them in proportion to their intrinsic merits.

Being now fully sensible of her worth, and of the advantage they had derived from her society, it is no wonder that they parted from her with reluctance. Farmer Wilson assisted her to furnish the cottage, which being done, she immediately entered on her new employment, and though but

a very short time had elapsed since she commenced school mistress, she had already met with encouragement beyond her hopes; and not a day passed in which she did not offer up her prayers for the benevolent beings who had snatched her and her babe from the ruthless hand of famine.

Not many minutes after the departure of Sir Charles B——, Mrs. Mansfield and her little boy came to pay their accustomed daily visit to her benefactors, for she had never omitted seeing them once a day ever since they separated.

Happy to see her friends, countenances betray unusual marks of joy, when she apprehended the very re-

verse, on account of the Nabob's severe decree against them, she eagerly sought to participate in the cause of their felicity.

“ Sir Charles B——, our former beloved landlord, is once more come to live in England,” said Mary Wilson, “ and he has only this moment left us, how I wish you had been here, my dear Mrs. Mansfield, to——” Here she was suddenly interrupted by the death-like paleness, which in a moment overspread the countenance of the latter, who faintly uttering, “ is it possible,” sunk senseless on a chair.

Alarmed and astonished at the disorder of Mrs. Mansfield, they hurried

round her to administer relief, smelling bottles, burnt cloth, and vinegar, were by turns applied to her nostrils, yet it was some time before she shewed any signs of returning sense. At length she gradually recovered, and her anxious friends gently solicited to know the cause of her disorder. "Sir Charles B—— is —— here," she paused and wept bitterly. "O what is he," said Catharine! "Is he not a good man?" "Yes, yes, he is indeed good, but he is ——." Again she hesitated and wept, Mary and her sister were breathless with impatience. "Confide in us, my dear Mrs. Mansfield, fear not to unbosom yourself; say, why the name of Sir Charles B—— has so greatly disturbed you, tell who he

is." "He is," continued Mrs. Mansfield," deeply sighing, "my long loved, but highly offended brother."

Exclamations of joy and surprise, alternately broke from the lips of the auditors; the good old farmer rubbed his hands, half laughed, and half wept, while he congratulated himself to think he had the sister of his worthy landlord under his roof; but she continued to weep most bitterly."

"O my dear Mrs. Mansfield," said the two delighted sisters, "forgive our freedom, now we know you are so much above us; do not weep so, what joy would be mine to have such a brother; besides, if you did but know how anxious he is about

you, I'm sure you would weep no longer. This very morning he told us, "that he should not have come to England, had it not been on account of a beloved sister, whom he heard was become a widow, and in much distress." "And did he indeed say this! and am I still the object of his care," said she, raising her eyes to heaven in a transport of gratitude; "O my brother! my brother! then you have forgiven me."

She now related to those, whom she proudly and gratefully styled her best friends, all the circumstances which she had withheld on a former occasion. It appeared that she was the only sister of Sir Charles B——, and having married strongly against his



inclination, he had declared a resolution never to take any notice of her.

He was, perhaps, the more easily exasperated against her, because his mind was irritated by a painful sense of the injuries he had received in his own matrimonial connexion. He had married young, and being of a sanguine temper, his too vivid imagination of the happiness that awaited him, had served to render the disappointment more dreadful.

To this only sister he turned his eyes for consolation, and when he determined to hide his griefs, by retiring to the Continent, he ardently wished for her to be the companion of his voluntary banishment. At the mo-

ment when this seemed to be his sole reliance, his sole hope and consolation, she had privately married, and without bidding farewell to her relations, had taken her departure for the West Indies. Hence followed his resentment. But her widowed and distressed state, soon banished all recollections but those of tenderness,

When Mary Wilson and her sister found her in the park, she had not been long arrived in England.

With much difficulty she had travelled to B—— Hall, supposing it still belonged to her brother, whom she had been informed was on the Continent, and that there was no prospect of his return; but doubted not of

finding shelter wherever he had a home and servants.

As she slowly pursued her way through the park, she met a man servant, of whom she enquired whether Sir Charles B——'s housekeeper was at the hall. But how dreadful was her disappointment and agony, when she was informed, that the house and estate now belonged to another person.

Without money, without friends, and both her child and herself fainting for want of food, what must have been her situation.

