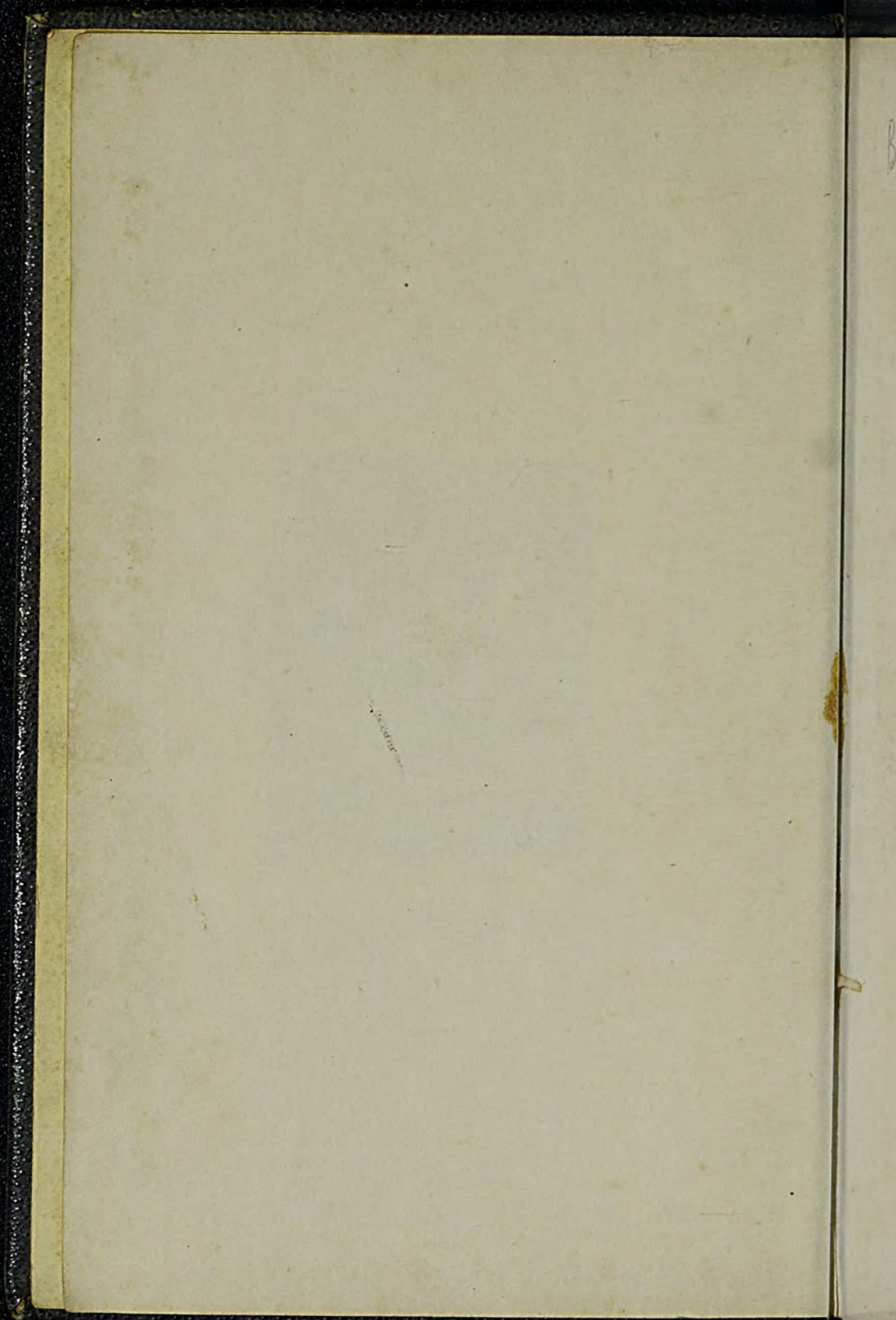


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THE WEDDING

SOCIAL TALES

FOR THE YOUNG.

BY MRS. SHERWOOD.

Receive, dear friend, the truths I teach,
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse fortune's power."

Cowper.

NEW EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

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SOCIAL TALES.

THE MAIL COACH.

I WAS travelling a few weeks since in the inside of the mail coach, where I had for my companions three gentlemen; the two who sat opposite to me being still in the prime of life, and the third an elderly person of a highly respectable appearance, and an expression of countenance which I thought particularly pleasing.

It was not for me, being a female, though not young, to begin the conversation with these strangers, neither did the old gentleman seem much disposed to talk; nevertheless there was no dearth of discourse, for our two opposite neighbours were, it seems, of the number of those who are for setting all the world to rights, for reforming parliaments, changing laws, subverting all establishments, and in short, for setting the whole earth on fire, in order to produce salaman-

ders and phœnixes from the flames and ashes. And our speculators seemed to be quite elated by the impertinences which they uttered, not considering that those systems of reform, which, in theory, appear without fault, may, in experience, be found to work directly in opposition to the end desired, as every statesman and wise politician would have it in his power to prove from the result of his experience; for these crude reformers, as I have often remarked, these favourers of general emancipation from old authorities, almost universally leave the depravity of human nature out of their culculation. As if, in computing the progress of a vessel through any given space of ocean, the calculator should forget to take account of opposing tides, and baffling winds, and suppose that deceitful element, the sea, to be always as serene and calm as a bay to the leeward of one of the Fortunate Islands.

The old gentleman on my right had listened to this conversation for some time with his mouth pursed up, as if resolved not to speak. And I was thinking what might be passing in his mind, when suddenly he began to hem and cough, and then shifting himself a little in his seat, and begging my pardon if he incommoded me, he

uttered various incoherent monosyllables, much to the following effect. "Well—good—so—ay—true, but"—and then was silent again.

These monosyllables, however, served to silence our opposite companions, and to draw me out; for I said, "Sir you were about to speak; will you favour us with your opinions on the subjects which these gentlemen have had under discussion."

"I should have given my opinion, good madam, much more promptly forty years since," he replied, "but when a man has reached his grand climacteric, he is somewhat slower in deciding on questions of the nature of those now in agitation, than we find young people to be."

"Your opinions, then, probably, do not coincide with ours, sir," remarked one of the younger gentlemen.

"I was much of your way of thinking at one time," replied the elder. "In short, I thought that the whole state of society was deranged, and that I wanted only sufficient influence in the world to set all things to rights; but although I had been accounted one of the best arithmeticians in my class at school, I always omitted, in my calculations, when weighing my arguments, to

make my allowances for tare and tret—or any other species of drawback.”

To do our opposite neighbours justice, they seemed very willing to hear the experience of the old gentleman; and being more decidedly encouraged by me, he was, at length, drawn on to the relation of the following narrative; which I shall hope to commit to writing in his own words:—

“It is of little consequence,” said the old gentleman, “what my name may be, or that of my place of abode. Call me, if you please, John Gwynne, and my residence Plus Caervon; and having so done, you will, no doubt, expect to find that I am a Welshman, and somehow connected with Prince Llewellyn of unfortunate memory; but you are not to know the exact place of my abode. Suffice it to say, that at the age of twenty-one I found myself in possession of an estate of many acres, bringing me in a handsome income; I being, as it were, a sort of little prince in my retired domain, which is shut out from the rest of the world by different ranges of mountains embracing it, as it were, on all sides, and being only approachable from without by one or two terrific gorges cut in the living granite: in fact, I required little more than the command of life and death, and the

privileges of a mint, to have made me as powerful a sovereign as some of those, whose princely towers are reflected on the waters of the Rhine—at least, such, at that time, was my opinion of myself; although I trust that I have now a somewhat more rational idea of my own consequence, and am very well contented to be considered nothing more than an obscure Welsh gentleman, who does not think it beneath him to travel from place to place in a public vehicle.

“It was when I was in my prime, that revolutionary principles were first brought forward in the light they have since become so general, and I was mightily taken with these new lights, and joined in the cry against our forefathers, as a parcel of half blind, obstinate, stupid, old fellows, who had combined to keep the world in darkness, from generation to generation, in order that they might have their own way, and enjoy their own comforts according to their own perverse inclinations; and it was marvellous how wisely I reasoned and declaimed, uttering every species of ridiculous rhapsody respecting the dignity of human nature, and what man would be if relieved from the chains of superstition, the shackles of human laws, the customs of society, and that

most cruel of all tyrannies, namely, the Domestic.

“I say nothing of the inconsistency by which I was, at this very time, led to avail myself of the old authorities I thus decried, to keep my position in society, and to hold fast my paternal inheritance. Had I really thought that any portion of mankind were unjustly used by the division of property according to the established laws of *meum* and *tuum*, I ought to have commenced my plans of reformation by making a fair division of my possessions among the various householders in my native valley, and descending at once into a fellowship with Roger, my carter. But this was not the end at which I proposed to begin my improvements: there was a great deal to be done, I thought, before this equalizing system could be thoroughly brought to bear upon me—there were many above me to be brought to my level, before I could think of descending. What wise man, when he would pull down a decayed edifice, would commence by removing the foundation, or even by demolishing a centre arch? Nevertheless, I was not inactive in my plans of improvement. Being settled at my mansion, having given a great entertainment on the occasion, seen a

young lady whom I liked, made her my wife, and furnished my drawing-room under her auspices—I found that leisure which I had long desired in order to put some of my plans of reform into exercise within my own domain, where, as I before said, I thought myself a sort of king; and, in fact, there was no one in the parish to contend with me, the very living being in my gift, and the old rector having a comely young scion of a son, who being also in orders, was waiting with open mouth, like the fox in the fable, for the small benefice, whenever it should happen to fall from the mouth of his father; being, in consequence, very observant of the humours of the patron. I therefore had none to oppose me; and as I proposed no change which was contrary to the law of the land, I found myself at liberty to pull down and set up just as I pleased.

“My first attack was upon the village school-master, who, because he lived in a house of mine, and had a great delight in a garden attached to it, which he had cultivated with his own hand for the last thirty years, was entirely in my power as to his comfort, if not his subsistence.

“Hearing that he was in the habit of using coercion with the little urchins placed under his

control, and that he not only used that instrument of tyranny with which our birch tree supplies us, whenever he saw occasion, compelling his slaves to hear sermons, learn catechisms, and repeat their creed in their mother tongue, I caused him to be introduced into my august presence, and gave myself an immense deal of trouble to endeavour to persuade him that the rod was quite an unnecessary instrument to be used for the advantage of youth, inasmuch as the mind of a child is by nature pure and spotless as my lady's apron, and incapable of evil, excepting from the influence of example; that the human intellect is always injured by coercion, and that the principles of children ought never to be biassed by any creed whatever, until the mind has obtained a sufficient strength to choose and reason for itself—with much more to the same purpose, which these gentlemen may add from the stores of their own mind.

“I have often been much hurt, on looking back on this transaction of my life,” continued the old gentleman, “and though I then laughed heartily at the perplexity and horror which the schoolmaster exhibited, whilst I was thus lecturing him, it is with great pain that even now, at this remote period, I tell the

consequences of my folly—for the poor pedagogue, being deprived of his rod and his bible, fell suddenly into a sort of dotage, from which he was soon after released by death; and another being put in his place, the dominion of misrule received no further check from that time for some years in the school-house of Plus Caervon, than was absolutely necessary to prevent the little urchins, notwithstanding the purity of their minds, from tearing each other to pieces, and burning down the house; but I was too much engaged with other plans of reform to look very closely into the effect of this my first attempt.

“My next attack was made upon the ancient usages and customs of the Lord’s day—I chose to assert that I could not see any manner of harm in sports and amusements on that day. ‘Poor creatures,’ I used to say, when speaking of the labouring classes, ‘they are tied to the cart’s tail and the churn all the week round, and are they to be deprived of every species of pleasure on the only day of the seven which the cruel usages of society have allowed them?’

“It may be easily imagined what the effect of such a sentiment as this would be, when proceeding from a man of so much power and influence

as I possessed in my little nook. I had annihilated order and piety in the place of education, and I now proceeded to empty the church and fill the alehouse, the bowling-green and the fives'-court, not to speak of the many immoral and unruly assemblies which took place in the cottages and farm-houses, the sure consequences of a day of leisure, recurring regularly, and having no appropriate employment of a purifying and sanctifying nature.

“In the meantime, my conversation at my own table, and in the presence of my visitors and dependents had always the same tendency, namely, it was my constant object to heap the evils of life (the consequences of the sin and imperfection of our nature) upon the existing authorities. If a son did ill, I always laid the blame in some way or other on the father; if a daughter forgot herself, her error was owing to her mother's harshness; if a wife went wrong, the husband had been too severe with her. I ridiculed the clergy, and maintained that their religion was all for filthy lucre, and I spoke of all persons in temporal authority, as being unjust and cruel tyrants. Although it must be observed, that I required all those who were immediately about my person to

be very subservient to my peculiar comforts, and there were enough of those, who found it their interest to keep me in good humour, to preserve me for some years from feeling any inconvenience, as an individual, from the rapid march of immorality within my domain. At length, however, it was no longer possible for me to remain in ignorance of the ill effects of my reformation system: as the elder and more sober inhabitants of the parish passed away, and the younger ones, who had been brought up under my plans, entered into responsible situations, the effects of my folly began to display themselves. My tenants broke, and ran away in my debt one after another; my servants cheated me on all sides. I had a mine in one of the mountains, and instead of being a considerable gainer, I found myself a loser by it. In short, every thing went wrong. I railed and fretted at the ingratitude of mankind. I have been an indulgent father to these people, I said, and now are they all bent upon my destruction. In short, I could endure the place no longer. I procured an agent, a man of the law;—I established him in full power in my house, and set out for the Continent, with Mrs. Gwynne and my two elder daughters, leaving a son about

three years of age, and an infant daughter, under the care of a faithful nurse, in my mansion.

“I felt I had managed matters horribly, but I was too proud to confess my error; nevertheless, my spirits rose in proportion as I was more and more distant from the scenes of my plans of reformation; and my wife partook of my feelings of pleasure. However, though I was aware that I had utterly failed, I was not humbled, or convinced that I had done wrong. I did not yet see that I had acted pragmatically and irrationally. I had refused, and still refused, the light of divine revelation. I had calculated as a heathen would do, who, in planning a reformation of society, is not acquainted with that which Scripture tells us, in almost every form of words which could be devised for the exhibition of truth, namely, the total depravity of human nature, which is continually using all the ingenuity of selfishness to counteract the laws and arrangements of those in authority. Hence it is certain, that no laws, no forms of government, no plans of legislation, no human politics, can ever entirely reach the evils they are meant to counteract. The laws may protect an individual from open violence, and inflict a punishment on actual

crime, but religion only can so insinuate itself into the bosom of society as to banish all those acts of secret and retired unkindness, tyranny, and dishonesty, by which the intercourse of those dwelling together in one house is embittered, and all the sources of domestic harmony poisoned."

At this moment we entered the town where we were to dine, when our worthy companion, particularly addressing me, said, "Good madam, if you are not tired of my story, I will tell you, when we are again seated in our vehicle, after dinner, how that order, which I had used all my power and influence to destroy within my domain, was restored, through the medium of one, whom, in the days of my sinful pride, I should scarcely have counted worthy to wipe my shoes."

Having taken our dinner, and being again seated as before, we had scarcely cleared the pavement of the town before my worthy old friend began the second part of his story.

"It is a dangerous thing, my good lady," he said, "to set a man of seventy to talk of himself and his family, and I am almost ashamed to intrude so much on the patience of my auditors; nevertheless, as you have heard the former part of my

story, I would not deprive you of the latter, which will, I trust, prove to be the most agreeable; for he must be accounted but a poor narrator, who does not keep some of his best things for the latter end of his tale.

“The last I told you of myself was this, that having rendered my mansion at Plus Caervon too hot to hold me, notwithstanding the snows of the mountains with which it is surrounded, I made the best of my way with my wife and daughters to Paris, where we took a house, and remained from month to month, constantly talking of going home, and as constantly putting off the evil day. Well, and we had cut off the way of doing more mischief at home, and however bent we then were upon folly, being lost in a crowd of (I was about to say) fools like ourselves, our influence at any rate was less, and, in consequence, when we arrived at the season of reflection, we had less to answer for.

“In the meantime, the agent whom I had left at home applied the rod which I had put into his hand, to make my tenants and dependents look about them, fearing no censures from me on the head of severity, for I was thoroughly soured and irritated; and there is perhaps no character,

amongst the multifarious shades of human character, more revengeful and tyrannical than a disappointed liberalist. At this time also the cheese fell from the mouth of the old crow in the tree, into that of the young fox below, or, to use more courteous language, the old rector dying, his son was permitted by me to step into his place, with this stipulation, that he was to bestow upon my son such learning as lay within his grasp, and to begin his labours as a tutor as soon as the child could be supposed to be capable of literary instruction. My younger children were left, as I before said, in the mansion, under the superintendence of my agent's wife, and the care of an old female servant, who had nursed Mrs. Gwynne, and who possessed the advantage of speaking the Welsh as well as the English language.

“I had left home more than a year, when, one fine summer evening (to repeat the story as I have often heard it told,) the nurse and the children had strolled through the pleasure grounds into the churchyard, which is just without the inclosure, and had there seated themselves on a tombstone, whilst the old woman pointed out the grave of a little girl who had been buried only a few days before, and which, according to our

pretty village rite, was scattered over with garlands of fresh flowers.

“The attention of my son being directed to the grave, it seems that he began to ask his nurse many questions respecting it, as, why those flowers were put there,—and why they laid the little girl in that place, for he remembered to have seen her a very little time before; with other such inquiries as are suggested by the youthful mind, when it first begins to consider subjects of this nature.

“‘They put her there because she was dead, Master Gwynne,’ replied the nurse.

“‘What is being dead?’ he asked; and, ‘Does every body die? and shall I die too? and does she like being there?’ ‘Can she smell the flowers?’ ‘Can she breathe there?’

“Before the nurse could answer these many questions, it seems that one of the last remaining specimens of those ancient bards who used to pass from one gentleman’s house to another, carrying his harp on his shoulders, and being well assured of a joyful welcome, had entered the churchyard, and stolen unobserved close in the rear of the nurse and children, and there having rested his harp against a tombstone, he was ready to answer

to the last inquiry of the child, 'Can she breathe there?'

"'Ah, little lass!' he said (for he had known her well), 'Poor little Lucy! There is no breath in her now, nor never will be again, till the heavens shall be no more, though she was wont to be the first to greet me, when I entered yon village street.' At the sound of old David's voice (for such was our harper's name), the nurse and children started, but immediately seeing who he was, they welcomed him cordially, and my little boy made him sit down by his side, and answer all his questions on the mysterious subject which then, for the first time, filled his mind.

"It happened, good madam, or rather, I should say, it was so ordered by Divine Providence," continued the worthy old gentleman, "that this harper, notwithstanding the hinderances which his wandering mode of life might seem to throw in his way, was a decidedly pious man, and as such, promptly availed himself of the opportunity thus presented, of directing the child's mind to the real intent and purpose of natural death, or the dissolution of the body, as it regards the true believer, and those who are found in Christ; for

what is natural death to such, but that process by which the redeemed is set free from corruption, and admitted to a more perfect union with Christ.

“‘So then,’ answered the little boy, when he had listened a long time, ‘Lucy’s soul is gone to Jesus Christ, and she is very happy, and quite glad, and will never be naughty any more, and she was younger than I am,—I am five years old, and she was four; and her grandmother had taught her about Jesus Christ: who will teach me about him? for perhaps I may die too, whilst I am little.—When will you come again, David, and sit again in this place, and talk more about it?’