Hope played about her heart; however, when she saw the young ladies now approach, whose behaviour on the

occasion is already known, and it is likely that her griefs would soon have been ended by death, had it not have been for the gentle hearted sisters, Mary and Catharine.

The farmer and his family would not hear of her returning to her cottage, but immediately prepared their best apartments for her accommodation; while all parties were alike impatient for an interview; and as Sir Charles had promised to acquaint them with the result of his visit at the Nabob's, they had reason to imagine that he might again call at the farm in the course of the day.

## CHAP. VIII.

AN UNWELCOME VISIT FOLLOWED BY A REPULSIVE INTERVIEW.—THE HAUGHTY DESCEND TO SUBTERFUGES OF MEANNESS TO DEFER THE CLAIMS OF EQUITY.—AN EVENTFUL MEETING ANTICIPATED.—THE INTERVIEW DELAYED, AND PRELIMINARY EVENTS DEVELOPED.—THEY MEET AND MINGLE HEARTS.

WHEN Sir Charles B—— took his leave of the farmer and his family, he hastened to the Nabob's, where he found it difficult to obtain an audience; for as the former was on foot, and without a servant, he was thought a person of no consequence. At length, however, the honour was granted.

After having informed the Nabob who he was, he proceeded with a politeness that was habitual to him, to communicate the purport of his visit.

He requested the Nabob would either fulfil the engagement he had made and pay him for the estate, or otherwise that he would give it up altogether; assuring him that the latter would be by far the most agreeable, as he wished to reside in the house himself.

The Nabob paused a few minutes before he spoke, during which time he surveyed Sir Charles with an eye that betrayed the working of his haughty soul.

At last he addressed him as follows:

“ You may be Sir Charles B——, and the owner of this estate, but I know nothing of you, I never saw you before in my life, and therefore you may as well be some impudent impostor, come to trick me of my money. Whenever I pay for this estate, it shall be the person I bargained with; but, as for you, I have nothing more to say to you; besides, I'm engaged at present, and shall be all day.” As he concluded this sentence he walked out of the room, leaving Sir Charles astonished to find that so much insolence and pride had taken possession of any individual in existence.

This visit had, however, not a little disturbed the Nabob. He had no doubt of the identity of Sir Charles B——, but conscious of his inability to comply with his demand, with that weak cunning which is generally found in little minds, he had recourse to the mean subterfuge already described.

When Sir Charles quitted B—— hall, or otherwise Pagoda lodge, he was, for a time, thoroughly occupied in his mind, with the character and behaviour of the man he had just parted from. Having been politely requested by Mr. and Mrs. Maitland to make their house his home, during his stay at N——, he hastened to inform them of the unhandsome behaviour of the Nabob, and also to



consult with them on his future mode of proceeding with him.

He determined, however, to rest quiet another day or two, and to permit their festival to pass uninterrupted; yet was fully determined to make the Nabob understand that he was Sir Charles B——, and no impostor.

The same evening he again called on farmer Wilson; for, though he had nothing to communicate respecting his negotiation with the Nabob, yet he had many questions to ask him in regard to some depredations which he found the former had made on the estate, though it could not certainly be his own at present.

Joy glistened in the eyes of the honest family the moment he appeared, for their hearts were beating with anxiety to communicate the interesting discovery they had made; and if Mrs. Mansfield had not strongly objected to it, they would ere that time have told him that his sister was beneath their roof.

When Sir Charles was seen crossing the stile which led to the farm, his sister, unable to support the idea of a sudden interview, had withdrawn to her chamber, leaving her little boy, who bore a striking resemblance to her, to prepare the way for a meeting, which, though ardently wished for, was attended with doubt and anxiety.

After kindly addressing the family he cast his eyes on the child, whose attention was engaged by one of his uncle's grey-hounds.

“Whose little boy have you here?” said Sir Charles, looking earnestly at him; “come here,” said he, “my fine fellow, will you come to me?”

The little creature, who could scarcely run alone, was led to the knees of his uncle, who lifted him up, kissed him, and sighed deeply.

It was evident that the resemblance reminded him of his sister, though he named it not.

Again he enquired his name, and

whether his parents lived in the vil-  
lage? "He has no father, sir," said  
Dame Wilson, "his mamma is a  
widow."