“‘I will come very soon, and talk more to you, little master,’ he answered; ‘but, mayhap, now you would like to hear a tune on my harp, and I will sing you a hymn about going to heaven;’ and he uncovered his harp, and played an old psalm tune, accompanying his harp with his voice, in a hymn; and thus he talked and sung, till the sun got low, and then the nurse took him to the mansion, where he lodged that night.

“The nurse, from whom I gathered most of this story, told me, that all the while he was talking to my boy, she had been listening, and,

as she expressed it, gathered up many things which had been lost to the child, as being beyond the grasp of his understanding; and these things, with God's blessing, sunk deep into her mind, and she added that, during that winter, whenever he asked her to tell him a story, she used to tell him the story of little Lucy's grave, and how the harper had come and surprised them, and how he had talked about our Saviour and heaven, and the happiness of the redeemed; till at length he as regularly asked for the story as it grew dusk. When spring arrived, the harper came again; but he had had a bad winter, and looked very infirm; he could hardly carry his harp. He seemed aware that he should never see my little boy again, when he took leave of him, but he promised him, if ever he came again, he would bring him a book, with a picture in it, of a good man who travelled from the city of Destruction to celestial Zion. The poor harper never indeed did come again, for he died soon afterwards at Aber Conway; but in dying, he remembered his promise to my son, and caused the clergyman who attended him, to pack up this book, which was 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' full of old-fashioned pictures, which he had

possessed for many years, and put it into such a channel as to reach the child.

“The brown paper parcel, containing this old and well-worn book, was the first packet my son had ever received; added to which, the tender remembrance of the old harper, whom he had known from infancy, rendered the old worn volume inexpressibly dear to him, setting apart its intrinsic merits, its curious and quaint representations of Giant Despair and his redoubtable castle; its maps and charts of the road, with other embellishments of the same description; so that from that period the harper’s book was the favourite companion of the leisure hours of my son, and if he learnt nothing more from this book, he at least learnt one thing, and that was not a little, that the true Christian ought to be ready to leave all behind him, in order that he may obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

“And thus was my boy led silently forward in the way of holiness, whilst his parents were far away; and his tutor gave himself no further trouble respecting him, than to see that he construed his Latin, and made himself well acquainted with his Accidence.

“In the meantime, we in Paris were con-

tinually deferring our return to Caervon, and when we had actually fixed that return, our eldest daughter was taken ill, and ordered to the south of France; and we in our hearts were almost glad of this excuse to delay our absence; for my agent had found it his interest to keep me abroad, and with this view had always made it appear to me, by letter, that he could manage my refractory tenants much better without my visible presence with them.

“It is easy to persuade a man, when he wishes to be persuaded; so I sent for my youngest daughter and her nurse, and wrote to a brother of Mrs. Gwynne, to find a proper school for my son. My brother-in-law accordingly sent for my son, and, as he wrote me word, was very much pleased with him, and was about to send him to a large public school, when his plans were providentially changed, by what appeared to be quite an accident. Whilst my boy was at his uncle's, there happened to be a clergyman visiting in the family, with his two sons; he was a man of fortune, and a truly pious man; his sons were older than mine, and it seems that one of them detected my little boy, one morning, sitting at the foot of his bed, in a closet which his uncle had

given him to sleep in, trying to copy the picture of Giant Despair on a slate, from his old book. This led my son to tell his young companion the story of the book, and of the harper, and this story being carried to the father, he was so touched and affected by it, that he made a petition to my wife's brother, to be allowed to take my son home with him, and to educate him with his own fine boys. This was an offer not to be declined; and all preliminaries being settled, the dear child went off with his patron in a few days, and in the house of Mr. Hughes enjoyed every privilege which the child of the first gentleman, scholar, and Christian of the land could desire: but all this might still be attributed to the ignoble means which the Almighty chose to use, in order to confound my pride and self-conceit.

“Thus my son, and the heir of a large domain, was educated in the way of holiness, and inspired by God's blessing on human means with those true principles, through the medium of which the rulers and reformers of society can alone shed peace and happiness on their dependents, whilst they still use those restraints which are and ever must be necessary for keeping in order those members of the community, who are not

under the influence of Christian principles ; for liberty is a fine word, but it is not made for man. There is no creature living, who does not find himself in one way or other subjected to another. The very conformation of society includes the idea of dependence, and the best view we can have of liberty is, that state of mind by which we are enabled to conform, with most ease to ourselves, to the circumstances of our situations. The yoke does not gall when we cease to struggle against it; and there is One who truly says of himself, ‘ My yoke is easy, and my burden light.’

“ So my son grew and prospered, and although I did not return to England till his education was finished, yet I saw him twice ; for Mr. and Mrs. Hughes and the family, being invited by me, joined us once in the south of France, and again a year or two afterwards in Paris. I was delighted each time with my boy ; and I must do myself the justice to say, that I had sufficient discretion not to interfere with Mr. Hughes’s work, so happily begun and carried on ; and indeed, to confess the truth, both I and my wife were at this time beginning to have no small doubts of our own superior wisdom, and of the soundness of our reforming principles. The

death, too, of our eldest daughter, had its influence in showing to us the vanity of the world—for she had died in the very early blossom of superior loveliness, and in a state of mind, which, although we had not understood it at the time, has given us great delight in the retrospect.—But I must not be too particular, as I see the spire of the village to which I am bound rising above the woods before us,” continued the old gentleman, “but must hasten to the conclusion of my story.

“Having made such miserable work of my reformation system, I resolved never again to settle at Plus Caervon, but established my son there on his marriage with his tutor’s only daughter, who was an infant in arms when he entered her father’s house—and he is now the parent of children as tall as myself.

“I am now on my return from visiting him, and if I could only say of him that in his generation he has undone all the mischief that I did in mine with my pragmatistical schemes of reform, it would not be saying a little; but with God’s blessing he has done more. Though he had to fight against the stream for a long time, yet has he at length introduced that spirit of submission, and of consequent content and frugality, into the

families of his dependents, which in a great measure has removed all cause of murmur and complaint; for he labours to teach his people, that this world is not their resting place; that they are to be here but awhile, and that godliness with contentment is great gain; that if the old customs of society have their inconveniences, new plans, however well arranged, would certainly introduce others, and probably still greater ones. —That it is necessary that there should be different ranks in society, and that although the turn of fortune's wheel might probably bring some up who are now down, yet that equality is a state of things which cannot last, as long as one man is stronger, or another more wise or artful than his brother."

The good old gentleman was here suddenly cut off in his discourse by the appearance of a groom leading a horse, and motioning to the coachman to stop.

"Is it you, Thomas?" he said, in a cheerful tone: "Are all well at home?" and then, bowing politely as he descended the steps of the coach, we passed rapidly forwards, and saw him no more.

MY THREE UNCLES.

My father never had more than one brother, and no sister, and my mother was an only child; I was therefore, brought up in the idea that I never had, and never could have more than one uncle; yet I have given for the title of my story my three uncles. How is this to be explained? how is one man to be multiplied into three? This is what I am about to make clear, and in order so to do, I must enter into a little outline of my life, and give at large some particular transactions of that life.

At first, I must make up my mind upon what name I shall choose to give my family, for the public, if I can help it, shall never guess our real cognomen. I will not even select a name which shall mark my country, or direct my reader to any particular district of the island; and for this purpose what name can be more suitable than Smith? Since there have probably been, smiths by trade, in every habitable corner of the

earth, where iron is to be found or obtained, from the time of Tubal Cain to the present day. Not that I would be so unpolite as to seem to hint that all the genteel and polished families which now possess the surname of Smith in this our island, originally proceeded from the artificers in brass and iron; but this is not at present much to my purpose; suffice it to say, that I have chosen to adopt the surname of Smith, and the Christian name of Francis; and I would also wish my reader to be informed that I was left an orphan at a very tender age, and was immediately adopted into my uncle's family, brought up with his own children, and treated with so much kindness, and so great impartiality, that I as often pass for his son as his nephew.

My uncle is a country gentleman, living on his own estate, which may be worth about a thousand a-year, having an excellent wife, and a blooming family; he is a literary man, and has devoted much of his leisure to the accomplishment of a work which was published some years since, and brought him so much credit, that he has been from that time a sort of public character, often quoted, and spoken of in the literary societies of the metropolis, and other

parts of England. At present I shall say no more of him, but leave his character to develop itself in the course of my narrative; and here I must take the liberty of obtruding a hint which might not be altogether useless to certain celebrated writers of the present day; namely this, that he who is compelled, in order to make his reader understand the character of the person he would describe, to use two or three pages of expletives and high sounding adjectives, is something like the painter, who, having drawn a lion, was obliged to write under the figure, *this is a lion*, lest the beholder should mistake it for a certain long-ear'd animal of a very different description. It is a poorly drawn character indeed, that does not show itself by its actions, and the parts which it takes in the adventures in hand; but I am growing prolix, and perhaps my reader will say, a little dull.

I had been more than fifteen years in the family of my uncle, when the good man was called to London, on some business relative to his publication; and as my two cousins, who were older than myself, had been with him before, he proposed that I, as the next in age, should accompany him to town. I was then past

nineteen, and did not sleep soundly for a week after this delightful prospect had been unfolded to me.

I do not propose to trouble my reader with our adventures on the road, nor with the account of all the sights we saw in London, or of our various regales on beef-steaks, porter, and oysters, but shall proceed to one of our latest scenes in town. We had taken our places for the country, and were to meet the coach at the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, at six o'clock in the evening, with the view of travelling all night. Having a few hours on our hands, we entered a celebrated bookseller's shop in Piccadilly, and whilst I was selecting some little books, with the double purpose of making presents to my cousins, and reading on the road when the rising sun should favour my studies, my uncle, who happened to be personally unknown to the master of the house, was listening to a knot of literati, who, being gathered in a circle, were discussing the merits of a new publication. It happened that this publication treated of the same matters which had been so ably managed by my uncle, and which had obtained him so much credit. It was not, then, to be wondered

at, if the mention of this publication should lead to that of my uncle's book, and accordingly one of the gentlemen present remarked, "that Mr. Smith's well-known valuable book contained all that could be said on the subject in question, and that every one who came after him, must, in consequence, come with disadvantage."

A slight colour rose in the cheek of my uncle, at the mention of his name, but he looked at me not to betray him, and we went on turning over and selecting our purchases, while the following conversation proceeded.

"That Mr. Smith," said an elderly gentleman, in a large wig, "is a man of sense and erudition—a deep reader—a close reasoner. His work is a good one. He has said all that a man of sense could be supposed to say on the subject he selected; he has a mathematical head—a man of sense—quite the man of sound plain sense."

"Doctor," replied an elderly gentleman, of very solemn and portentous aspect, "I quite coincide in your opinion. Smith's book on the subject in question, is the best which has been written,—the only one existing, which is not mingled with, and spoilt by metaphysical subtle-

ties. I have had Smith's book on my table ever since it was printed; and Lord ——, who was with me this morning, says he knows it almost by heart."

"Do you know Mr. Smith?" asked a little gentleman in black, and wearing green spectacles; "do you happen to have seen him or conversed with him?" This question was addressed to the bookseller, and answered in the negative: on which the little man, taking some state on himself on the occasion, rejoined, "I have a friend who was in his part of England last summer, and heard much of his history."

"Well, sir," said the doctor, "and what may that be?"

"He is an elderly man, sir," replied the little man, "a widower, and brings up his brother's children in his own house; a strict man in his family; one who understands how to make a guinea go as far as any man in England—a very Puritan in his religious sentiments—an enemy to all amusement—in short, the sort of man who would think it a sin to hold a hand at cards, or play a hit at backgammon."

I had thrown down the book I had in my hand, and was turning like a turkey cock in a

rage to attack the little man in black, when a second glance from my uncle restrained my ardour, and we suffered the conversation to proceed without interruption. It seems that the little man had purposely mentioned the subject of cards; for the doctor fired instantly at the hint, and exclaimed, "I cannot understand how the good people can find so much sin in an innocent game of cards. I should not have expected so much bigotry in a man of Mr. Smith's sense."

"And so you say, sir, Mr. Smith is an austere character. Well, that is to be lamented; but you did not see him. How is he said to appear in conversation?"

"My friend tells me," replied the little man in black, "that he never cared to open his mouth before him. He is afraid of his acuteness. He is said to have a deep insight into human nature, and nothing leads to severity of judgment like knowledge of the human heart; you will allow that, gentlemen."

"Pardon me, sir," said the bookseller; "a keen sense of the follies of mankind leads to asperity,—but not a knowledge of the human heart; because a man can only obtain this last

species of knowledge by the inspection of his own heart; and the contemplation of his own defects will never make any man judge harshly of those of another."

"That is well remarked, sir," said my uncle, putting in his word in this place; "you have made an accurate and wise distinction."

The bookseller bowed, and the little man in black resumed.

"My friend was at the races of the country town, not far from which is the residence of Mr. Smith, and saw some of the country gentlemen, his neighbours, and they all agreed in the opinion of the abilities of this author; but they asserted that he was shown rather as a sort of curiosity amongst them, than cultivated as an acquaintance."

"Perhaps," said the bookseller, smiling, "Mr. Smith being a man of talents, is not precisely the sort of character whose society would be relished by persons addicted to racing."

The little man bristled upon this. "My friend," said he, "is a man of intellect, otherwise I might venture to say he would not have been chosen as an associate of mine; but perhaps we do wrong in speaking rather slightly of a

popular author in this place. We will, therefore, if you please, call another question, and I will beg leave to introduce a pamphlet which I met with this morning, and which possesses an infinitude of merit, if my poor opinion is to be depended upon."

Having finished our purchases, my uncle and I left the shop without waiting to see the pamphlet, and as soon as we were fairly in the street, I told my ever dear paternal friend that I was only sorry that his presence had prevented me from applying a horsewhip to the little prig in black who had taken such liberties with his character.

"Why," said my uncle, "what very great harm did he say of me? it is no ill to say of a man that he is a widower, and takes care of his brother's children."

"Harm enough," I replied, "when almost in the same breath, he asserts, that this same man is a severe and parsimonious character, a domestic tyrant, and consequently a harsh guardian to other people's children."

"The idea of my being harsh, severe, and strict, might easily arise," replied my uncle, "from my having always kept you, my children, within my

own domain, and not having encouraged you to communicate much with other young people, and having never brought you forward on any public occasion. I repeat, that an idea of strictness and severity might easily have arisen from this circumstance."

"It might with ill-natured people, sir," I replied.

"With ill-judging people, I would rather say, Francis," calmly answered my paternal friend; "but this is not the first time that I have had it hinted to me, that I am rather a severe disciplinarian at home."

"You a severe disciplinarian, uncle!" I replied; "why, you indulge us all even to an extreme."

"I hope that I may deny that, Francis," he answered; "I hope and trust that I allow you no improper indulgences. Name to me any indulgences which you think any of you have which are improper, and they shall be no longer allowed."

"I cannot," I replied; "you never allow sin in your children, or excesses of any kind. You make us work too, and you make us use self-denial; but, as to happiness, there never was, and never will be, a more happy family."

“Well, then, it seems that my children don’t think me harsh,” replied my uncle, “let the world say what it will then; but, in order to compose ourselves, for we are just now a little irritated, let us turn into this picture gallery, and talk of this conversation in the bookseller’s shop at a more convenient time, and in some more proper place than the public street.”

There was no farther allusion made to the scene in the bookseller’s shop by my uncle or myself, during that evening. At six o’clock we were in the coach, where we found two more persons. We travelled all night, and at sun-rise were at a considerable distance from London.

About mid-day we were arrived at a town which is only two short stages from our home, and at this town a young lady who had come by another coach, got in with us, and being young and incautious, told me presently where she was going, namely, to the very village where our home was situated. I had some curiosity to know more of this young lady, and therefore put several questions to her without letting her, in the least degree, into my own history—a rather unfair measure often practised on the unwary by passengers in a public vehicle. My uncle, in

the mean time, as I thought, had fallen into a doze, and, as I supposed, had heard nothing of what was passing. "I am going," said the young lady, "to visit my aunt, and to stay a long time with her; and my aunt says, that there is a most delightful family living near her, a very large family too, and many young people, and that she will introduce me to this family, for she is very intimate with them; and then I shall partake in all their delightful employments, and perhaps be permitted to help them in their school, and to enjoy their schemes of pleasure in the woods and the fields, and hear the father of the family instruct them; for she says, he is the kindest father in the world, and so cheerful, that his children are never happy when he is from them; and she tells me that he talks so sweetly to them about religion, and makes it so pleasant, and is so good to the poor, and so kind to his servants, that she can never speak enough in his praise."

"And pray, madam," I said, "what may this gentleman's name be?"

In reply, she named my uncle, as I expected, and was going on in the same artless manner, for she was quite young, when my uncle rousing himself and looking smilingly on her, for she was

a simple blooming young creature, "My little lady," he said, "methinks you would do well to exercise more caution in forming hasty acquaintances: for once, through the care of a gracious Providence, you have fallen into good hands; but another time when you happen to meet with strangers in this sort of way, wait a little before you become too communicative. But how comes it" added the good man, "that you are travelling alone at your tender age?"

"I am come only a little way alone, sir," she replied. "My father was with me till I arrived at the last stage."

"So far so well," said my uncle; "and as I find you are going no farther than we are, I shall have pleasure in delivering you safe to your aunt."

This remark led to an explanation, and the young lady being found to be the niece of a neighbour, and my uncle to be the very identical Mr. Smith, in whose favour the fair traveller was already so much interested, we immediately became friends, before we had travelled together another couple of miles.

At length the woods and hills about my uncle's house arose to view. At the sight of them the

tender father settled his wig, and began to anticipate the delight of embracing his beloved children again. I saw joy kindle in his eye as we advanced towards home, and it blazed forth, when first we espied through openings in the trees, the dear domestic party winding along the gravel walk from the house to meet the coach. Our good neighbour Mrs. Horton, the aunt of our little friend, was in the company; hence we had nothing to do but to get out of the coach at the gate, and walk up to the house.

I have often thought, and so also must many of my readers, that the greatest pleasure of going out is derived from coming home. This assertion may, perhaps, partake in some degree of the nature of a bull, nevertheless, it contains a truth which no happy member of a family will deny.

It was not, however, with an intention of drawing a view of domestic felicity that I took up my pen. Suffice it to say, that our evening was as sweet as the interchange of heartfelt kindness and elegant courtesies could render it; and my uncle and I did not enjoy our beds the less from having travelled all the night before in a stage coach. The next day I had a conversation

with my uncle, with which I propose to finish my narrative.

There is in my uncle's pleasure ground a long embowered walk upon a terrace, from whence, through openings in the trees, a lovely dingle discloses itself in various points of view, presenting many exquisite combinations of shade and light, water and wood, rock and verdure. To this place we have often observed the dear father of the family, to retire at noon day, no doubt there to pray and meditate, sometimes being reclined on the mossy bank, and sometimes pacing slowly up and down the close shorn walk, as David Brainerd is reported to have done in the forests of the New World.

On these occasions, even the youngest children of the family are as careful to avoid any intrusion as our ancestors would have been to have shunned the haunts of the Druids, in the hours which were consecrated to the less holy rites of their mysterious worship. Yet no one ever makes any remarks in the presence of my uncle on this his daily custom.