Having been directed what to say  
by Mrs. Mansfield, she proceeded as  
follows:

"Nearly three months back my  
daughters were carrying a little fruit  
to a neighbour, when they saw a lady  
and her child, sitting on the grass in  
your honour's park. She appeared  
much fatigued, and at last fainted.  
Mary and Catharine went to assist  
her, and she recovered, after which  
they led her here. We saw soon that  
she deserved our respect and attention,  
and we did what little was in our

power, and very little that was. Her story is short, but full of sorrow ; she is the widow of a captain who died in the East-Indies. She has not yet told her real name, we only know her as Mrs. Mansfield, and she speaks often of a brother whom she greatly loves, but has sadly offended."

The emotions of Sir Charles increased every instant, and scarcely had the farmer's wife concluded the last sentence ere he exclaimed, " Just God ! it—surely is my dear unfortunate sister, but, whoever she may be, I entreat your permission to see her."

With trembling impatience she had descended from her chamber, and was now in a little room adjoining the

apartment where her brother was sitting.

Having distinctly heard the last sentence, she could no longer refrain from embracing a relation so justly beloved; and, throwing open the door, a meeting followed, which greatly affected the beholders.

Sir Charles, being left alone to converse with his sister, heard from her lips such an account of the benevolence of farmer Wilson and his family, and of their extraordinary kindness to her in particular, that he was impatient till he had made them a suitable return.

He was now more than ever desirous of repossessing his estate, and impatiently waited till the Nabob's

entertainment should be over, that he might effectually pursue the means most likely to obtain his design.

The sister, whose true name was Wallis, having married a captain in the army of that name, requested to remain where she was, at least till that business was settled; her fervent wish was to reside again at B—— hall, to which spot she was strongly attached, as it was the place of her birth. Nothing could equal the indignation of Sir Charles, when he understood the inhumanity and unfeeling conduct of the Miss Rapines towards his sister, whose forlorn situation demanded the attention, at least of her own sex, and who, had it not been for Mary and Catharine Wilson, must inevitably have perished.

## CHAP. IX.

PREPARATIONS PROCEED AND GUESTS ARRIVE PREVIOUS TO THE FETE.—UNPROPITIOUS OCCURRENCES, AND THE DAY FOREBODES DISAPPOINTMENT.—THE FESTIVAL OPENS.—ENTERTAINMENT ANTICIPATED WHICH CANNOT BE REALIZED.—A MASQUERADE THE FINISHING SCENE.—A STRANGE MASK, AND A SONG WHICH DISCONCERTS THE HOST AND HOSTESS.

THE guests from London arrived at Pagoda lodge the day previous to that fixed on for the fete.

All was hurry and bustle in the village, the servants and equipages, which could not be accommodated at the



Nabob's, were forced to go to the only inn there was in the village. Here they found much difficulty in obtaining what was necessary either for themselves or their horses; and the neighbouring farmers were so highly offended by the recent behaviour of the Miss Rapines, that not one of them offered the use of an empty barn or stable, for the accommodation of their London visitors.

The wished for day was now arrived, and the festival commenced with an elegant breakfast, for which purpose superb tents had been pitched on the lawn, and a band of music was to have been concealed in an adjacent shrubbery.

But the elements were not favourable to the wishes of the gay party, or to the arrangements of their splendid hostess; for it not only poured with rain, but a violent thunder storm which began about six in the morning, continued till almost noon.

A platform had been raised on the lawn, over which a superb awning of blue silk, fringed with silver, was intended to have been displayed for the accommodation of the dancers.

But as the storm put an end to their festivity out of doors, they contented themselves with a breakfast in the saloon, which was ornamented for the occasion in a style of elegance not to be surpassed.

The party consisted of a few titled people, and a few whose riches needed no title to give them dignity in their own estimation.

All were sufficiently vain and imperious, or they would not have been distinguished by Mrs. Rapine. From the moment of their arrival, she had fed their expectations with an account of the fund of amusement she had provided for them, by inviting the neighbouring gentry, whom she portrayed as the most awkward and ridiculous set of beings imaginable; and to heighten the scene, they were taught to expect the farmer's wives and daughters dressed in all their village finery.

Every one was now full of expectation; one longed to see the airs and graces of the squire's lady, another was impatient to behold the parson and his prim wife. Some were of opinion that every species of entertainment would be exceeded by the ludicrous behaviour, and tawdry dresses of the farmer's wives and daughters.