It happened, however, that on the day which succeeded our arrival at home, I chanced to cross one end of this consecrated path at the hour

when my uncle might be expected to be there, and the excellent man seeing me in the clear obscure at the end of the vista, called to me and requested me to join him.

"Francis," said he, as soon as I had come up to him, "I have been thinking of one or two circumstances which happened during our journey.

"The first of these was the conversation in the bookseller's shop, and the second, what I happened to hear in the coach from our young fellow traveller; and I will now tell you, my dear nephew, what are the reflections which have been inspired by these things.

"It may be said," continued he, "of every human being, and especially if he be at all known in the world, that he has three characters—the first being that which is given him by the world in general, and by persons who have only heard of him, or seen him, as a common acquaintance: the second, that given to him by his relations, intimate friends, and dependents: and the third, that which is known to himself only.

"All these characters are more or less misunderstood, and commonly more or less mis-stated. Supposing the individual to be amiable in temper,

and possessing an ordinary portion of natural affection, his public character is generally less favourable than his private one. If he is a highly talented person, it sometimes happens that he is better spoken of in public than in private, and sometimes the reverse: it being certain, that the more largely an individual is spoken of in the world, the more difficult it often is to acquire a knowledge of what he really is in his private life; and the more exposed he is to common slander, and the malevolent comments of envious men.

“When a man feels himself to be beloved at home, and amongst his connections; when he has an assurance of being received on his return to his house, with such smiles, such caresses, as I met with yesterday; when he knows that his presence is as sunshine in the little circle of which he is the centre, he is surprised and hurt (as I was when in the bookseller’s shop) to hear himself described as a gloomy tyrant, by any pragmatrical talker, who takes credit to himself for knowing more of him than any other person present; and he begins to ask what have I done to deserve this, and how can I be thus misunderstood? and it is natural for him to

experience irritation and sourness on the occasion. And truly, Francis, my boy, it was as much as I could do to conceal my anger in the presence of the knot of critics who were assembled in the shop; or my triumph, when I heard my praises from our warm-hearted young companion, which I trusted were the simple and sincere echo of the voice of my friends. However, I rejoice that I did not betray myself, but that I was enabled, by the divine help, to bear myself meekly, both under the evil and the good report, and that I was kept within bounds till this morning afforded me an opportunity of reflection and meditation, in this my favourite haunt, this calm retreat, this silent shade, so well agreeing with prayer and praise, where the strife of Satan ceases, in some degree, with me, and where I have so often heard the notes of the heavenly dove. Here I have been brought to see that I am neither what the world would make me, nor what my friends believe me to be. I have been led to renounce both characters, namely, that which is given me by common report, and that which is given me by my friends and lovers, as neither of them belonging to me; and both, even

the worst of these, as being far too good for me; for, in looking into myself with that discernment which is spiritually bestowed, I find that I am more vile by nature, than my worst enemies have ever dared to represent me. I have been made to feel that there is in me no good thing whatever, and that I should prefer death to an exposure of my real thoughts and feelings to the most partial friend I have on earth. I have been led to see that it is by a continual miracle that I am, and have been, enabled to preserve any thing like consistency of character; and that I have reason to thank my God every moment for having brought me so far on the journey of life, with that degree of respectability which I possess, even in the eyes of my worst enemies. For when, my beloved nephew, we are made to understand that every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts is only evil continually, whilst we remain in a state of nature, and that even when in a state of grace, the original nature is ever struggling vehemently against the new principle, we ought to be filled with gratitude and astonishment at the infinite goodness and care of God, which prevents us from exposing and betraying

ourselves in some unguarded moment, in such a manner, as might blast our reputation, and destroy our usefulness for life.

“These, my dear nephew, have been the reflections which have occupied me for the last hour; and I impart them to you for your benefit; apply my case to yourself, and if the world thinks worse of you than your partial friends do, be assured that both think better of you than you deserve. Blessed and happy will that time be, my Francis, when your old uncle will really be what he now only seems to be in the eyes of those who love him best.”

The good man gave me his hand as he spoke, and as I held it to my lips, my tears fell upon it, and I could not help in part re-echoing his last sentence.

“Blessed and happy, indeed,” I said, “will that time be, when all need of seeming what we are not, shall have passed away, and when we shall be like Christ our Saviour, for we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” 1 *John* iii. 2.

My reader, from this, my little narrative, you will be taught, I trust, to feel, that the worst your enemies can say of you, falls infinitely short

of what you could tell of yourself; and hence will be made to bear the reproaches of those who do not love you, as being more your due than the praises of those who are stimulated to the expression of them by interest or affection.

THE OLD LADY'S COMPLAINT.

“SAY not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning them.” *Eccles. vii. 10.* These are the words of Solomon, and prove that man was given to murmur nearly three thousand years ago, just in the same key as is used by us in the present day. The truth is this, that in looking back on former days, we remember only those things which are agreeable, and, generally speaking, entirely leave out from the picture all that is evil and disagreeable; the real state of the case being this—that every situation in life has its advantages and its disadvantages, and that every age of the world's duration has had its peculiar errors and offences. We are apt to cry down the present day, and it is well that we should see and feel our offences, in order that we may endeavour to put a check upon them: but when we compare our present trials and suffer-

ings with those of the nations which have gone before us in barbarous times, and with the situation of many people now existing in remote regions of the globe, instead of complaining of the times and the seasons—of our rulers and of our inferiors—we ought continually to praise our God, who has so far rendered the path of our pilgrimage through this present evil world safe, and, to a certain degree, pleasant; that we are protected from the hand of cruelty and rapine, and assaulted only by that which cannot materially harm us, namely, the strife of tongues, and the petty encroachments of dishonest men.

But whilst we ought to acknowledge with humble thanksgiving, that, take all things together, our lot has fallen on a propitious time, and in a goodly place of present abode, it may be advantageous to consider the peculiar errors of the present day, in order, as I before said, that the check may be placed, and the defence affixed, on that side where the enemy is making his attack. It is half the battle to know where the danger lies, and it is one of the principal arts of the evil one to keep up the hue and cry against a vanquished and dead enemy, at the moment in which he is preparing, or perhaps carrying on an

attack, through the instrumentality of a powerful and living champion.

But without entering into a farther explanation of my purpose, I shall proceed to my narrative, which, if it does not speak for itself, and point to the quarter from which danger is to be feared, to the present and rising generation, I am much mistaken, and will acknowledge that the trouble I am now taking is altogether in vain.

I belong to the generation which is now rapidly passing away. I have been a great-aunt more than ten years, and was made a great-grandmother a few weeks since, a circumstance which naturally induced me to endeavour to peep further into the future state of this world than I might perhaps have done, had it not been so.

My birth was respectable. My father having been a country gentleman, of easy fortune, living in an old mansion, and, through the economy of my mother, having been enabled to bring up and portion off a very large family without encumbering his eldest son, on whom his estate was entailed. I thank God that I can also add, that my parents were pious, although I do not suppose that they could have given a reason for the hope that was in them so accurately as religious

persons of their condition would now be able to do.

I was the fifth of six daughters, and although my mother was by no means a harsh person, on the contrary being one who was keenly alive to every feeling of her children, yet there were certain family, and I might almost say, national, customs at that time established, which no persons in respectable life, and desiring to preserve a suitable appearance, ever thought of departing from. For example—we, the children of the family, had apartments of our own, first a nursery, and then a school and play-room, where undoubtedly we were left much to ourselves, but beyond the precincts of which we never presumed to make a noise or a litter—unless it might have been in some remote corner of the garden, where we were permitted to delve and plant at our pleasure. The leading rule or principle which was taught us was this—that we were to keep ourselves to our own apartments when desirous of exercising our limbs or lungs; that it was a favour and an honour to be admitted to the presence of our parents; and that this favour would be immediately forfeited, should we attempt to transgress any of the rules prescribed

at that time for the proper behaviour of little masters and misses.

These rules for behaviour were few and simple—a courtesy, low and profound, was required at our entrée and exit into and from the paternal presence; we were not to sit down till directed so to do by the eye of our mother, and never to speak in the presence of a stranger till first addressed. We were taught to pronounce those very difficult and obsolete words, “sir” and “ma’am,” as soon as we could speak; and never thought of the possibility of omitting either of these titles when addressed by an elder, a superior, or an equal. We had other rules of behaviour of a more minute nature—such as always allowing precedence in company to an elder sister; refusing any nicety, though offered to us, when we saw but little on the table; never answering when reproved; combing our hair, and arranging our persons, before we appeared in the parlour, &c. &c. All of which observances (though in themselves powerless in changing and renewing the naturally-depraved heart of man.) were undoubtedly serviceable in checking the growth of the passions, and accustoming us, in

small matters, to prefer the pleasure of others to our own.

It is certain that parents can no more give a new nature to a child than a physician can give a new constitution to a patient. No mere man can say to the leper, "Be thou cleansed," but he may use the means supplied by nature for relieving the sufferer, and consequently may withhold swine's flesh from the infected person; and so far would parents do well to imitate the wise physician: whilst humbly and piously awaiting from above the descent of the regenerating Spirit on the children whom God has given them, they may use the appointed means for their conversion—no one of which is more directly within their reach than the enforcing of those gentle and decent restraints which proceed from a constant attention to the common courtesies of life.

Thus, as it regarded external observances, passed the years of my childhood; it is not my present purpose to enter into the other branches of my education: I shall only say, that as we grew up we were gradually emancipated from the school-room, and made companions of our mother, going out and coming in with her; but still

we were admonished to keep our places, and not to be too forward to give our opinions, and, above all things, never to contradict our elders. Any transgression of this kind was immediately noticed by our parents—our elderly visitors looking grave on the occasion, and chiming in with the senior authorities, by some such remarks as these: “When Miss is older, she will know better;” “I am sure, Miss would not distress her honoured parents on any account;” “Dear Miss, beg your kind mamma to give you her hand to kiss, then all will be well.”

Now, my gentle reader, you will please to observe that I have not told my name, nor that of my family; therefore I shall hurt no one by what I may say in the conclusion of my narrative. No family need to put the cap on unless it should find it particularly suitable; in that case I do not withhold my permission. My brothers and sisters were most of them married, and settled before me. I also in due time entered the marriage state. My husband was an excellent man—a gentleman of small landed property entailed on the male heir. He died, however, within two years, leaving me a young widow, with an infant son: it was the will of God; and I trust that I

have been enabled to say, "Father, thy will be done." Where was so happy a refuge for one in such circumstances as a father's house?—to that I returned with my babe, and was received with open arms. From that period I remained in the paternal mansion till the death of my mother, an event which did not take place till my son was more than thirty years of age, and had been married eight years. My mother had survived my father several years, and had become in her latter days very infirm, requiring much attention, and being easily put out of her way, so that it had been necessary for me to devote much of my time to her service, and to accommodate my habits very much to hers. But I had considered, when I returned as a widow to my father's house, that it would not become me to interfere with the arrangements of the family. I felt that the society of my parents, and the protection extended by them to me, was a sufficient recompense for any exercises of free will which I had forfeited by not choosing to reside by myself: and I was led to form a just estimate of the advantages to be derived from a residence in my paternal mansion. I had more time to give to my son; my situation was more respectable than had I lived alone;

and last, not least, I enjoyed the society of my own beloved parents, and at the same time saw much of my brothers and sisters, who being settled in different parts of the country, came from time to time to visit them.

But as the years of my widowhood rolled on, and as my mind began to cast off the first heavy pressure of grief, my parents, by the same process, in progress of time, began to forget that I had been a wife, and was a mother; and my dear father, returning to old habits, would now and then reprove me for some slight failure of attention to family rules, with as little ceremony, in the presence of my son, as if I had been only eight or nine years of age. I was certainly hurt at these things, and once complained of an attack of this sort, to an old clergyman, a friend of the family: in reply to which, he said, "Permit me to congratulate you, my dear madam, on a happy occasion for showing your sense of filial submission in the presence of your son: depend upon it the lesson will not be lost upon him." The remark was blessed to me, and I was henceforward enabled so to act, that the lesson descended as the dew of heaven on the heart of my son, who has ever been a dear and dutiful child.

My dear father died at 75, and my mother survived him ten years. In the meantime my son settled in London, having been brought up to the law: he married with my approbation a very elegant and pleasing young lady, and, as far as I heard, their family management seemed such as I could most have wished, for my son assured me that they had morning and evening family prayers, and never failed to attend divine service on the Lord's-day. Neither did they frequent places of public amusement, and were also strictly honourable and correct in their pecuniary arrangements; but for the last eight years of my mother's life, I saw very little of them. I could not leave my venerable parent, neither could she bear the noise of children: I was therefore almost a stranger to my son's family when she died.

When my beloved mother was no more, I remained only to see her remains interred, and to deliver every thing up in the family mansion to my eldest brother; and then, being earnestly solicited by my daughter-in-law, hastened to town, my dear son meeting me at one stage from London, and embracing me with a tenderness which showed how dear his sole-remaining

parent was to his heart. This was pleasant, and I felt myself comforted for the loss of my poor mother, especially when introduced into my son's pleasant drawing-room. His wife met me with a warmth of manner and brightness of expression which left no doubt in my mind that she was really glad to see me. As it was very late, no children were present that night, although my daughter took me into the nursery to see and kiss them sleeping, as they were, in their little cribs; there were four of them already, a girl, the eldest of the family, nearly eight years old; two little sturdy boys, and a baby, who looked as she slept like a little cherub. Before I was ushered to my own apartments, for two together had been set aside for me, my dear son and daughter expressed a hope that I would stay with them always, if I found myself comfortable. In return for which, having thanked them with tears in my eyes, I assured them that whether I stayed with them a longer or shorter time, I should never (God helping me) forget the respect due to the master and mistress of the house that sheltered me, or use the prerogative of the parent to interfere with any of their arrangements; I only stipulated that the liberty of being in

company, or withdrawing to my room, should always be allowed to me. I am of a very sociable turn of mind. I always have preferred living with my friends to residing alone.

These things being settled, I was conducted to my apartments, which I found all that I could wish; and awoke the next morning in an agreeable and thankful state of mind. In this temper I came down to breakfast precisely at the hour indicated the night before by my daughter.

The door of the breakfast-room was opened to me by a footman who was in the hall, and I was advancing to kiss my daughter, when from an inner apartment, which, according to the London fashion, was separated from the outer by folding-doors, burst three out of four of my grandchildren, shrieking and clamouring, and tumbling over each other, all impatient to see their grandmother, but standing in a group at about three yards distance from me, and looking at me as if I had been some strange animal just brought in from the woods.

“Come and kiss grandmamma—dear grandmamma,” said my daughter,—“come, darling,” on which the eldest child came forward and gave me her cheek to kiss, though without vouchsafing

me any thing like a smile; whilst the other two held back, the younger saying decidedly, "I won't."

My son was not present, or this probably would not have passed; and, as I never court sullen children, no notice was taken, and I proceeded to place myself in a chair which was sat next my daughter-in-law. I had scarcely placed myself, before I was startled by a terrible cry in my ears, feeling at the same time a sort of concussion in my seat, which made me start—my daughter at the same time saying, "What is the matter? do not let us have this noise."

"It is Sam, mamma," replied his sister. "Grandmamma has got his seat." Her mother tried to silence her by some dumb and ineffectual tokens of displeasure; but my son, who had entered just in time to hear what his daughter had said, and to see what his little son was doing, for he was still drumming on my chair, reproved them both, decidedly saying to Harriet (that was my grand-daughter), "Let me hear such another word, and you leave the room. Your grandmamma shall have any seat in this room which is most agreeable to her." He immediately caused every child to take his place, and we pro-

ceeded to breakfast, during which, to my surprise, there could be little or no conversation from the constant interruptions of the loud shrill voices of the children. But what was this to what ensued when the father went out? for business, it seemed, required his absence every day from ten o'clock till four or five, and often somewhat later in the evening. He was no sooner gone than I discovered that, small as his influence was over the minds of his children, that of their mother was still less.

My daughter-in-law, I verily believe, ever meant to do well by her young ones, but unfortunately, she had imbibed two or three modern principles, which completely rendered her the slave of her children, and made them the torment of every body else.

In the first instance, they were to be allowed to say every thing that came uppermost, lest they should learn to be artful; in the next, they were to be with their mamma at all times and seasons, excepting when they were asleep, lest they should be induced to like any other person's company better than hers, though I never could ascertain that they considered it half the privilege to be permitted to associate with her, as I

and my sisters did, when children, to be allowed to stand behind our mother's chair, when introduced into the parlour after dinner. Again, they were to eat of any thing they chose, lest they should acquire the habit of greediness, by being deprived of dainties. In the last place, all their lessons were to be taught them by word of mouth, lest they should mis-pronounce some new word which might occur; and no servant was on any account to control them, because servants are injudicious, and the parent is decidedly the proper person to manage a child. But truly, I thought it very hard, and a very fit subject for complaint, that I should have come into existence just at the point of time in which I was subjected in youth to the old regime, and compelled in old age to submit to the new, especially as I never could bring my reason to assent to the expediency of letting the world be governed by that portion of society the least fitted for it—nor could I ever persuade myself that there could be any propriety or justice in allowing the free will of the grandchild to encroach upon the comforts and privileges of the grandmother—not to speak of the mother, since, as the power is in her own hands whilst her children are in their in-

fancy, if she chooses to be uncomfortable she is no object of pity. With regard to my daughter-in-law, if she resolved to allow her children to make a play-room or dog-kennel of her parlour, during the absence of her husband—to suffer perpetual head-aches rather than control the exuberant spirits of her sons—to fatigue herself continually in instructing her daughter by word of mouth, instead of insisting that the child should exert herself, I felt it was not for me to interfere with her, but I took the liberty of withdrawing myself to my own apartments as much as possible. As my son and daughter continued to wish me to remain with them, I put up with much coldness, and what my mother would have called insolence, from the children rather than leave the house; and I trust was led so to act to my descendants, that these young creatures will be willing, when I am no more, to pay that respect to my memory which, I am sorry to say, they have as yet withheld in my lifetime.

THE SHEPHERD'S FOUNTAIN.

THERE is in the East a certain range of Mountains, called the Mountains of the Leopards; this range bears but an evil report, by reason of the fierce beasts which infest its acclivities, which prowl among its valleys, and take refuge in its dens and its caves. Nevertheless, these hills are beautiful to look upon, their loftiest peaks being clad with eternal snow, shining pale and cold in the moonbeam, and gleaming sadly in the hours of frozen winter, but emitting a thousand rays of violet and golden light, when the summer sun rises upon them, and the wintry clouds roll away from their summits.

On the sides of these hills grow every variety of tree and herb, from those whose hardy natures can endure the Alpine blasts, to the broad-leaved and fragrant palm, the spikenard and calamus, the aloe and cassia, whose roots imbed themselves in the southern banks at the foot of the range.

Now, in former times, my history tells me not in what age, or at what period, there dwelt upon these mountains a certain shepherd called Theogenes, a sort of patriarch, for in his manners and mode of life he was not unlike what we read of Abraham; he was a species of inferior chief; he was not a prince himself, for he held this place under another, and was subject to the dominion of that other; although the subjection was so easy, that, as he would often say, he had no other experience of his state as a bondsman than that he was thereby as the servant of a powerful prince, secured from enemies, who, had he endeavoured to have maintained his place in his own strength, would have assuredly proved too powerful for him.