Bets were laid who should create the first laugh at their expence; and all joined in the laudable design of exposing them to ridicule.

The music had now played a full hour, while the company waited for the arrival of the persons thus des-

tined for their diversion. But to their great surprise and disappointment, not an individual of any description made their appearance.

Miss Rapine, whose recent accident had greatly disfigured her, was the only person resigned to all the disappointments of the morning; for, being on this account prevented from joining the party, she actually rejoiced in every thing that could possibly mortify others.

Mrs. Rapine, however, attributed the absence of the bumpkins, as she termed them, to the rainy morning, and doubted not of their appearance in the evening. The pleasure of an-

icipation is great; and for want of some more just or substantial source of mirth and conviviality, the country guests were the subject of some dull jest, or ridiculous comparison during the day.

The rain continued to descend in torrents, and every preparation out of doors was rendered useless.

Booths had been erected in the park for a Dutch fair, and proper persons engaged to perform Dutch dances.

Masks and dresses were provided for all who were disposed to amuse themselves or others.

Jack-asses, ponies, and their riders, were also ready for racing on the lawn. But all these *charming* diversions were set aside by the unpropitious weather, and the day was spent in regulating the amusements of the evening.

In due time evening arrived, and the weather began to clear up; expectation was again on tiptoe to behold the objects of intended ridicule; but hour after hour passed, and neither the squire's lady, the parson's prim wife, nor the farmers with their families, ever made their appearance at Pagoda lodge.

Insult upon insult to the noble family of the Rapines; it was scarcely

to be borne, yet at present there seemed to be no remedy.

Discontent and disappointment sat in every countenance, which a masked ball, attended by every luxury which could please the palate, and every splendid object which could charm the eye, could not entirely dispel.

Thus, these objects of satire, so lightly estimated as companions for our high-bred party, become all at once of so much consequence, as to cloud the bright prospects which they had in view for the entertainment of the evening.

Though Mrs. Rapine had invited a



very great number of guests, various occurrences conspired to prevent the whole of them from accepting the invitation. The great distance from London, was a circumstance which prevented many from coming; and as their neighbours had so insolently refused to become their sport, there was, in reality, a want of numbers to enliven the midnight hour.

Their only resource was a masquerade, when each assumed that form which was most agreeable to them. But in a short time, even this species of amusement afforded but a scanty portion of entertainment.

Harlequins become inactive, and suffered their Columbines to sit idly

in a corner, while monks and nuns every now and then caricatured their holy profession, by skipping away in a Scotch reel.

The Nabob, whose mind was far from being at ease, particularly since the visit of Sir Charles B——, was not, in any degree, a partaker in the small portion of cheerfulness and ease *assumed* by his lady.

Soon after the clock had struck eleven, a strange mask suddenly entered the ball room, habited like a ballad singer.

He was the only person present who supported his part with humour. His voice was pleasing, and his ballads

composed with taste. He frequently addressed the Nabob and his lady, who behaved with their usual repulsive civility. He stayed about two hours, and just before he departed, he mounted on his stool, which he placed directly opposite to the Nabob and his lady, and from his bundle of ballads he selected the following :

“ He that binds the broken heart,  
 He that wipes the orphan’s tear,  
 He that takes the widow’s part,  
 Adverse fortune ne’er shall fear.

“ He who proudly scorns the poor,  
 Or augments the widow’s woe,  
 Or on the orphan shuts his door,  
 Tranquillity shall ne’er know.

“ But smiling peace shall smooth the brow,  
Of him who heals the care-worn breast,  
Or dries the tears that silent flow  
From hidden grief, and heart oppress'd.

“ Yet a word before we part,  
Wipe, O wipe the orphan's tear!  
Heal the widow's wounded heart,  
And then no change of fortune fear.”

Whilst he sung the last verse, the Nabob and his family, strange to tell, were evidently much disturbed.

Ten minutes after his song was ended, he was seen no more.

The entertainment now became every minute more insipid. The Nabob and his lady soon after retired, and before the clock struck two, the company repaired to their respective apartments.

## CHAP. X.

CONCLUDING INCIDENTS.—UNWELCOME  
VISITANTS THE DAY AFTER THE FETE.  
REVERSE OF FORTUNE ENRAGES THE  
HAUGHTY.—A TRAGICAL TERMINA-  
TION.—FALLEN OFFENDERS SUS-  
TAINED BY THE KINDNESS OF THE  
INJURED.—VIRTUE A MORE CERTAIN  
REWARD THAN WEALTH.