Now this shepherd had his habitation on the ledge of a rock; this rock was hard as adamant, and more pure and white than the far-famed marble of Carara; there was no spot or stain therein, neither had the inclemences of the seasons, the variations of heat or cold, of damp or dry, power to sully the purity of its surface. Hence it was known, by those living in those parts, by the name of the White Stone, which being seen far and wide, was as a landmark to the traveller in the

valley below, and a sure guide by which many who had lost their way were directed to their course again. Now, from this rock there poured a stream of living water: I call it living, because of its pure and sparkling nature; and beneath the rock, within its shade and protection, were many fair pasture grounds, such as were not found in all the mountains beside; and the stream which poured from this rock, meandered through all these meadows, bathing the roots of an infinite variety of excellent trees, which produced their fruits in due season, and filled the air with the spiey odour of their blossoms, affording shelter for many birds, whose songs were new every morning. There were bees too, in those fragrant fields, which laid up honey in the clefts of the rock, and cisterns wrought in the pure marble, where the blue pigeons, which inhabited those regions, might be seen washing and pluming themselves at the period of the first dawn of the morning.

Now the water which distilled from the White Stone was called, nay, for aught I know is still called, the Shepherd's Fountain, to distinguish it from certain torrents and intermitting springs in other parts of the mountain; and the prince,

of whom I before spake, when he appointed the place of his servant, the shepherd Theogenes, caused him to fix the curtains of his tent beneath the shade of this rock, charging him that he should never permit the sheep of the flock to drink from any other source than that which proceeded from the rock; for this water, said the prince, is wholesome for the sheep, and it will cause them to grow and to thrive and to produce wool of the finest description. I know not that he gave other charges to Theogenes, although he put a book into his hand which taught him certain secrets, by which he was enabled to interpret his prince's pleasure from the objects of nature which environed him—a species of instruction which is particularly agreeable and delightful to those who dwell where nature is least perverted by the artificial works of man.

Now Theogenes had a wife called Sophia—she was a woman of extraordinary comeliness; and he was wont to say of her that her price was above rubies. So Theogenes and Sophia dwelt under the shade of that spotless rock, and fed their flocks in the meadows which were watered from the fountain. And this water never failed: in winter it was not hardened by the cold frosts

of the mountains, and in summer it was augmented from the chambers of heaven, and the sheep throve on the banks of the stream; and because they were washed in these fair waters they were always white, and there was a blessing with them, for the lambs came by pairs, and there were none barren among the ewes. They were sheared every year, and their fleeces were such as might be wove into royal garments; there were no such sheep in all that country as those which composed the flock of Theogenes. There was also another advantage in the water I speak of, the wild beasts of the mountain loved it not; though ever so pressed with thirst, they would not approach it: the old shepherd said that they were alarmed at the rushing sound with which it came down the mountain. Nevertheless, this sound seemed to be agreeable to the sheep, and the shepherd had a story to tell respecting that sound, which was somewhat curious, though I can by no means doubt its truth, it having been confirmed to me by one who cannot lie.—*John x. 27.*

Now this was the story:—Once upon a time it seemed that a dog got amongst the flock, and drove a certain number of the sheep far away into

a dark valley where were the dens of many wild beasts, and there the dog left them to perish, when suddenly the breeze which had some time before carried the sound of the fountain in another direction, turned about and conveyed it to the lost sheep, and behold they knew the sound, and obeyed the call, and came running back to their place of rest. Theogenes saw all this himself, and loved to tell this story among many others—all of which had reference to what he had observed in his pastoral life.

Now Theogenes and Sophia were like Job, blessed with a fair and noble progeny, both sons and daughters. There were not in all the East more beautiful children than those of this shepherd and shepherdess; nor can it be questioned but that they endeavoured to lead them in the way they should go, from the moment they were able to totter from their mother's arms. Nevertheless, there was one of these, namely, the youngest son, who had a will determined and set to please himself rather than those who were set over him.

His mother called him Benjamin, because he was the youngest, but Benoni is the name which the history gives him, by reason of the trouble

he gave his parents; for, whereas the wills of his brothers and sisters being submitted to those of their parents,—through the blessing which is from above,—their young days passed in peace and joy; but those of their youngest brother were always disturbed and uneasy. When he was determined in that which was evil, his parents could not permit him to go on peacefully in that evil way, and thus he enjoyed neither his own pleasures nor theirs. As he advanced in age, and grew strong in his own strength, he must needs go to his father and say, “Father, I am now able to provide for myself; give me my portion of the flock, and I will feed them where I list.”

“The flock is not mine to give,” replied Theogenes, “these sheep are the Lord’s, and no one can take them out of his hands; besides, I would ask you, where would you feed them? Where can you find pastures such as these? Look upon them, my son, how rich and verdant are those meadows! How tender and fragrant is that herbage, beautiful with flowers springing from the earth, shaded with all manner of stately and fruitful trees.”

“There are other pastures, and other stately

woods upon these mountains," replied Benoni, "and other cisterns cut in the rocks, by those who have gone before us, where I can feed and water my flock, and cause it to lie down and rest at noon day."

"Ah! my son! my son!" replied Theogenes, "would you commit two offences? Would you forsake the Fountain of living waters, and find out for yourself cisterns,—broken cisterns that can hold no water? Know you not the injunction laid upon us by our Prince, when he appointed unto us the office of feeding his flock, namely,—that we should cause the sheep to drink of the water which gushes from the White Stone, and should permit them to taste of no other stream?"

"Yes," returned the son, "I am aware of this injunction; and I grant that when the shepherds were few, and the flock small, the arrangement was good; but now that the shepherds are multiplied, and the flocks increased, I see not wherefore we should not seek out to ourselves other settlements on the mountains, and wherefore we should not use our natural strength and discretion in availing ourselves of other resources, besides those appointed by the Prince."

“Will it not be time enough to seek other resources,” replied Theogenes, “when our water fails, and our herbage becomes scanty?”—*Isaiah xxxiii. 16.*

Benoni heard these last words of his father in sullen silence, for he knew that the water and the herbage had never failed, nay, that both the one and the other seemed to increase with the demands of the flock, and of those who tended them. He therefore turned away from the word of counsel, being resolved in his own mind concerning what he would do, and he watched his opportunity, and one day at noon, being unobserved by his brethren, he drove a small portion of the flock apart from the rest, enticing them with sweet notes from his flageolet, for he had invented to himself an instrument of music.—*Amos vi. 5.* And he had provided himself with a dog, which was accustomed to go and come at his call, and this dog was cunning and quick in obeying his master's command; so when Benoni had beguiled a portion of the flock from the main body, the dog got in between that portion and the rest, and so did what in him lay to prevent their return. So the silly sheep followed their leader, and he beguiled them from their secure

pastures, and brought them round a point of the hill into a place among the mountains, where they were no longer under the observation of Theogenes. Now the place into which Benoni brought his flock was exceedingly beautiful to the eye: it was a lofty site, commanding all the country round, and there were many fair and shadowing trees scattered upon the height; and there were vines which had climbed up the trunks of the trees, and hung in festoons from the branches; there were clusters of grapes hanging too from these vines, and these grapes were full of juice, luscious, and inviting. And behold there was a cistern formed of brick, which had appertained to the old inhabitants of the hills, and which they had wrought with their own hands, placed on the brow of the height; and Benoni looked thereon, and behold there was water in the bottom thereof, and a stone trough which filled itself from the cistern; and the side of the hill was covered with a thick herbage, rank and strong; but Benoni marked not that poisonous weeds were mingled with the grass. So he sat himself down near the cistern, and he took of the grapes, and pressed them into the cup which he carried in his shepherd's bag,

and he drank of the blood of the grape, and the sheep cropped the herbage, and according to their pasture so were they filled.—*Hosea* xiii. 6. And Benoni looked round him and said (for in the satisfaction of his heart he expressed his feelings aloud) :—

“ Why does my father insist that every shepherd of the master’s appointment should drink himself, and cause his sheep to drink, only from the stream which poureth from the White Rock, in the shadow of which he has erected his tent? Is not this trough of brick, and this grove of fruits, as good as the fountain wrought in the living rock, and the trees whose roots are bathed in its waters? (Are not Arbana and Pharphar better than all the waters of Israel?—*2 Kings* v. 12.) And cannot I make of this cistern, which is fed from the torrents of the mountains, that which will serve my flock, as well as the cisterns in the rock of the living stone? Why should I be bound down by old regulations and ordinances which are now obsolete? The few sheep which my father possessed when he began the world, had room enough and to spare in the meadows which border the brook ; but times are altered now, the flock is enlarged ; it cries

out for straitness of room, and I will be its deliverer. I will convert the whole mountain into a pasture ground for the sheep. I will erect my tents in other valleys; I will build new cisterns; I will grow rich and great, and that by my own efforts; the Prince, when he comes, shall praise me; the evil beasts of the mountains shall submit to me. I will excel my father, and my brothers shall bow down to me."

To this effect Benoni soliloquized, for he had drunk of the intoxicating cup of the vine of Sodom, for of such were the grapes of which he had compressed the liquor, and he was become heady, and filled with strange conceits; and after awhile he was overtaken with a deep sleep, and so he sunk down upon the grass, being stretched all along at his full length like one dead. Neither were his flock in better plight, for they had eaten largely of the rank pasture, and drunk of the stagnant waters, and behold they became swelled and heavy, and lay stupified by the side of their betrayer. And so passed on the day, and at length the sun went down, and the dense mists arose, and darkness covered the mountains, and the shepherd still slept. Neither did he hear the bayings of the wild beasts, nor

did he observe when the frightened flock rose up from around him and fled for their lives. At length, and it was near the hour of midnight, one came to Benoni,—he knew not who it was, and said, “Awake thou that sleepest;” and he started up, and behold it was dark, and there were doleful cries of wild beasts sounding in his ears, the leopard and the panther, and other fearful creatures; and he looked for his sheep and they had fled; they were scattered, and there was none to search and seek them out; and the dog that was near to him was dumb, he would not bark, and the mountains were dark; they stood round about him, encompassing him as the bars of the earth; he knew not whither to fly, or in what direction lay his security; and the ravenous beasts cried out upon him, and he was without weapon or means of protection. He could not save himself from the leopard and the wolf, how much less could he have saved his flock!

Then did he cry out in his affliction, “Now do I see the wisdom of my Prince, in that he commanded my father to feed his flock on the banks of the river of the living waters, for were not these waters our bond of union? Could the

shepherd have strayed had he felt himself bound to draw water for his sheep from these wells of salvation? But I must needs seek other cisterns—I must needs purpose to myself to dig other wells—I must needs be for slaking the thirst of my flock from other sources than that which proceeds from the Rock which is higher than I! Oh! had I hearkened to the counsel of my father, when he said unto me, ‘Ah! my son! would you commit two offences? Would you forsake the Fountain of living waters, and find out for yourself cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water?’ ”

Then Benoni threw himself on the ground, and cried, “Father, I have sinned against my Prince, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” And yet, whilst he cried, one came up to him, and lifted him up and set him on his feet, and took him by the hand and led him by a way he knew not of, and brought him again to where he beheld the White Rock gleaming in the light of the morning, and heard the sweet rushing of the living fountain; and where he saw the tabernacle of his father, spread beneath the shade of the rock, and the flock resting quietly around it. And he that led him

was not visible to him, yet he apprehended his presence by a sense which seemed new to him, and he knew him to be the Prince—even the Chief Shepherd to whom appertained the flocks, of whom his father and brothers were the appointed overseers.

But Benoni had scarcely shown himself in the valley, when all his friends came running out to embrace him, weeping, and thanking their Prince, who alone had the power to bring him back, and to restore the sheep which he had misled—for this had he done, for although Benoni knew it not, yet his father knew it, that it was impossible for any wild beast to pluck these sheep out of the hand of the chief Shepherd; nevertheless, the sin of those who would mislead those sheep is not the less.—*John* x. 27, 28.

So Theogenes and Sophia embraced their son, who had been lost and was found, and he fell at their feet and wept, and confessed his sins against their Prince, his Saviour, and against his tender parents, and they lifted him up and brought him into their tent, and they feasted him with his brothers and sisters; and they called him no more Benoni but Benjamin: and his sisters took harps after supper, and they all sang together

in one accord, and the burden of their song was this—"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so does our Prince seek out his sheep, and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

Ezekiel xxxiv. 12.

Thus, Theogenes and Sophia rejoiced in the return of their Benjamin, and they dwelt with their children, till in the end of their time they were taken to dwell in the presence of their Prince: and my history adds, that their descendants still reside upon the Mountains of the Leopards, which are in Asia; and that they may always be distinguished from other families dwelling on that vast range, because they are careful to give their flocks to drink from the fountain which flows from the White Rock, never willingly suffering them to taste of the waters which proceed from any other source; hence, their family, which has multiplied to thousands of thousands, and a thousand times ten thousand, through the lapse of ages, have never been suffered to wander from each other. Nay, how should they do so, when every individual of that family comes daily to draw water from the same fountain?

THE HOURS OF INFANCY.

IN order to give my reader a clear view of the tendency of what I wish to say, I must present him with a short outline of the principal events of my life.

I was born in the East, and was an eldest son. My father was an indigo planter, residing in the jungles near Mahda in Bengal. Both my parents were English, and, consequently, though by birth an Asiatic, by pedigree I was entirely European. Being an extremely sickly infant, the lady of a civilian returning to Europe took charge of me (and no small charge it was), and brought me to England before I was two years of age. When arrived in London, she sent me into the country to an aunt of my mother's, who lodged (for she did not keep house,) in the parsonage of Adbaston in Staffordshire. The parsonage at that period, and for some years afterwards, being occupied by farmers.

I arrived at Adbaston before I had entered my third year, a poor little pale creature, not having strength to support my delicate frame without assistance, and speaking a sort of jargon which was wholly unintelligible to every person in the parish. I was no doubt received very kindly by the old lady my aunt, for I remember nothing of her but repeated acts of affection, yet, as she never left her chamber, and never travelled farther than from her bed to her fireside in winter, and from her bed to the window in summer, I was of course left much to the mercy of other persons, and might have suffered severely had not Providence in my case fulfilled the words of the prophet, "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." *Isaiah* xxvii. 8.

An attendant was provided for me as soon as I arrived at Adbaston, a young woman, and, as far as I can recollect, one of a very sweet and engaging aspect. Her name was Margaret Hartland, and, had I the means, I would erect such a monument to her memory, and engrave on marble or brass such a durable record of her humble merits, as future ages and generations yet unborn should contemplate with wonder and admiration. But I am forgetting myself, and

departing from that simplicity of style which befits the narrative of the hours of infancy.

I remained at Adbaston under the protection of my aunt, and under the care of Margaret Hartland for seven years. When I was nine years old, my poor aunt died, and I was torn from the scenes of my childhood, and removed to a public school—I will not say where. There I learnt some Latin and some Greek. I was chiefly distinguished as being a remarkably active and light-minded boy. Here I did not imbibe so many wicked ideas as might have been expected, considering the examples which were continually set before me.

When I was fourteen, the lady who had brought me to England procured me the situation of midshipman in a vessel of the line, and I was transferred from school to the Nore, where my ship was at that time stationed. In the mean time I had heard very little of my father, who still remained in India, my mother having departed this life whilst I was yet an infant, and her place having been taken by one of the daughters of the land, who had filled her husband's house with a numerous flock of sons and daughters, who, as they grew up, seemed as little in-

clined to acknowledge me, as I could be to solicit any intercourse with them.

Some years ago there was not that attention paid to the morals and education of the little midshipmen as is now exacted by the governors of the navy ; I and my companions were therefore allowed to follow what devices we chose in the hours of recreation, on condition that we never neglected our professional duties : and we availed ourselves to a considerable extent of the license allowed us. My reader will not be surprised if I say that there was a sort of emulation amongst some of us, the object of which was, who should be most wickedly daring.

Promotion in the navy is seldom rapid ; mine proceeded in the usual routine, and I have now been a lieutenant for several years, and having seen much service, and suffered considerably in my health, I have left my ship for a short time with permission, and am now recruiting myself in the very place where the seven happiest years of my life were spent, being an occupier of my aunt's apartments in the parsonage house at Adbaston, where I have the leisure, as I thank God I have the inclination, to take such a review of my life as I trust may prove beneficial to me

through the remainder of my sojourn on this earth; for I was scarcely arrived at Adbaston, before I found my mind constrained to reason, and meditate in a manner almost entirely new to me.

Being in bad health, I was glad to retire to my chamber immediately on my admission to my lodgings, and there I sat down by the open window, to inhale the evening breeze, and enjoy a calm, so entire and so refreshing.

My window was open, and it was a new delight to me to meditate on the peaceful landscape, to mark the shades of night stealing over the beautiful tower of the church directly opposite to me, and to listen to the mingled murmurs of rural sounds, as they approached or died away in the breeze. Being thus situated, many touching recollections stole over my mind, and I began to consider the tendencies of my whole past life, with its various changes, and the principles by which I had been actuated, and was presently brought to this assurance, that bad as my life had been, I had not sinned in ignorance or darkness, but against conviction.

I felt that I was well acquainted with many of the most important doctrines of the Christian

religion, and had ever been convinced of their truth, and more than this, I felt that all my ideas of redemption, of death, of a blessed and unblessed resurrection, &c., were all associated with the scene before me, and that so intimately, that whenever these subjects had recurred to my mind at any time of my life, the images I then beheld had presented themselves in some way or other to my fancy.

The question then arose in my mind, were the views I had of these subjects correct? I believed they were; but when had I acquired this knowledge of the true doctrines of our blessed religion? Careless and vicious as my life had been, I knew that I had always, at least as long as I could remember, possessed an acute sense of what was not orthodox, and had always felt myself offended when our chaplain gave us a moral essay, instead of a solid discourse.

The next question which then suggested itself was this, Where had I acquired these correct views which I had always entertained (though often to my own condemnation)? Not at school, for I had never heard any thing of religion in my master's house, and when obliged to attend divine service with my companions, we had employed

too many devices amongst ourselves to admit of our hearing or profiting by any thing which was going on beyond the precincts of our own pews ; not on board ship, for our chaplain too commonly gave us moral essays, instead of Christian discourses ; and not during any of my short residences in England, when our ship was in harbour, for on these occasions I had never entered a church, or associated with pious persons ; not from books, for I had no religious books, not even a Bible, and yet, as I before stated, I had no recollection of the time in which I had not been perfectly assured of the following truths : viz.—the omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect holiness of the Deity ; the Trinity in Unity ; the sufficiency of the salvation provided for man by the God incarnate ; the depravity of man's nature ; justification by Christ alone ; and the incapacity of man to work out his own salvation ; together with some indistinct views of the need of regeneration, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Of these truths, I repeat, that I always knew enough to enable me to detect any false doctrine, although I do not think that my knowledge had any further influence on my life than to prevent me from uttering any premeditated or deter-

mined blasphemy. Well, then, upon reflection, it appeared that I possessed a certain knowledge of religion which I had possessed no means of obtaining since my ninth year, and that all my ideas on these subjects were connected with the scenes of my early life. It then followed (for I sat reasoning a long time with myself) that these first pure and blessed principles had been received at Adbaston, but not, I was assured, from my good aunt, who spoke little, and mumbled so from the loss of her teeth, that I seldom understood what she wished to express. To whom, then, was I to attribute all the good I had ever known! My eyes filled with tears as memory suggested the reply, and the figure of my young nurse (for Margaret Hartland was fair and young when she had the care of me) arose in all its loveliness before my eyes, and my heart swelled with such feelings as I had never before experienced.

And what, said I to myself, have I been doing, that I have allowed so many years to pass away without inquiring after this, my best friend; or so much as knowing if she still lives. I instantly sprang from my seat; and, although I had reason to think that my hostess was gone to

rest, I went down into the kitchen to learn what I could of the history of my nurse. But the servant was a new inhabitant of the place, and had never heard the name. I, accordingly, returned to my chamber, trying to believe that my nurse perhaps had changed her name, and might still be found among the cottagers in the neighbouring hamlets; but in the morning this hope was destroyed. For an old man who was at work in the garden, under my window, informed me that he had known her well, and had often seen her carrying a little child about, who was said to have come from a very far country, but that she had died of a consumption, as much as fifteen years since, and had been buried in the churchyard; just, he added, in that place where the rays of the sun linger latest on a summer's evening. The old man would have added more, but I could listen no longer, and withdrew my head from the window.

There are some feelings which we like not our fellow-creatures to penetrate, and such were those which at that time agitated my heart. I felt myself alone in the world. I was in bad health. Every reflection on my past life only tended to make me more miserable, and the ten-

der remembrances of the hours of infancy which now burst upon me, made me almost wish that I had been laid in the cold bed and bosom of her whose tender and pious cares were now so fresh in my recollection.

I swallowed a dish of coffee, which was brought me by my hostess, and then walked out to visit the scenes through which I had been so often led by the guide of my infancy. I passed down the long strait garden walk which conducts to the church-yard, and being entered into that solemn place, in which many, we trust, have been laid to rest, in the hope of a joyful resurrection, I made my way immediately to the spot indicated by the old man.

A low head-stone, on which the cypher M. H. was rudely sculptured, and which now was almost effaced, marked the grave I sought. It was covered with green sod, and the morning breeze shook the heads of a few tall grasses which grew in one corner of it.

Behind me, where I stood, was a tomb: I rested against it, and remained with my eyes fixed on the lowly grave, for I know not how long a time: the beautiful tower of the church forming a back ground to the scene, parts of it being

concealed by branches of trees, which shot across the centre of the building.

The whole scene was familiar to me; it had been present with me on many a dark night-watch, in remote seas and foreign latitudes. Surely, I had looked upon it often and for a long time, and very particularly, at some distant day. Could I remember the occasions? Yes, I recollected that I had often sat with my nurse, on that very tombstone, sometimes on her lap, sometimes by her side, whilst her gentle arm embraced my slender form; and now, many ideas which she had conveyed to my mind, when thus placed, burst upon my recollection. Here was the very scene in which I had always pictured myself standing to witness the resurrection of the just; with all its wonderful circumstances of blazing heavens, celestial visions, bursting tombs, and glorified human bodies, with the awful and tremendous stillness of those graves, whose inmates were not of the number of those redeemed and beatified individuals, who are to be partakers of the first resurrection. It followed then, that it was from my tender nurse that I had imbibed my first ideas on this subject, although I could not call to mind one expression used by her,

when conveying these ideas to my mind; nor hardly conceive the means she had used to imprint them so lastingly on my infant fancy. Yet I recollected, very accurately, the sweet expression of her face, and fancied I could still see her directing my infant gaze towards that heaven, from which I was to look for the re-appearance of my Redeemer.

I meditated on these things, and looked upon the grave of my beloved nurse, till the intensity of my feelings became more than I could endure. I arose, in haste, and walked away, passed through the outer gate of the church-yard, where I entered into a small field, partly enclosed by the out-houses of the large estate of Adbaston Hall.

There every object was familiar to me; there was not a bush or building with whose form I was not acquainted, but my attention was particularly drawn to an ancient hollow trunk, which instantly brought another passage of my infancy, and another holy lesson, to my mind. When about six years of age, I had run away, late one afternoon, from my nurse, and hid myself in this hollow tree. My nurse had missed me immediately, and had run in various directions to find

me. I had heard her call, and in the spirit of frolic, had refused to answer. At length, when she was out of hearing, I had peeped from my hiding place, and had seen, to my utter dismay, a tremendous bull, the terror of my childhood, feeding before the entrance.

In vain, then, did I long to hear that voice, which, but now, I had chosen to disregard, and I was kept many hours in that distressing state, whilst my gentle nurse sought me, sorrowing, in every direction. My pious reader will already have conceived the lesson which my tender instructress took occasion to inculcate, from this adventure. And though I could not remember one single word of that lesson, yet the association which had ever remained in my mind, with the dark and gloomy interior of the hollow tree, and the state of that individual, who having despised the indications of the divine will, and turned a deaf ear to the voice of the spiritual Shepherd, is left for a time to the consequences of his own evil inclinations, convinced me of the nature of the instruction derived from this little circumstance, by my ever tender protectress.

From the hollow tree I passed on, and took my way through many green and lovely lanes,

whose hedge-rows, for it was spring time, were gay with hawthorn, eglantine, and the wild rose. It was the time of the singing of birds, and the bleatings of the lambs reached my ears on all sides.

And now a thousand and a thousand vague and indistinct ideas of the scenes of infancy broke in upon my memory. Indistinct and beautiful ideas, when life was young, and the world unknown. The image of my lovely nurse mingling itself with every scene, and holy and scriptural associations being connected with every natural object. Oh! exclaimed I to myself, how indefatigable must the labours of this virtuous young woman have been, thus to have formed my infant mind from the simple materials which were alone within her reach. Multiplied almost as the images of rural life are, the only associations which she contrived to give me, and fixed as on a rock, are my views of right and wrong, of truth and error; and all this effected under nine years of age; and that by one in the humble situation of a nursery maid. I had, indeed, wandered far from the fold in which I had been fed; but I had never sinned in ignorance, and never felt the possibility of reconciling my reason

to vice. I had been removed as much as man could be from those objects which were connected in my mind with holy feelings; but in returning to them again, I have been again made to feel the influence of their silent language. And if (oh! if I could but obliterate the memory of long years of guilt) I could now return with undiminished delight to these simple feelings which rendered the hours of infancy so indescribably sweet: then how delighted should I be!

But in a few months I must quit this blessed retirement, and abandon the grave of the beloved and never-to-be-forgotten guide of my childhood, but it is my prayer (and the prayer I trust of a broken and contrite heart), that the remembrance of the hours of infancy may pursue me wherever I may be, and that the pious labours of my beloved nurse may, through the grace of Him who died for my sins, prepare me to partake of that same glorious resurrection, of which she was the first to give me the idea.

Yet, in my grateful recollections of Margaret Hartland, let me not forget my higher obligations to that God who not only provided for me such a guide of my infancy, but shed such a blessing on

the seeds which she sowed, that after having been dead for many seasons, they are enabled to spring again, and promise an abundant harvest; verifying the words of Scripture, "Paul planteth and Apollos watereth, but it is God that giveth the increase."

ECONOMY.

IN a certain country town in the south of England, there formerly lodged two maiden sisters, whom we shall call Mrs. Clary and Mrs. Grace. When I was at Mrs. Tristram's school in that same town, I used to be invited as often as once a month to tea and supper with these worthy persons, and was commonly accompanied by two or three of my school-fellows.

Such an old-fashioned parlour as these ladies occupied, might not in these days be often seen, and as to their only maid servant, her resemblance, I am well assured, would not easily be supplied in all the three kingdoms.

Such being the case, my readers will, no doubt, be obliged to me for a full and true description of these antiquities.

On entering the house where Mrs. Clary and Mrs. Grace lodged, the visitor was ushered through a neat kitchen to a pair of winding stairs

which led to a landing place, on which opened two doors, one of which conducted to the old ladies' bed room, where two small beds with patch-work hangings stood side by side; and where sundry old chests and wardrobes, arranged in due order, contained many relics of brocaded silks and faded ribbons, together with other more useful articles. This bed room window opened on the yard at the back of the house, and enjoyed the privilege of a view of the steeple of the parish church, and the dial plate of the great public time-piece; whilst the parlour on the other side of the inner wall of the house had three narrow casement windows in a line commanding a view of the street, having each their deep window seats, and curtains of old needlework, on iron rods. This parlour was also hung with what is called a velvet paper, displaying immense scarlet and yellow flowers. Over the chimney piece, which was curiously carved, was a family picture in rude oil painting, and a variety of old-fashioned figures in Dresden china. The chief, and indeed the only ornaments of the room, were two ancient Indian cabinets; some of the contents of which consisting of old knickknacks, miniature pictures, and China toys in ivory, were

regularly displayed to us on occasion of every visit.

There was in one corner of the room a blue cupboard filled with china, the teacups being scarcely larger than a good-sized table spoon, and two ancient figures of Mandrians standing in the most conspicuous place; which in my young imagination added much to the interest of that cupboard. Such were the various wonders of that parlour, and I can still in imagination see the two old ladies in their high head-dresses, their long ruffles, their hooped petticoats and large flowered chintzes, seated on each side of the fire-place, whilst their maid Betty attended on them in her light mob cap, her high-heeled shoes, her long waist and short petticoats, looking only a few years younger than her mistress.

There was no place in which we were invited from school where we loved so much to go, as to see these old ladies, and I have often wondered at the various little contrivances which they employed to please and to amuse us. It was sweet to see in them the example of old age accommodating itself so kindly to the tastes and pleasures of childhood, and their hospitality was

the more admirable since they were well known to have very slender fortunes. I was at Mrs. Tristram's school for several years, having no mother living; and when I was about six, I was invited to spend one entire Christmas holidays with the old ladies. Girls at six are great observers, and it was at that time that I first distinguished a decided difference in the characters of the sisters.

These two old ladies were sincerely attached to each other, and had never been separated through life. Nevertheless they had, I found, very different modes of thinking upon some subjects; and these different opinions often gave rise to certain little arguments, in which I always thought Mrs. Clary wrong, and Mrs. Grace right. The first of these arguments which I heard, was respecting a piece of lace which Mrs. Grace had been purchasing in the morning, and which she produced after dinner, requesting her sister's opinion. "It is cheap and it is pretty," said Mrs. Clary, after she had looked at it and inquired the price.

"It is for a cap, sister Clary," answered Mrs. Grace, "and as you want a new cap, I hope that you will be tempted to buy some for yourself."

"Nay, sister," returned Mrs. Clary, "I can do without it."

"That is what you always say," retorted Mrs. Grace, "you have such notions of economy, you are always thinking how you can save, and you deny yourself even what I should call common necessities,"

"No, sister," replied the other, "not common necessities—you will not say that my clothes are not always whole, and clean, and respectable."

"Yes, but you are seen in the same bonnet, and ribbon, and lace, year after year," answered Mrs. Grace, "till your friends are tired of looking at them; and really I think you carry this matter too far."

Mrs. Clary, I observed, dropped the subject, which had been thus introduced, as speedily as possible; but after this, I heard many hints to the same effect from Mrs. Grace, and from that time I began to observe many little instances in which I thought I could see covetousness in Mrs. Clary, more especially in such things as belonged to her own dress, &c. Young people in general are very rash in forming judgments, and seldom very cautious in keeping their opinions to them-

selves. Accordingly, one day, after one of these little disputes, being left with Mrs. Grace, I ventured to say, "I wish Mrs. Clary would take your advice, dear Mrs. Grace; you would be much happier if she would, I am sure." "Very true, my dear," replied Mrs. Grace, "it is certain that we are not very rich, but that is no reason wherefore we should be actually shabby in our dress. A few shillings more or less in a year could not make much difference. I know my sister means well, and that indeed there is not a better woman on earth; but by these little shabby savings of a shilling here, and a shilling there, she lowers herself and me also. What can they all come to in a year? and what end can be answered by wearing a bonnet or a gown two years instead of one, or using a lawn border to a cap instead of a lace one? However, I am very much to blame, I know, to be always disputing and arguing these subjects with her. She must take her way, and I must take mine; and, as I before said, she is a very good woman, notwithstanding her little singularities."

Mrs. Grace had used no arguments to convince me that she was right and her sister wrong; and yet I was convinced, because young

people are ever inclined to adopt those opinions which tend to self-indulgence ; and from that time I was always ready to uphold Mrs. Grace, though, I trust not in a very unbecoming manner, whenever any expense was to be urged upon Mrs. Clary. Some time after these holidays, I was invited by the old ladies to spend a day with them, and Mrs. Grace being unwell, Mrs. Clary took me out to walk with her in the fields. Whilst we were there together, she began to speak to me more seriously than she had ever done before, and taking occasion from the time of the year, which was spring, she pointed out to me how the four seasons were natural types of the ages of man, to wit—infancy, ripe manhood, decline, and old age. With you, my dear, it is spring, she said, and with me it is winter. A speedy change with me is inevitable ; it would therefore be madness in me not to seek that preparation which only can make death easy, nay, even desirable ; and inasmuch as the fairest plants are sometimes cut off in the early prime, it becomes you also, my beloved child, even now so to begin to number your days, and apply your heart unto wisdom.

She then directed my attention to that solid

faith in the Blessed Redeemer, which alone can ensure to sinful man that peace at the last, without which the agonies of death must be altogether unsupportable. She was proceeding in this way, in a most interesting manner, having succeeded in fixing my attention, when, suddenly coming to a stile, which was half hid by thick trees, we saw a very pleasing youth of about my own age sitting upon it, reading with great seriousness. Mrs. Clary rather started and changed colour, when she first saw the youth; and he no sooner looked up, than he arose in haste, came forward to meet us, and spoke to the old lady as one would do to the friend most valued on earth. I observed, that in answer to his inquiries, she spoke affectionately to him, expressed surprise at seeing him where he was, and inquired the cause of his being there.

In reply, he said something about a holiday, and having had leave to spend it where he pleased; and I then saw her put her hand into her pocket, and slip something into the youth's palm, after which we passed on.

I had time to observe the countenance of the boy, which was remarkably pleasing; and to notice his dress, which, though very clean, and

neatly made, was of ordinary materials. However, as when we had parted from him, Mrs. Clary made no remarks respecting him, it was not my business to say any thing; and yet I could not help feeling so much curiosity about him, that I failed not, when left alone that evening with Mrs. Grace, to mention him to her, and to tell how we had met him, and how glad her sister had been to see him, with other circumstances relative to the meeting. She expressed some surprise at this youth being where we had found him, and told me that he was the orphan son of a relation; that his father had been a very ungrateful and bad character; that he was called William Fitzgerald, and that she believed he was at school somewhere in the neighbourhood, adding at the same time, that as it was not in her power to do much for him, she never inquired about him, lest she should raise his expectations.

I asked her who maintained him at school. She replied that she did not know, having the reason above-mentioned for not inquiring after him.

When I had heard all this, I thought no more

of William Fitzgerald or his affairs; indeed I had forgotten that I had ever seen such a person.

Soon after that I left school, and was absent from that town for several years. At length I returned to it again, to pay a visit to my old governess, Mrs. Tristram, and the first inquiries I made, were after the two honoured sisters.

Mrs. Tristram informed me, that Mrs. Grace was still living, but that Mrs. Clary was no more; that her beloved remains had been committed to the dust only the day before, and that it was expected her funeral sermon would be preached the next Sunday; and thus, my dear pupil, said my worthy governess, am I made to experience, in common with all elderly persons, what it is to witness the loss, one after another, of many old and valued friends; and to feel that, unless my affections were drawn out to younger persons, I must soon become as it were alone in the world.

I was much affected at hearing of the death of Mrs. Clary, and inquired by whom the sermon was to be preached. By a young clergyman, answered Mrs. Tristram, a stranger in this place; I think they call him Mr. Fitzgerald.

“Fitzgerald!” I repeated; “surely I have heard that name;” and then I recollected the boy whom I had seen sitting on the stile.

I could not divest myself of the idea that Mr. Fitzgerald was this very boy, and went to church on Sunday, being not only impatient to see the preacher, but anxious to hear what would be said respecting my poor old friend, of whom I entertained an affectionate remembrance, although I had no idea of the excellence of her character, which had hitherto indeed laid low in the dust, but was now to blossom forth according to the old poetical version of the 10th chap. 7th verse of *Proverbs*,—

“The blest remembrance of the just,
Smells sweet and blossoms in the dust.”

The preacher had scarcely ascended the pulpit, when I recognised the features of the blooming boy I had once seen when walking with Mrs. Clary. He was still almost as young as he could be, in order to be thought fit to fill that sacred place which he then occupied. His manner was, however, solemn and impressive, and as he proceeded, a sort of tenderness stole over it, which at times seemed to threaten to throw him off his

equilibrium. His text was taken from *Numbers* xxiii. 10.—“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”—and after having enlarged upon it, and shown how, only, a sinner can die the death of the righteous, that is, by being made a partaker in the death of Christ, he proceeded to several particulars in the character of the deceased, which filled every auditor with astonishment; and amongst these, none more than myself, because, inasmuch as I had loved Mrs. Clary, I had always thought her a common character, a good sort of every-day person, who was altogether incapable of any thing like a great action, much less of a succession of noble actions consistently pursued year after year, and that without any visible encouragement. The preacher, however, made it appear, that this excellent woman had, by the most exact and minute economy, as it referred to her own private comforts and convenience, made such savings from a very small income, as to maintain, to clothe, and educate an orphan child from early infancy, until he was enabled to support himself in a liberal profession without farther aid; and that with so little ostentation, and indeed from motives of delicacy, with so much

secrecy, that even her nearest and dearest friends had no idea of what she was doing. He then proceeded to speak of that living principle by which sinful and miserable creatures, such as we are by nature, are often enabled to carry on a continual system of benevolence, undergoing for that purpose many privations,—not great indeed perhaps in the minutiae, but vast in the aggregate, and bringing to pass, when summed up, such mighty effects, as in the prospect could hardly have been conceived. He then pointed out how, by a minute economy, this excellent lady had not only preserved a poor child from want, but had provided him with a pious and liberal education, and had placed him in a way of usefulness, where, if he did not prove unworthy of his benefactress, he might, in his turn, with the divine blessing, become a benefactor in a still wider sphere, to others of the human race. And then again he turned back to that great Source from which all human virtues spring—to wit, that Divine Influence, from which is derived not only the original desire of doing well, but the power of doing well consistently and continually; and he concluded by making the application to his audience, and entreating the

younger part of it henceforward to honour that economy which is the source of generosity, and never to allow themselves to throw contempt on that sort of self-denial which can only supply the cravings of a truly liberal spirit. His concluding address was extremely affecting, and brought tears from every eye—tears which, in my case at least, were not easily dried up; and may I add, that I trust the exhortation which met my ears that evening, never so far passed away from my mind, as to enable me to yield, with self-satisfaction to such unnecessary expenses as should render me less able to supply the wants of those that required my aid.

“HOC AGE.”

It was the custom of my father, when I was a girl, to require of me, every Saturday, a few pages written upon a given subject. Well do I remember the hours which I sometimes used to spend on these unfortunate Saturday mornings, in endeavouring to elicit sparks of genius from the cold iron of my brain; and how pleased I was wont to be, when any thing like a bright idea presented itself to my imagination: such were welcome to me as angels' visits, which are said to be few and far between.

Much of my success, however, I found, depended upon the subject which was given me. When these subjects were fruitful and congenial to my feelings, the task was comparatively easy; but when they were new and strange to me, my labour was greatly increased, and so far from being able to put my ideas in any new form, I

seemed to lose the power of expressing them even in the most ordinary way.