THE following morning was ushered  
in by a fete of a very different kind  
to that which had been celebrated the  
day before.

Scarcely had the Nabob risen ere  
his valet waited upon him, and, with  
a grave face, informed him that there

were two men in the hall, who had said they had been sent from London to take possession of every thing at Pagoda lodge.

Here the pride of the Nabob could avail him nothing, yet he blustered and swore, and ordered his valet to enquire who sent them on such an errand, and what sum they demanded, which, when he received an account of, he became outrageous.

His creditors in London had one and all join'd in demanding their debts, the amount of which was so large, that the Nabob could not tell what to say, nor how to act. When the news was communicated to Mrs. Rapine, she became a perfect fury,

and her daughters the same. Nothing was to be heard but loud reproaches and bitter recriminations; yet all was to no purpose, the die was cast, and this very day was the last which witnessed the grandeur of the Rapine family.

Two hours after the first unwelcome news, the same officious valet brought post letters to his master, at the sight of which the latter was a little revived, hoping that they contained news of his property in the East. So indeed they did, but of a very different nature to that which he expected; for these letters informed him that his negroes had risen and set fire to his plantations, which were wholly destroyed. The superintend-

ant, being anxious only for his own life, forsook his post, and left the property of every kind to be plundered by the negroes.

When misfortunes assail the virtuous, they are supported by conscious rectitude, and they patiently bow to the decrees of heaven. When the farmer heard that he was to be deprived of that farm, which for three and twenty years his own hands had cultivated, he meekly said—"God's will be done."

What a contrast was now presented in the behaviour of the Nabob and his family. By turns, husband and wife, children and parents, reproached each other, all was agony and dismay.



“And will our new sociable and all our horses and carriages be sold to these hateful creditors?” said the young ladies, “I’m sure I never can, or will do without a carriage; we that have always rode in one from our cradle; why does not papa turn these fellows out of the house. If they stay here much longer, I’ll tell Domingo to poison them! Papa is a fool to let them stay there.”

“Hush, hush,” said Mrs. Rapine, “your father is a fool to be sure, or he would never have let things come to this extremity. But, hark! what noise was that in the dressing-room? What a dreadful groan.” The mother flew to the door, followed by her daughters, opened it in haste, and

beheld the husband lying senseless on the floor.

Overpowered with rage, and various contending passions, an apoplectic fit terminated the existence of the Nabob.

Real sorrow had little or no share in the scene that followed, but when the survivors found that pride and resentment were alike unavailing, they sunk into despondency and helpless sorrow.

During this unexpected change in the affairs of the inhabitants of Pagoda lodge, their friends, as they had been recently styled, no sooner gathered some account of the truth,

than they hastily departed, without offering to console the widow. This office was left for Sir Charles B——, who had been so grossly insulted by the unfortunate Nabob.

He little thought when he personated the ballad-singer the preceding night, (for the reader will scarcely need to be told that it was him,) that the events were so closely at hand, of which he had by his ballad, in some degree foretold. Yet he strove to sooth the outrageous grief of Mrs. Rapine and her daughters; and though he took immediate possession of his house and estate, he gave Mrs. Rapine ample time to settle her affairs, and provide for her family. She was, however, seized

with a fever, which threatened her life, and prevented her removal.

Sir Charles ordered every thing for the interment of the Nabob in the village church, and would willingly have provided a nurse for Mrs. Rapine, could he have persuaded any person to attend her; but the whole family were so thoroughly hated and despised, that not a soul would come near them. The servants had all decamped in the general confusion. The Miss Rapines, poor helpless imbecile mortals, unused to perform the smallest offices of utility, beheld the sickness and distress of their mother, without offering to exert themselves in her behalf; and, but for the never-failing kindness of Mary and

Catharine Wilson, she would probably have died. By turns they watched her night and day, and fulfilled every duty which is implied in christian charity.

Her daughters, hard-hearted and unfeeling, wept, not for their mother, but hourly murmured the loss of all those baneful luxuries, which now rendered them a burthen to themselves and to society.