Judge, then, what must have been my despair, when, on a certain Saturday, having stolen up into my father's study, with that sort of quiet pace which children use when they are going about any thing they do not much relish (for the motion of the foot is a never-varying index in a simple mind, of the feelings of the heart). I stood behind his chair as he sat writing, and said, "Papa, please for the subject of my theme to-day."

"*Hoc age*," he replied, still writing on.

"What papa?" I said.

"Hoc age, child," he answered—"Hoc age—go and make the best of it, but don't disturb me."

"Hoc age," I repeated, as I went down stairs. "Hoc age—it is Latin; I know it is Latin. Hoc is *this*, and it is neuter, and the word *thing* is understood; and age is *do*—I know enough of Latin for this—therefore Hoc age means—Do this thing."

So I mended a pen, and took a sheet of paper, and wrote "Hoc age" in a fair hand at the top of the paper; and then I added the

translation; and then wrote my own name in one corner, and the date at another; and then looked out of the window, and up to the ceiling, and wrote again, and actually made out a sentence to this effect,—“It is our duty, under every circumstance of life, to attend to this admonition,”—and there I stopped, for the question suggested itself, to wit,—what admonition? Further, therefore, I could not get, and when my father called me to dinner, I had not advanced an inch beyond the full round stop after the word admonition.

My father was one of the kindest and gentlest of parents, and when I presented my vacant sheet to him, he smiled and said, “’Tis as much as I expected—but I am perfectly satisfied, nevertheless. If you have spent your morning in considering the nature of the injunction meant to be expressed in the words ‘Hoc age,’ you have not lost your time.”

My father then entered into an explanation of the subject, and pointed out to me, that these two words were equivalent with the Scripture injunction—“Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” And then he showed me, that the world abounded with persons who

never seem to give their full and undivided attention to any thing which they had to do, and in consequence, when suddenly called upon to act or speak with promptitude, were never ready, and never had their words or their actions at command: "Hence," continued he, "on smaller occasions they are for ever wasting their time, and on more important ones loosing advantages and opportunities never to be recovered." My father added much more to me on this subject; but as I shall hope, in what follows, to elucidate what he said by a very appropriate example, I shall cite no more of his valuable discourse, with the exception of one remark only, which was most important; it was to this effect—that the salvation of the soul is the thing to be done in the first instance; the "Hoc age" to which every human creature should principally attend—all other concerns being made subordinate to this one object, and all other efforts or exertions being in the end wholly inefficient, in producing the happiness of any individual, when this one thing needful is neglected.

It was several years after I had received this important lesson, at a time of my life when the

paternal roof no longer afforded me a protection (my parents being no more), that I took up my residence in the family of a discreet maiden lady, named Markham; a person already somewhat advanced in years, who increased her small patrimony by presiding over the education of several young ladies.

Mrs. Markham lived at the extremity of a small town in the neighbourhood of York, and occupied an old-fashioned house, which stood in the centre of a garden.

My reader will excuse me if I decline mentioning the name of the town near which she dwelt; suffice it to say, that I there found a happy home, at a period when I wanted a home; and being still young, I associated more with the little people about me than I might have done at a more mature age. Amongst these little ones, there were two who particularly attracted my attention, and one of these especially awakened my regards. These little girls were both orphans; though not sisters, they were near of an age, one of them being named Theresa and the other Amelia. They were both children of considerable ability, but varied essentially in one particular: for whereas Theresa was remarkably

hasty and rapid in all she did, Amelia, on the contrary, was decidedly deliberate. I use this word for want of one which would serve my purpose better, for Amelia was not exactly slow, and certainly not dull, but she took so much time to arrange her materials for her work, drawing, or lessons, and so much more for collecting her ideas, and, as it were, bringing the focus of her mind to the right point, that she was always behind hand, always at a loss; and, on every occasion which required promptitude, appearing and acting as if she had not that usual quantum of common sense, which is bestowed on the larger portion of the human race.

Notwithstanding which defect of character, there was not in the family a more lovely or interesting girl than my little Amelia; and many and happy were the hours which I have spent with this little fair creature, for I obtained permission to have her bed placed in my own apartment, and to make her my especial companion whenever her actual attendance was not required in the school-room. How many privileges this child thus obtained, may be easily conceived; and I trust also, that I was enabled to add profit to comfort, and that my little Amelia will never

have occasion to regret the hours she spent with me—for the respectable head of the family had little idea of the importance of religion, in consequence of which, any instruction which I could give the child was doubly acceptable.

But, as Theresa was an orphan as well as Amelia, I felt it unkind not to show her some favour also, though not drawn to her by affection, so closely as to Amelia. Neither was she that sort of child that seemed to want those kindnesses so much as her little companion did; nevertheless, when she tapped at my door, she was never sent away, and many a nice warm has she had by my fire on a cold winter evening, and many a pleasant walk on a summer's day.

In the meantime I had many opportunities of observing the dispositions of these little girls, and of remarking particularly their several defects.

I was in the habit, when we sat together in the dusk of the evening,

Whilst glowing embers thro' the room,
Taught light to counterfeit the gloom,

of telling them stories from Scripture, and sometimes of questioning them respecting what I had previously taught them. On these occasions, I

was often struck with the two peculiar defects of these children's minds, and led to meditate upon what their probable results might be in after life. One conversation I particularly recollect, and shall therefore give it as an example of what I would wish my reader to understand.

I had been giving them an outline of Bible History during my evening discourses, and taking the Old Testament one day, and the New the next, I thought, therefore, that I would question them on what had gone before, previously to going on any further with my plan.

I had a watch, which had been my father's, and there was a minute dial: and, in order to make my little girls attentive when I asked a question, I gave one circle of the minute hand for the period for giving the answer. Theresa's reply was commonly given before the minute hand had gone one-tenth part of the circle, whilst Amelia's was seldom forthcoming till the same little golden index had completed more than the whole evolution. The question I asked on the present occasion was, "What was the name of the first city on record?"

"Methuselah," replied Theresa, without a moment's thought.

"What does Amelia say?" I asked.

She started as if awaking from a dream, and repeated my question, "What is the first city?"

"Yes," I replied, "what is its name?"

"Its name?" repeated Amelia.

"My question was," I answered, "what was the first city ever built?" Ten moments were now gone. "Before the flood, or after the flood?" asked Amelia.—"The first city, I say." Twenty moments more were gone before I had done speaking. "Oh! before the flood," rejoined the little girl, "the first city—Did not you mean before the flood? Oh! I remember—yes, it was called—called—it was called—called—Enoch."—But the minute was gone.

"You are too late, Amelia," I said, "too late by a quarter of a minute, and you knew it all the time; and had your wits been at home when I asked my question, you would have answered me in less than a second—you would have said Enoch at once. And had you, Theresa, thought an instant before you spoke, you would have replied rightly too. And now I will suppose, that if a person's life had depended on either of you thinking of the right thing, at the right moment, that life would have been lost by the precipi-

tancy of one, and the slowness of the other. Endeavour, my dear children, to acquire the habit of commanding your attention to the thing which you are doing, be it what it may, whether apparently important, or otherwise." To this admonition I afterwards added another, after Theresa had left the room. "Amelia," I said, "I know that you are not reckoned a clever child in this family, and this is entirely owing to a sort of indolence of mind in which you indulge yourself. You seem never to be present, or attentive to what is passing. When a question is asked you, you have to collect your wits from the four quarters of the heavens, before you can answer; and when you are desired to do any thing, you seem to be all confused and bewildered for as long a time, perhaps, as it would take another person to perform it. For instance, when I asked you last night to take a thief out of the candle, you made me repeat the question twice, and were so slow in finding the snuffers, that I was obliged to spring up from my place, and clear the candle myself. I could give you a hundred other instances of the same want of promptitude. It is true, in regard to answering questions, when your answers come they are generally correct;

but this will not save you from being thought lightly of, as it respects your understanding; for there are many people in the world, perhaps nine out of ten, who cannot judge of the correctness of a person's knowledge, but all are pleased with a prompt and ready answer; therefore, Theresa, incorrect as she is, will by these nine people be esteemed cleverer than you, whilst the tenth person will perhaps say,—Amelia knows what is right, but she is so tiresome that we cannot stay to listen to her, and there is no depending on her in an emergency, for she is never ready at the moment her services are required."

Little Amelia wept, and threw her arms round my neck when thus reproved; and when we had united in a prayer, that God would vouchsafe to correct the defects of the little girl's mind, I was called down to tea in the parlour, where I found a lady from London, a friend and distant relation of the head of our family.

This lady was a widow, had an independent fortune, and made great pretensions to literature; with a sort of affectation of encouraging the advancement of knowledge in others; but whether she took proper measures for this purpose, or whether she was exactly a judge in

these matters, I leave my reader to discover by what follows.

We will call this lady Mrs. Montfort. She was an elderly woman, and was dressed with some attention to fashion. She was talking to Mrs. Markham when I entered the room, and having interrupted herself to pay me some compliment, and to say that she anticipated much pleasure in my acquaintance, she proceeded with the subject which she had commenced before my entrance. "And so, Mrs. Markham," she said, "as I was observing, I think that by this little plan of mine, I shall be able to give a sort of spur, a kind of excitement, to your young people. There is nothing like emulation, like the desire of excelling. All the fine characters that ever shone in history, the Cæsars, the Pompeys, the Alexanders, the Bucephaluses, the Cleopatras,—all these were made what they were by the spirit of emulation. Do you not agree with me, young lady,—is not what I say perfectly correct?"

"Really, madam," I replied, "it may be so, but I do not quite make out what you would say;" for truly, I did not quite understand whether the spur she spoke of was a literal or figurative one—being a little confounded by the idea of the

introduction of Bucephalus among the heroes of ancient history. In reply to this, the lady explained her plan, and informed me, that she had provided herself with a beautiful jointed doll of superior dimensions, together with a small trunk, including a variety of elegant apparel for this wooden baby; and that it was her intention, with Mrs. Markham's permission, to present this prize to that young lady of the seminary, who should be able to answer such questions as she might think proper to suggest, in the most satisfactory manner. "I shall not be hard on your little people, my good friend," she added, with a sort of knowing shake of her head, "my examinations shall not be too deep; I shall content myself by merely asking such things as every tolerably well-educated child ought to know; and I cannot doubt but that the pupils of my friend Mrs. Markham know all that is right and necessary for children of their ages to be acquainted with. And we will have a gala that day, Mrs. Markham," continued the lady, "a gala in your garden, a feast in some of your fragrant bowers, and a dance under the trees; and you shall invite a few friends, and allow me to be at the expense of every thing."

"Really, madam," said Mrs. Markham, "I know not how to express my sense of your kindness. These little exhibitions give an eclat to a seminary; but permit me to ask you to have the kindness just to point out some book from which you will have the goodness to take your questions."

"I shall use no book," replied Mrs. Montfort, "my examinations will be merely from the spur of the moment; but I will give you a clue—the English history shall afford my subjects of inquiry; and as I before said, I will not be hard on your little ones—that would not do, my good Mrs. Markham; on no account would that do—I appeal to this young lady."

"There is one thing, madam, which I wish to remark," I said, "and that is, that public examinations of this kind are not, I think, generally speaking, real tests of the intellectual state of the mind of an individual, because on occasions of this kind much depends on the nerves; and it often happens, that self-confidence will carry the palm in things of this kind, from far superior merit."

"I do not agree with you at all in this remark, young lady," said Mrs. Montfort, and she gave

me a variety of reasons for her opinion, none of which struck me as being worth remembering. And thus I was convinced, that I had nothing to do but to yield to the opinion of my elders, and endeavour to prepare my little favourite for a contest in which I felt assured that she would fail.

I had, however, a sort of feeling of honour, which seemed to compel me to devote as much labour to the instruction of one orphan, as I did to the other; and in consequence, from that period till the appointed day of trial, I laboured without ceasing to give these two little ones as much knowledge as possible of the history of their own country; neither had I reason to complain of any slowness in acquiring ideas in either of my pupils, although they both retained the defects when answering my questions, of which I had always complained.

I had occasion, however, to observe, as soon as Mrs. Montfort's scheme was made known to the little people, that a very bad spirit appeared in the school. From that moment every one seemed to consider her companion as a rival, either to be hated or feared. The expression of innocent and unapprehensive cheerfulness passed away from many a dimpled face, and all that was

unamiable and undesirable in the human mind, seemed at once to be called into action.

It is remarkable, that the desire of excellence in divine things, and that of excellence in earthly things, produce a directly contrary feeling in the mind of man. The moment that (by the power of the Holy Spirit) the heart conceives the wish to obtain the crown of glory, a strong feeling is excited at the same time, to see others blessed and promoted in the same degree, and to the same extent; nay, even, if so it might be, to a higher degree, and a more enlarged extent; whereas, on the contrary, the moment that worldly and ambitious desires are awakened in the mind, they are accompanied by a sort of instinct, which is gratified by the depression of others; and these feelings being long indulged, terminate in the sentiment put by the poet in the mouth of Satan:

“Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.”

But I must not indulge in these reflections, lest my own motto should be brought against me, and my reader should say to me—Do the thing which you first proposed to do, and do not wander from your purpose. My intent was to show the evil of that state of mind which is tardy in

fixing itself to an object at the present moment, be it of more or less importance.

Well, then, to proceed with my narrative.—The gala was to take place on the first of August, provided the morning was fine, and the interval between the declaration of Mrs. Montfort's intentions and the eventful day was, as you may believe, fully occupied by the study of the history of England. Much, no doubt, was acquired at that time; and if the reward held out had not been for one only, to the exclusion of all the rest, the object would have been equally well attained, and no bad passions excited. The first of August, however, at length came, and presented a cloudless sky, and brilliant sun. The examination was to take place in the school-room, which was hung with garlands of flowers on the occasion. At eleven o'clock, the persons who had been invited began to arrive, they consisted of the wives and daughters of the most respectable persons in the neighbouring town; worthy people, for the most part, but not perhaps very highly enlightened as it regarded literary matters, although, probably, they might be on a par with most people of the same rank throughout the kingdom; for notwithstanding the present boast-

ed march of intellect, it may still be questioned, whether the mass of persons in middling life in this country, can be said to be highly informed. These ladies (for we admitted no gentlemen) were placed round the school-room on forms. In the centre of the room was a table covered with a green cloth, on which lay the doll, in a pink satin slip, and a gauze frock; and at the head of the table was a chair for Mrs. Montfort. Mrs. Markham did not sit down, but busied herself in paying attentions to her guests.

When all was ready, the young ladies were introduced, all being dressed in white, with scarfs of blue gauze; and I thought that they made a very pretty appearance as they came in, though none, in my eyes, looked like my beloved Amelia.

The little people were arranged round the foot of the table, and care, anxiety, and agitation were painted in burning blushes on many of their cheeks.

Mrs. Montfort seemed quite delighted with the part she was to take in this exhibition. She was dressed with more than her usual display, and she smiled and looked around her, and had a word prepared for every one who sat near her.

All at length being ready, the examination

began. The questions she put were sufficiently simple—as, What Roman first visited Britain? From what country did William the Conqueror come? &c. &c. She did not put the questions as the children stood, but addressed each by name, as she called for an answer; and I very soon observed, that she was not very particular respecting the correctness of these answers, provided that they were promptly given, and not very far from the mark. Whether she was aware of the errors which the children made, or had a mind to pass over those errors which she trusted the audience would not detect, I was not quite sure, but I saw that she was, as she proceeded, somewhat at a loss on whom to fix the palm.

In the meantime Amelia, who was in appearance one of the youngest of the party, had not been called upon, and I was exceedingly sorry to see that her eyes were so entirely fixed upon the doll, which lay before her, that she seemed unconscious of what was going on. Oh, how did I long to whisper “Hoc Age” in her ears, but I dared not to stir: and though I coughed aloud two or three times, yet I could not catch her eye. At length the question was asked—Who was King Arthur? No one could answer, till it came to

Amelia. Mrs. Montfort spoke twice to her before she heard her, and then repeated the question. Amelia started, look confused, and stammered, "King Arthur, ma'am—he was—he was"—Mrs. Montfort passed on to Theresa, who stood next, saying, "Can no one tell me who King Arthur was? Theresa, surely you can tell me."

"Yes," said Theresa, "he was a king, and he lived in the time of Charlemagne, and he fought with the Danes; and he had twelve knights, called the Knights of the Round Table: and he went into the Danish camp as a harper."

"Very well," said Mrs. Montfort, smiling, and looking round, whilst the audience used several expressions of admiration, to this effect—Surprising!—Nice little girl!—How clever!—Wonderful! &c. &c.

Mrs. Montfort then turned to me, and said graciously, "Your little pupil—I think she does you credit. I will question the other again:" and then addressing Amelia—"Can you tell me any thing more of King Arthur? Can you tell me any pretty story of him? I know a very pretty story of that prince."

Amelia looked bewildered, and then said, "Arthur, ma'am — Arthur, did you say?"—

“Yes, my dear, the prince that went as a harper into the Danish camp—there, I have helped you,” and she looked graciously, nodding at me. “Arthur,” repeated Amelia, “Alfred, ma’am—” and not another word could she get out, though I was assured that her ideas were much more correct on this subject than those of her examiner; but Mrs. Montfort did not wait till she had collected her presence of mind, but going on with her questions, proceeded through thick and thin, till she happened to put an inquiry which went half way round the circle, without obtaining an answer: this was—Who was John of Gaunt? Amelia was then applied to. I knew that Amelia could answer this, and when the question came to her, I looked hard at her. She had to withdraw her eyes from the very farthest end of the room, before she was ready to speak, and then it seems she had not heard the question. “John of Gaunt,” repeated Mrs. Montfort. “John of Gaunt,” said Amelia, “he was the son of—one of—one of—our kings,” and there she made a full stop till the question had passed to Theresa, who answered boldly, “He was Earl of Warwick, and he killed the dun cow.” “No,” said Amelia, in a low voice, “you are thinking of Guy, Earl of Warwick;” but neither Theresa’s remark re-

specting the dun cow, or Amelia's attempt to set her right, was heard by any one but by me; for Mrs. Montfort had broken up the assembly, and with the general approbation of those present, was about to deliver the prize to Theresa; for it seems that she had rather miscalculated her powers, and drawn too deeply on the stores of her memory, in attempting to carry on a public examination of the History of England, without book; after which we all adjourned to the garden, there to partake of the various amusements prepared for us.

But I was not in a state to enjoy these pleasures. My little Amelia looked sad, and I loved her too well to be easy when she was unhappy: I therefore took her from her companions, and led her into my own room, where, having shut the door, I kissed her tenderly, saying, "My child, I am hurt to see you grieved, but I hope your sorrow does not proceed from an envious spirit: I hope that you are not sad because Theresa has the doll."

"No, ma'am," she answered, "I hope not; I did indeed wish for the doll, but we could not all have it; but I am very unhappy in thinking that, after all the pains that you have taken with me, I should have been unable to give a single

answer. I know that Mrs. Montfort thought me a simpleton, and, what is worse than all, I knew every question she asked the moment it had passed from me; and I knew all the blunders they made about Arthur, and Alfred, and John of Gaunt. I knew every one. They confounded King Arthur and King Alfred, and they mistook John of Gaunt for Guy, Earl of Warwick."

"There were fifty people in the room," I replied, "and out of those fifty there were, perhaps, not ten who found out these blunders; but how many of these people were there, Amelia, who did not observe the poor figure you made when you were unable to answer a single question! And now, my dear child, I do not say this to add to your affliction, but in order that you may endeavour to overcome this mental defect, which, if it attend you through life, will prevent your usefulness, perhaps, more than any defect which can be thought of, short of real wickedness.

"And now, my Amelia," I said, "let this day be the beginning of better things: you have lost the prize merely from indolence and inattention, but I will freely give you an infinitely better gift, and may my gift be your guide through life, and may it lead you to seek that Physician by

whom all the maladies of the soul, and mind, and spirit, are perfectly healed." I then presented my little darling with a beautiful Bible, in a satin case, and from that period her little Bible was her constant companion. Neither did the divine word fail to effect, in due time, that blessed change in her heart and disposition which it is certain to produce, when attended by the influences of the Holy Spirit. *Isaiah* lv. 10, 11. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

And now, my gentle reader, I take my leave, hoping that the lesson contained in these few pages may not be lost upon you; and may these words be ever graven on your heart. *Eccl.* ix. 10. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

OLD THINGS AND NEW THINGS.

I AM a member of a very large family: my father was a country gentleman of the old school, and having more than his share of daughters, he was content to marry them, in many instances, somewhat beneath what (as some persons pretended) they had a right to expect. It, however, was so ordered, that I, who had no better pretensions than my sisters, should have made what the world calls a good match—that is, I married a man who lived on his fortune in an elegant little villa in Berkshire. As it also was ordered that I should be early separated from my own daughters by their becoming wives, I took it into my head that I should be doing a vast service to the children of my sisters, by inviting one or two of them at a time, in order that I might introduce them to a superior style of society to what they were likely to see at home. Now, I rather wonder at this my mis-

taken notion of doing good, because I was actually at that period, which may now be ten years ago, very deeply impressed with the vast importance of religion; and not only impressed with this sentiment in a general way, but I may presume to say, much instructed in the leading doctrines of Christianity. For example, the utter corruption of man in his natural state, and the completeness of the work which has been done for the salvation of the world; but be this as it may, I was permitted to follow the suggestions of my own mind on this occasion, and to send into the country for two of my nieces, viz. Catherine, the eldest daughter of my second sister, and Rebekah, who was also an eldest daughter in the family of my third sister. My reader will not be told what the rank in society of the fathers of these two young ladies was: he must content himself with knowing, that both families lived deep in the north, and that the young people had never before taken a journey beyond the metropolis of their own county; notwithstanding which they were as totally different the one from the other, as young women of the same age (for they were both between the age of eighteen and twenty,) could possibly be,

though I can hardly say which of them was most unprepared for profiting by the opportunities which I had provided for them. For, whereas Rebekah had been brought up in the bosom of her own family, her parents being persons who clung to forms because they were old, and called every thing heterodox which was new to them, Catherine, on the contrary, had received her ideas first, from a father, who was opposed to all ancient authorities, whether legal or formal; and, secondly, from a schoolmistress, who, acting upon the same principles, never even taught a child to spell without a reference to Pestalozzi, or some other high sounding name of modern renown. Thus having given the dramatis personæ of my narrative, I will beg my reader to accompany me on a certain fine morning in June in a drive from my little villa, which forms a very pretty object from Maidenhead thicket, to the town of Reading; in which town at a certain inn I was prepared to meet my nieces, who were supposed to have arrived there late on the preceding evening. It had been many years since I had seen my sisters, (the mothers of these two girls,) and when informed by the hostess that two young ladies, answering to my description,

were in a certain parlour which she pointed out, I ran along the passage, all on the *qui vive*, for I am naturally lively, and passing through a door opened to me by a waiter, I found myself the next minute in the presence of my nieces.

The moment my name was announced by the waiter, who knew me well, the young people came forward, and we embraced each other before we had time for reciprocal examination; after which, as we had an hour to wait whilst the horses rested, I sat down opposite my nieces, and whilst I looked upon them with no small anxiety, I failed not to put many questions respecting the several households in the north, in which my affections still lingered; but, although I had a deep interest in the answers given me, I had a deeper, because a nearer interest, in considering how the young people before me would show in the eyes of my husband, who had (to speak candidly) always expressed some doubts of the policy of introducing them to a style of life, for which probably they were not suited. On the first view Catherine certainly showed best: her figure was not bad, though her air was by no means of the first *ton*; still she had something of an air; and though her

manner was undoubtedly pert, yet it was not cold or sullen, that is, she had arrived at the second stage from ill breeding to the step above,—the most depressed state of manner being that of sullen reserve, the next above it being that of a forced and awkward endeavour to throw off this reserve,—at which point, as I have said above, Catherine was arrived; and as pertness is preferable to sullenness, as being more open and tangible, I must confess that my heart, at this first meeting, opened more to Catherine than to her cousin, although, if weighed in a scale which no man can use, there was perhaps as much, or more solid worth in the one than in the other.

Rebekah had a face, features, and a complexion which ought to have made her handsome: her eyes were well formed, of a dark blue; her nose straight, and her mouth small: she was also red and white, and the red and white were in their right places; but with all these appurtenances of beauty, her face entirely failed of producing the effect of beauty. As to her figure, she looked like one who, having been intended by nature to have been tall, had been kept down and compressed by some unnatural force during the whole season of growth; this compressure

having induced an answerable thickness in every limb. She received me with an unbending gravity; she answered my questions respecting her family without a smile; she gave me no title, and avoided looking me in the face when she spoke. I could not comprehend her manner, and after one or two efforts gave her up, and conversed only with Catherine.

We were sitting in a room from whence we could see the street. Some well-dressed ladies who passed by, having drawn the attention of Catherine, soon after I had finished my catechism of the family history, she broke out to the following effect,—“So I see the style is quite different here to what it is with us down in the north; and Miss Pennythorn was quite right when she told me that it was no manner of use for her to have my things made up by our own dress-maker, for we never get anything new with us, till it is old about town. Don't you think, Aunt Stephens, that Miss Pennythorn's judgment was very good?—Papa says there are few such clever women anywhere—” and then without waiting a reply from me, she called upon Rebekah to look at some young lady at a shop door over the way :—“See how pretty and janty

her bonnet sits," she exclaimed; "there is no milliner in our town could give such an air as that to a head-dress. Papa says that we are at the world's end in the north behind every other land in modern improvements—don't you think Papa's right, Aunt Stephens?" Rebekah had got up slowly from her seat, and was looking into the street. "See there," resumed Catherine; "she will be gone before your eye catches her, Aunt: she is a genteel person.—But Aunt Stephens, we were talking of Papa—he is all for the new improvements, and so is Miss Pennythorn. She says that it is very kind of you to invite me here, because I shall see with you many new things, and shall be able to improve myself. Papa told me to thank you."

"I am obliged to your father, Catherine," I answered; "I like a person who receives an intended kindness in a cheerful grateful manner. I would wish you to understand that I invited you and Rebekah to my house in order to profit you; but I can do you no good, unless you receive my advances with kindness, and believe that I mean you well."

Catherine assured me, that she did not doubt my kindness, and she spoke with the candour

and openness of youth, but Rebekah was still silent, which, the other observing, began to rally her; then she said, "There is my cousin: she hates new things as much as I love them. I tell her she will never improve."

"What do you mean?" asked Rebekah, looking at the same time wonderfully awkward.

"Why," replied Catherine; "you know how you argued with me last night, and told me how your papa admonished you—yes, that was your word—not to be adopting any new-fangled notions when you went out into the world: and do you not recollect how you told me that old notions and old customs were the best, and that my papa and Miss Pennythorn were all wrong; and that if people were to follow them, they would soon have no notions left, either of right or wrong?"

Rebekah coloured at this attack, which was by no means fair, for what people say in private, should not be told openly; and as her reply seemed not to be forthcoming, I spoke for her, and said, "Come, Catherine, spare your cousin for the present; or, at least, let her speak for herself, and explain her own sentiments, and to whom she pleases."

I expected a smile, at least, as a reward for my championship, but no such thing appeared. The same stiff close gravity continued, and, by way of a test to both, I spoke of my husband, and said, "As he was only their uncle through me, they must both try to please him:" and I told them, (what, I thank God, I could say with truth,) that he was a man who was truly pious, and who desired to make his Bible the rule of his life. As no answer to this remark was at hand from either of the young ladies, it was impossible for me to carry this subject any farther, and as I found myself getting impatient with the impracticability of one, and the levity of the other of my nieces, I proposed a walk about the town, till the horses were ready. And now, if Rebekah had annoyed me within doors, Catherine was to be my torment without. We had not passed many yards before she fell in love with a hat, in the last extreme of the fashion, which was displayed in the window of the very milliner with whom I had been accustomed to deal. Not aware of this fancy, I turned into the shop, Rebekah having hinted that she wanted gloves; and whilst I was assisting the slow choice of the one, the other had actually, at another

counter, purchased this same hat, and even despatched it in a band-box to the inn: and when at length I turned round, she was trying a cloak so *outrè*, that I could not have suffered her to exhibit it, even could she have prevailed upon me to let her purchase it.

"Dear Catherine," I said, "it is not the thing; it will not do. There are three colours too many, at least, about it, and frills and furberies enough for each colour."

"But, Aunt," she replied, "it is the very newest fashion—it came from Paris, they tell me, last week; and from town this very morning."

"A very good reason, in truth," I answered; "it must be proper, because it is new!" However, I was imperative, and I ordered the milliner to put the cloak away.

A bookseller's shop, in which I had some business, was the next into which we entered; and there my troublesome niece had, in a few moments, overhauled half a dozen pamphlets, novels, and books of essays, one and all of which had the recommendation of being new—quite new—and just come from town:—"On which very account, Mr. Blandy," I said, addressing

the bookseller, "this young lady shall have none of them; for, until experience and study of truth have furnished her with a sieve for sifting the chaff of this world from the grain, she shall not be trusted by me with that which is new, quite new, and yet untried by old experience."

"La, Aunt Stephens! la!" cried Catherine; "Papa buys, and brings home all the new books which reach our poor little town, and Miss Pennythorn borrows them of him."

I did not choose to hear this, though I saw that Mr. Blandy opened his eyes wide on the occasion; but, turning to go out, I missed Rebekah, and found that she had got to the bottom of the shop, and that the shop-boy had climbed upon some steps, to lift down for her a certain dusty volume, which she had pointed out to him from the label on the back of the book; appearing to me, at the distance where I stood, to exhibit a specimen of the art of book-binding of the period of the Charles's, at least, if not of one more remote. The next moment I saw her put down a trifling sum of money, after which she came forward with the black volume in her hand.

"The horses must be ready by this time," I

said; "we will go no farther:" and back I posted to the inn, a niece on each side of me,—and, as I walked along, I asked Rebekah what treasure she had met with in the dusty tome.

"It is a collection," she answered, speaking with an effort which convulsed her whole frame.

"Of what?" I asked.

"Of sermons," she replied.

"What sermons," I said, "of the seventeenth century?—for, by the look of the volume I must at least give them a hundred years. I hope you did not give much for them."

"Papa told me to read a sermon every day," she answered.

"A sermon," I repeated; "a sermon! But a sermon may be a very good thing, and a sermon may be a very bad thing."

"There is no sermon," she answered, "from which some good may not be got;—Papa says so."

"We shall want our sieve again here," I said; "but tell me, Rebekah, how should a young thing like you, when reading sermons thus promiscuously, expect to have sufficient judgment to choose the good, and reject the evil."

"Papa has taught me what is right," she an-

swered: "I know what he approves, and I shall keep to the rules he has given me."

"This is a good principle," I answered; "that is, it is good for a little child in a father's house: a principle which, as far as it goes, carries a blessing with it. But we must have a farther principle than this to carry us through the world. According to the nature of things, parents die before their children; and often even whilst parents live and are in health, children are parted from them, and are brought into scenes where no admonitions, previously given, can reach their cases; and therefore a higher principle than that of obedience to natural parents is requisite for human beings, and this principle must be derived from the study of the will of a heavenly Father."

"My father has taught me nothing," she replied, "but what pleases God. We read a sermon every morning, at home."

"At home!" repeated Catherine, laughing; "there is the word, Aunt Stephens; I thought it would not be long before Rebekah would out with it: you must know that every thing with her which is done at home is right; and every thing done in a different way elsewhere is wrong,

even so far as eating tansey pudding on Mothering Sunday."

"You are mistaken," replied Rebekah, sharply; "we have roast veal at home on Mothering Sunday, and tansey pudding on Easter Sunday."

"Oh! I beg pardon," said Catherine, laughing; "pray excuse me."

"But suppose it was Mothering Sunday," said Rebekah, "would there be any harm in it, Aunt Stephens?"

"None in the world," I answered, "unless there is a merit made of these observances."

"What did you say, Aunt?" said Rebekah.

"Unless," I repeated, "people think well of themselves for attending to these very unimportant things; then there is harm, and great harm in them, because they lead us to rest in the letter which killeth, and to despise the spirit which giveth life."

"Then you do not approve of the good old forms, Aunt?" returned Rebekah.

I felt myself getting offended: I felt that Rebekah had come to me with some prejudices; and I answered in one word,—“Niece, I desire to receive as a matter of faith and of duty, all that is enjoined in Scripture, and neither more

nor less. I neither wish to adopt any thing because it is new, nor to hold to any thing because it is old, unless I can find an argument for so doing in Scripture. And thus, having explained my motives of conduct to both of you, my nieces, if you do not understand me, it is your own faults."

By this time we had arrived at the inn, and the carriage being ready, we were soon on our way to that lovely home, with which my heavenly Father had provided me. It had pleased Almighty God, in giving me a husband of an independent fortune, to give me also a gentleman, in the highest sense of the word, a true Christian, and an elegant and intellectual man. We had been blessed in our own family: some of them had been ripened early for glory, and some had married, and were ornaments to their station. Under the divine favour they had owed every thing to their father, and I certainly felt a little uncomfortableness in the prospect, on presenting to him my two nieces, who in no respect replied to what I knew to be his ideas of what young ladies ought to be. But I feared too much: he was prepared to make every allowance; and had they been the children of his own

brothers, he could not have treated them with more uniform kindness. But for a very long time there was no suitable answer to our endeavours to benefit these young people: they were both so thoroughly wrapped up in their own ideas, that it was impossible to set them right where they were wrong. Never were two persons of our age more completely baffled by two girls; our family arrangements are regular; and, from the great attention to politeness in my husband, imposing; but, in different ways, the house suited neither of my nieces.

Catherine could not bear the restraint which good manners required; she was not content with the society of our occasional visitors; her mind had no anchor; it was tossed on the troubled sea of excessive excitement; she had got the idea that this present world was capable of being rendered a sort of Eden, by the changing of the established customs and laws of society. She was not actually a politician, but she had imbibed the feelings of a certain class of persons who are so, and though her ideas did not extend to the remodelling of empires, they certainly did to the remodelling of families. Instead, therefore, of trying to acquire what she might, by falling into

the superior style or manners constantly exhibited before her with us, she was always planning some amendment, or trying to break through some restraint; and when this could not be done, she became restless and fretful, and highly disputatious. I could not persuade her to fall into the simple style of dress used by the higher classes; she insisted on wearing her splendid hat in our simple village church; she made several violent intimacies, which I did not think proper, and borrowed every new publication which she could lay her hands upon. In short, she kept me in constant hot water, whilst Rebekah froze me with her cold reserve, shutting herself up half a day in her own apartment, and looking with general disapprobation when she was forced to come out. Thus we spent the summer months, and I was looking forwards to a very uncomfortable winter, when one day Mr. Stephens opened to me on the subject of these my inmates.

"My dear," he said, "you are not satisfied I see with your nieces, though you have not said much to me on the subject of them."

I confessed that what he observed was just.

"Do you not see," he said, "that neither of

these girls has any principles for the basis for proper conduct."

"I grant," I replied, "that Catherine has not, but Rebekah has a steady foundation of action, though perhaps a mistaken one."

"Rebekah," he replied, "is just as destitute of true principle as Catherine; they are both just as far from the knowledge of truth, the one as the other."

"You surprise me," I said; "do you not think Rebekah religious?"

"Not as much so," he answered, "as a Hindoo, who repeats his prayers on the banks of the Ganges; but believe me, that, as far as I can see, she knows as little of the Christian religion as does Catherine."

"You amaze me," I replied, "for she is particularly attentive to forms, and she reads her sermons daily; whilst Catherine is ever seeking novelties, without reference even to the name of Christianity."

"Rebekah is more decent and more observant of external ordinances," he continued, "and these decencies and these forms are a moral hedge, encircling and guarding her in her present situation. But what says our Lord, when speak-

ing of formalists? 'The publicans and the harlots are nearer the kingdom of heaven than the Pharisees.' Hence, in speaking of worldly matters, Rebekah is certainly the safest, but as it regards the things which are spiritual, there is as much hope for Catherine as for her; and for this reason, that Rebekah's antiquities are a stronger support for self-righteousness than Catherine's novelties."

"I made no answer," and he continued, "the education of both these girls is equally flimsy in its different way,—one has been instructed in the forms of religion, and perhaps even in some of the doctrines; that is, were you to catechise Rebekah, she has been sufficiently instructed to be enabled to answer more to the purpose, and would probably know that there are some doctrines which she must not deny in so many words, but she has never yet been taught to put the truths of revelation together, nor led to derive the due results from these truths. For instance, she might acknowledge, by having been so taught to speak, that man is utterly depraved, and dead in sin, and yet, follow this truth up to its result with her, and she would not acknowledge that if man can do nothing, Christ must do all;—

no, this she could not do, for then she must allow for fallibility in her own church, her own house, and her own duties; thus undermining that fabric of proud and lofty self-righteousness in which she shelters herself, to the exclusion of all those who do not do exactly as she does."

"But what can we do for these poor girls," I asked; "can we give them grace?"

"Assuredly not," he answered, "but we can do what has not yet been done for them by human means; let us devote the long evenings which are coming, to giving them something like *sound* instruction. Casting away all uninspired treatises, let us give them some such Bible teaching as we gave our own beloved children,—showing them that what man ordains is nothing, that it should be required as a matter of faith or as a duty pleasing to God, unless the Scriptures enjoin it also: let us show them also what Christ has done; what may be expected from this world and what may be hoped in the next, and on what basis human authorities stand,—and wherefore, and how far they are to be attended to.

"Depend upon it, my dear," he added, "that teaching of this kind, plain substantial Bible teaching, is the first medicine; and let me say,

the only medicine which we can apply to the spiritual and intellectual maladies of these poor girls, in order to do what in us lies to get the new follies and the old follies out of their heads."

"I agree with you entirely, my dear," I answered, "and I thank you for the proposition which you have made, but solve one difficulty to my mind,—Rebekah has certainly been made to read the Scriptures from childhood, how then can she have read them with so little profit?"

"I have not been behind the curtain of the family management of my brother-in-law," he replied, "but I much doubt the fact of pure simple Scripture teaching in the family; and if it has not been pure, it cannot be expected to produce the desired effect, that is, to give that sort of head knowledge which is correct,—for instance, if the father of a family reads a chapter to his household, and forces the text, in his commentaries, to his own preconceived ideas, he has fouled the waters which should flow unmingled to his children's lips."

"And who is not liable to commit this error?" I replied.