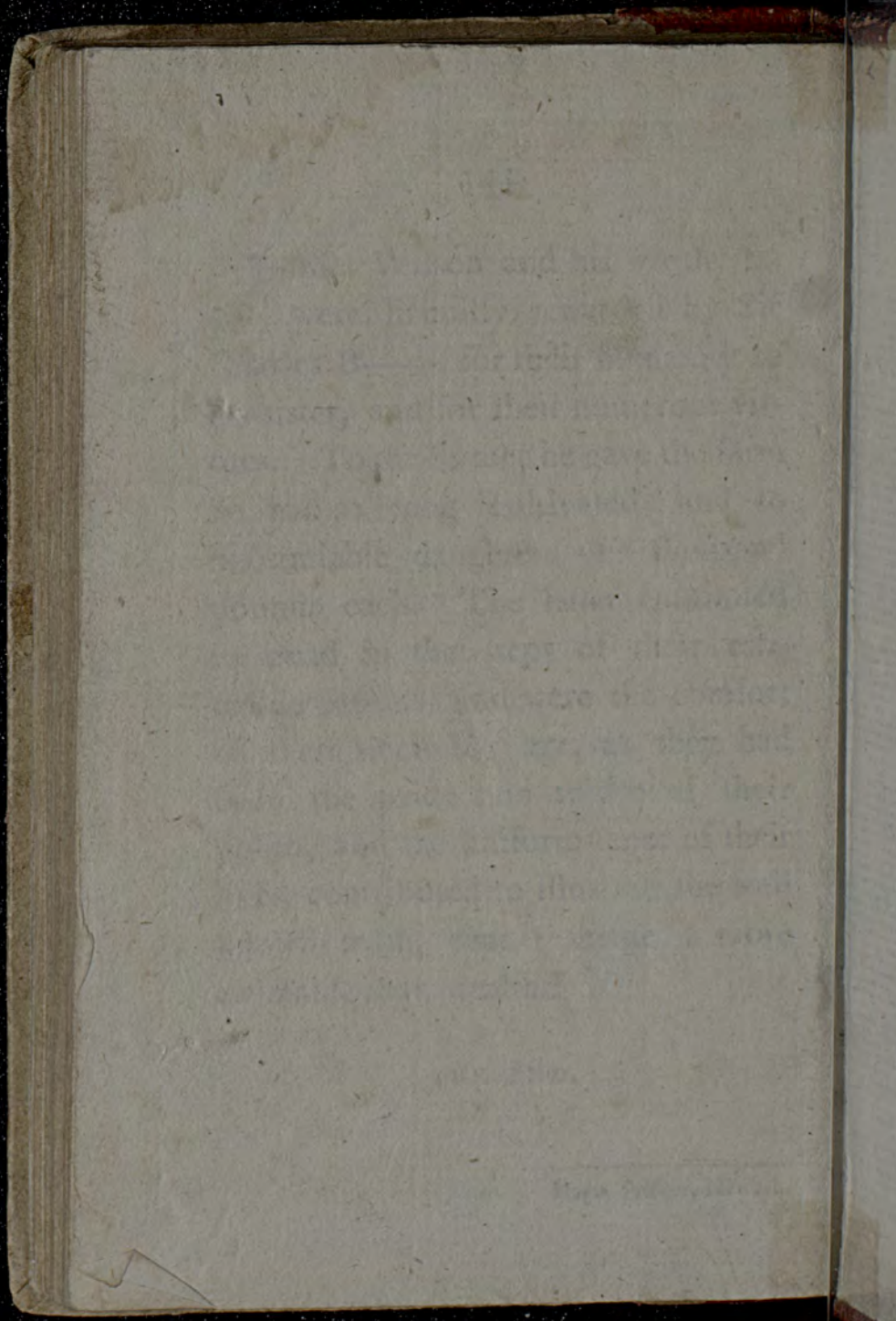
At length Mrs. Rapine slowly recovered; and, assisted by the bounty of Sir Charles B——, set out with her daughters in the humble conveyance of a stage coach into Yorkshire, where she still had some relations.

Farmer Wilson and his worthy family were liberally rewarded by Sir Charles B——, for their humanity to his sister, and for their numerous virtues. To the farmer he gave the farm he had so long cultivated; and to his amiable daughters one thousand pounds each. The latter continued to tread in the steps of their estimable parents, and were the comfort of their declining age, as they had been the pride and solace of their youth, and the uniform tenor of their lives, contributed to illustrate the well known truth, that “virtue is more estimable than wealth.”

THE END.

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