"Every earthly parent," he answered, "and therefore the greater need of the first principle

which I have laid down, viz. that man's authority in the interpretation of Scripture amounts to nothing. And there is another error," he added, "which ought to be most carefully avoided; and that is, the placing of any external form, ordinance, or observance on a line of equal importance with the words of the Bible."

My worthy husband then added several opinions on the nature of modern female education, asserting that it was, generally speaking, a superstructure without a basis; and therefore, the more it was elevated, the more likely to be blown down, or rendered useless in other ways. I conclude my narrative, by saying that my husband's plans were diligently followed up during the ensuing winter, much to my pleasure and advantage, though with little apparent fruit to the young people, for Rebekah retained her sullenness, and Catherine her levity, through every lecture; and, as my husband said, this was to be expected, or at least we were not to be surprised to find it so, because knowledge is not grace. Neither does the blessing result as a consequence of man's efforts. However, my husband was blessed in the imparting of a substantial head-knowledge to the young people, which

knowledge, though unwillingly admitted, they were compelled to carry back with them to the north, not being able to disembarrass themselves thereof, though I verily believe that they would gladly have so done.

I parted from them at the termination of their year with me, and felt that they had made as little apparent improvement as any two girls of their ages could possibly have been expected to have done; neither did they manifest that sorrow at parting which I had expected. But, in less than five years afterwards, Catherine having married and lost her first babe, wrote to me one of the sweetest and most pious letters I ever read, thanking me and my husband for what we had taught her, and acknowledging that without our instruction, and the divine blessing thereon, she could never have felt what she then did, viz. that her present affliction was for her good. She has since been blessed with other children, and is a truly pious wife, and mother, and mistress of a family.

It was only one week since that a letter from Rebekah, who is still unmarried, brought the welcome tidings, that she had also been brought to see that the Lord is the Alpha and the Ome-

ga of all truth, and that she had entirely adopted her uncle's opinion, namely, that what man teaches is nothing, that it should be required as a matter of faith, or as a duty pleasing to God. But I must not omit the postscript of Rebekah's letter, which was to this effect.—Dear Catherine, in whose house I am now writing, bids me tell my uncle that he has acted very inconsistently by us, for whereas when he was quarrelling with us both—with me for clinging to old things, and with Catherine for seeking new things, he ought not to have opened a treasure to us, wherein we have found things new and old, sufficient to gratify our desires until time shall be swallowed up in eternity.

THE SWISS COTTAGE.

It is written, that man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards. No doubt this is perfectly true, but may we not ask, Do not many of our afflictions proceed from our own ill-conduct? And may not this question be answered by another, Are we always most unhappy when outward circumstances are the least propitious? Were we to mark our most uneasy days, would they be found to be always those in which we were lying under the pressure of external calamities? What believer is there who has not experienced a peace passing all understanding during the hours of sore affliction? and what human being is there, who, in the moment of high prosperity, has not felt a weariness and dissatisfaction which he has been ashamed to own, even to his own heart? But, in order to elucidate what I would wish to say, I am about to

introduce my reader to certain short passages of my very eventful life.

About fourteen years since I was travelling in a melancholy mood through one of the loveliest valleys of Switzerland: business had compelled me to leave my own country, and my melancholy arose from thinking of a wife and children far away. With the recollection of my own little dwelling, my orchard and garden, in the heart of my beloved native land—in such a state of mind, it was natural for me to fancy every peasant I saw, as I passed along, more happy than myself,—inasmuch as I supposed him nearer to his home, and to that beloved domestic circle in which our most tender natural feelings find their dearest objects. It was the afternoon. I had breakfasted at a small inn, enclosed in a deep valley between two hills, and had descended towards noon into one of those exquisitely beautiful spots, of which few can form an idea who have not visited similar regions of Alpine beauty. It was by a very narrow passage that we entered the valley, and descended into a hollow where the green sward was scattered over with forest trees, and watered by several pure streams, which, meeting together in the bottom of the

valley, formed a small lake, on the polished surface of which was represented all the various beauties on its banks. Beyond the lake the ground rose precipitously, being richly diversified with rock and wood, and above the remote horizon, as it were floating in ether, appeared a long range of snowy heights, presenting cones and pyramids of celestial brilliancy.

The bleating of sheep, and the hum of multitudes of bees, together with the rush of waters, and the murmur of the breeze, among the lofty branches, added new charms to this enchanting spot; and, as my wheels moved slowly round, I fell into a train of thoughts such as are commonly suggested by a beautiful landscape, in a country where the inhabitants are unknown to us, and where we are wholly unacquainted with the little cabals and heart-burnings which exist in every place where human beings have fixed their habitations.

Here, thought I, applying the words of J. J. Rousseau, upon the brow of some agreeable hill (such as is now before me), in the depths of some retired province, I would have my habitation—namely, a white house, with green lattices; I would have my garden filled with culinary

vegetables, and my park should be a green meadow; the fruits, at the discretion of those that walk in my garden, should neither be counted nor gathered by my gardener; all our repasts should be a feast where abundance will please more than delicacies.

In such a retirement as this, how I thought I should delight to dwell,—far from the world, far from all its pompous pageants and gilded vanities—excluded from all society but that of friends, most dear and precious in my sight—how great, how pure, how perfect, would my enjoyment be. How happy are the inhabitants of this valley—give them but a taste for literature—give them but a little polish of manners, and the Arcadia of the poets would no longer be an imaginary state.

Whilst indulging in these meditations we had descended farther into the valley, and had passed beneath the shade of the trees; and as I proceeded, I seemed to be sometimes lost in the obscurity of a wood, and at other times to be travelling beneath arches of rock which hung terrifically over my head. In one part of the valley, sunny meadows opened to my view, gaily enamelled with every variety of flowers; the

perfumed cups of which seemed to promise a rich regale to the multitude of bees which roved from sweet to sweet : and in another I seemed to be departing from the channels of the brooks, being wholly unprepared for the instant when they should burst again upon the senses, and come dashing forward from some rocky height, to cross the very footsteps of the horses. At length a lovely cottage, such as poets have delighted to imagine, with all the most delightful circumstances of a roof of thatch, a rustic porch, and casement windows, presented itself, a little before me, on a green slope, half retired behind a group of apple trees, then bending down beneath the weight of their golden fruit. It was situated beneath an impending rock, from whence hung in beautiful festoons the branches of a vine, whose rich clusters were just beginning to assume their autumnal tint. A cow was feeding quietly on the green lawn, before the door of the house, and a young woman sitting near to her on the bank, playing with a little infant. In the porch was an old woman with a spindle and wheel, and on the summit of a ladder fixed against one of the trees, by the side of the house, was a peasant, who seemed quite in the

prime of life, occupied in throwing down fruit to a group of little children, who stood beneath the tree. To finish the picture, a creature of the feline order, with dainty step and murderous intent, was stealing along the thatch above the porch, and a row of bee-hives were arranged beneath the wall.

Here, I thought, as this beautiful picture burst upon my view with all its interesting features—here, surely, is an exemplification of that unbroken peace and sweet domestic happiness of which I have so often formed the image in my own mind. How enviable is the state of yonder peasant, who stands on the ladder, surrounded by his family, his aged mother, his wife, his little ones—the mother in whose arms he was reared, the partner of his life, whom no doubt he chose from the purest feelings of affection (for the love of money, which is the motive of so many marriages, can hardly have been felt in this simple scene); all these gather round him—all these contribute to his happiness—all these administer to his wants, and receive him with their sweetest smiles, when he returns wearied with his healthy labours. Oh, happy peasant! kings might envy thee, and wish in vain to change conditions with

thee. Thou hast every thing which mortal could desire. Thus I thought, and to this effect I no doubt should have spoken, had any one been with me in the carriage, but there was no one near me but the coachman, with his great jack boots and musical whip; for the drivers in Switzerland have the art of making their whips express many things, which we should consider beyond the reach of whip cord. I was therefore obliged to submit to be dragged up the eminence in silence, little foreseeing the sudden stoppage which was to take place, for I had scarcely been brought in a direct line with the cottage, when the carriage was suddenly thrown nearly over upon a bank; and, when I could recollect myself, I found myself lying against its side, having experienced no manner of injury. I was presently drawn out of the carriage by the coachman, assisted by the peasant, amid the ejaculations and cries of the whole family from the cottage. It was soon ascertained that the carriage could go no farther until the wheel had been mended; and, as I did not choose to leave my portmanteau, and walk on to the next village, where there was an inn, I obtained permission to remain at the cottage till the wheel was repaired.

Whilst the coachman went in search of the nearest smith, I was left to the hospitality of the peasant and his family, and permitted to look more closely into the real state of things as it regarded the happiness of this family than I had expected. As far as externals went, these objects of my vain speculation lost nothing by a nearer inspection. The Swiss peasantry are in general handsome, and the children are lovely. The little ones of this family bloomed with health, and were as active as the chamois of their own mountains; added to which, they had eyes of a dark and brilliant blue, and long flowing ringlets of silky hair. The dress too of these cottagers was becoming, because it was clean, whole, and suited to their condition; their house too was orderly, and indicated no want of the comforts of life. Neither was any polite attention wanting towards me. They hastened to serve a table for me in the porch, provided with eggs, bacon, vegetables, fruit, and even a bottle of the ordinary wine of the country. Nevertheless, I could not be brought into so intimate an association with these peasants without discovering that there was any thing here but that peace which I had so vainly sup-

posed to be their portion; for in my speculations, being then myself in a state of darkness, I had omitted the main ingredient in the composition of that happiness and peace which we all desire to possess—namely, religion. I had supposed, with many of the wise, many of the learned, and many of the great, of this world, that happiness is not only affected, but actually, as it were, created by our outward circumstances; and, in consequence, I had through life been in the habit of attributing perfect bliss to those individuals whose external circumstances were the most agreeable. In several instances, however, I had been undeceived, and had arrived at this conclusion—that honour, fame, and riches, so much and so generally desired by young people, were often found to fail in bestowing happiness; but, when I expected to find it in retired and domestic scenes, I had not the least idea that I was still pursuing a phantom, and that I should, at length, be brought to the conviction, that outward circumstances have but a feeble influence in insuring the peace and serenity of the mind. This lesson I had not learned at the period I am speaking of; I was therefore much surprised and disappointed, when seated in the porch of the

cottage, awaiting my meal, to hear the voice of discord from within. A disagreement, it seems, had arisen between the mother and the son respecting the fruit he had been gathering, of which she charged him with having given too much to his children, instead of laying it up in store for winter; and he answered her with sureliness, on which the wife interfered, and the children attacked the grandmother. Words ran high, and the young man withdrew at a back door, shutting it after him with violence, and returning no more whilst I was in the house. It was probably not supposed that I had heard all this, and the old woman came to lay my cloth soon afterwards, with smiling face, indeed, but with a raised complexion, and that sort of fiery expression in the eye, which indicates a storm within. Every thing, however, passed off quietly till I had dined, at which time the daughter, going out to milk upon the lawn, followed by the little ones, the old lady brought her wheel, and sat near me.

“You have a pleasant house and charming family, and every thing very comfortable about you, my good woman,” I said, thinking it was necessary for me to show my complaisance to

one by whom I had been so hospitably served. "True, Monsieur," she replied, "we have every thing comfortable, and are as forward in the world as any poor persons in the valley; and to what is this owing but to my industry? and did I not get for my son the best wife in all the neighbourhood, and one that had a cow and a chest of linen for her portion? and yet I have but poor thanks, as you might have heard but now, Monsieur, had you been minded to attend to what passed before my son went out; but, although all prospers, as you see, about us, there is no contentment here. My son and daughter would spend all before them, and I would have them lay up something for a winter's day; and the children are so wilful, and my daughter-in-law so sullen, that I have a miserable life among them, though I spin and toil for them from rise of day till the going down of the sun; and many and many is the skein of flax which I have spun for them, ever since I have been too blind to thread a needle."

There was irritation in the aged woman's face; I therefore ventured to suppose, notwithstanding what I had heard of the insolence of her son, that there might be faults on both sides; and ac-

cordingly I ventured to speak in behalf of the duty of mutual forbearance in families, and of the allowance which the different members of societies should make for each other; on which the old woman begged I would give a little of my good advice to her daughter-in-law, who, she said, had no notion of making allowance for any body's whims but her own. This was an office for which I had no inclination, and was therefore glad when informed by the coachman that all was ready for the continuation of my journey. Nevertheless, I did not clear the premises of this supposed peaceful cottage before I had witnessed another domestic dispute, in which the young woman showed me that she was perfectly able to fight her own battles.

Upon the whole, however, I had been treated with kindness, and retained some regard for these cottagers, although they had certainly destroyed many very pleasing illusions; for from that time I always felt a sort of damp on my spirits whenever I attempted, in imagination, to people any pretty cottage which I happened to pass in my travels with any of those perfect beings which are said to inhabit romantic valleys, deep forests, and sunny glades.

Still, however, my mind remained in a dark state, and I attributed the unhappiness I saw in the world to chance or fortune, or untoward outward circumstances, or to bad examples, or to any other cause but the real one—namely, to the depravity of our nature, which, mixing itself with every scene of life, and exerting itself most on occasions of high prosperity, and when the outward man is most at ease, disturbs our peace and renders us miserable, when, were our minds duly regulated, we ought to be most happy.

Through the divine blessing shed upon the Word of God, administered to me by a faithful preacher, my eyes were opened, after a while, to the real state of man on earth, the nature of his fall, and the means taken by divine wisdom for his restoration.

I was then made to see that man in his unchanged state is incapable of happiness, and that all those persuasions which have been entertained by self-sufficient persons respecting the different outward circumstances in which happiness is to be found, are altogether erroneous; the seat of peace being chiefly in the mind, and independent of externals, and being the gift of God—a gift which is never bestowed on those

who have not been brought to seek him in the way pointed out in Scripture, that is, through Christ.

It was after my mind had been thus divinely illuminated, and that by the free grace of God, and not through any merits or exertions of my own, that I was called again by my affairs to visit Switzerland. Ten years had elapsed since my first visit, and I pursued nearly the same track as I had done on the former occasion.

I had retained such a recollection of the hospitable cottage and its inhabitants, that I resolved to visit it again, and having failed on my first visit of speaking a word in season (for how should I then have spoken of what I neither understood, nor cared for?) I set out early one morning from the inn, in the pass, where I had formerly breakfasted, with the intent of again taking my afternoon meal at the cottage, should circumstances permit. On emerging from the gorge, I was again impressed as before with the uncommon loveliness of this valley of flowers and bees, of rocks and rivulets, of lawns and woods; and again my admiration was excited by the exquisite beauty of the thatched cottage and its rustic porch; but as I was slowly drawn up the

eminence, I was struck with a sort of air of desolation and neglect, which was shed over the environs of the house. No cow was feeding on the lawn, no laughing babes were grouped beneath the trees, neither was the voice of the father heard, nor was the mother visible; but all was still and solitary—I was impatient—I sprang from the carriage, and approached the house by a shorter cut across the green sward.

I entered the porch, and knocked at the door. It was presently opened by a little girl, about eleven years of age. I recollected the dark blue eye, and ringlets of light auburn, which had designated all the children of this family whom I had formerly seen. “Where is your father, my little girl?” I said, as she stood courtseying to me.

“Dead, sir,” she replied, “long, long ago.”

“And your mother?” I added.

“Dead, too, sir,” she answered, and seemed embarrassed, but then continued to speak; “they are all dead, sir, and only my grandmother is left;” and she stood back and pointed to an exceedingly wrinkled figure sitting in the corner of the wide chimney.

“All dead! all gone!” I said; “and all those smiling and blooming children:—all gone

but your old grandmother:—by what accident, by what misfortune did this happen?” and I advanced to the old woman, and had some difficulty to make her recollect that she had ever seen me before; but when I had succeeded in bringing myself to her mind, her eyes lighted up, and she hailed me as an old and kind friend. She caused her grand-daughter to set me a chair, and expressed herself as particularly grateful for the visit.

I was embarrassed: I felt that things were strangely changed with her, and I hardly knew how to commence a conversation. But she presently relieved me by asking me, if all was well with me and with my family; and then reverting to herself, “Dear sir,” she said; “you see me brought low: my son and his poor wife, and their four sweet babes, are gone to rest. The small pox visited us, and carried all away but little Gertrude: she was left by a kind Providence for my comfort. She has been a tender child to me; my little ewe lamb, that has lain in my bosom many years, and the great Shepherd will preserve her when I am no more. But the Almighty was very good to my children: the pastor of our parish, good sir, was changed soon after you were here, and the new one

visited us in our cottage, and he catechised our little ones, and he gathered us all together several times in the week in the village church, and he taught us what we never knew before, and he made me feel how I had neglected the soul of my son in his childhood, and it was a very humbling feeling, sir. He visited my children when they lay dying. He visited me afterwards, and comforted me; and he gave me a Bible, and made me to understand the goodness of God, and all he has done for sinful men. And so, kind sir, I have been reconciled to my bereavements, and made to be thankful for what is left. And I have a belief that my children are in glory, for they died in faith: and I am waiting here until my change shall come, and I am not impatient to be gone, because of little Gertrude, although it will be a gain to her when I am gone, because the pastor's lady has promised to take her."

"Oh! don't talk of going, dear grandmother," said the little girl, rubbing a tear from her eye. "Please not to let her talk of it, sir; I never shall be happy when she is gone; this house is so dear to me, I shall never love any place like this."

"It is a sweet and a happy place, my dear

child," said the old woman, "and I thank God for giving us such a home : nevertheless this world is not our resting-place,—here we cannot stay, and ought not to wish to remain. But, kind sir, I can remember the time, when you were here last, when I was quite uneasy and dissatisfied, and yet could not bear the thought of going out of this world ; and now, sir, since the fear of death has been removed—since Christ our Lord has shown my heart what he has done for me—I am quite content to die. And yet I am more happy here than I was then ; as much more happy, I think, as heaven is happier than the place of anguish and despair. I have lost a great deal too, that is, for a time I have lost a great deal, and sometimes we feel it hard to manage for ourselves ; our cow is dead, and our garden is gone to ruin, and our bees have swarmed and hived in distant places ; still we are happy and content, because we know it is to be for a very little while, and that a place is prepared for us as much better than this, as this valley is to the sandy deserts spoken of in Scripture, where no water is ; and thus, sir, all care is off our minds, and of this I am sure, that where there is corroding care, there can be no peace."

In this way she talked to me, whilst I, from time to time, interrupted her to question and examine her, and as it were to try her serenity; and when she had told her story, and explained the changes which she had gone through, both in her outward circumstances, and her mind, she ceased to speak of herself, and began to busy herself in preparing a little repast for me. This fare, however inferior to what she had formerly given me, was tendered so hospitably, that I could not refuse it; and it was from her manner, when she thought that I did not observe her, that I felt more fully convinced of the blessed change which had passed in her mind.

I spent several hours with this excellent person, and before I left the neighbourhood I went to the friendly pastor, with whom (having received a confirmation of the blessed change which had passed in this poor woman,) I left a small sum for her use in case of need, and then took leave of the lovely valley, probably never to see it again, but strongly impressed with the truth so often mentioned during the course of this little narrative, namely, that happiness is a gift of God bestowed only on those who are brought to him by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and wholly independent of outward circumstances.

OBSTINACY PUNISHED.

BEING arrived at that period of life in which an individual is enabled to look back with calmness on the mistakes and miscarriages of early youth, and feeling, by the divine blessing, that sort of illumination of the understanding by which I am enabled to contemplate my former misconduct in its true and real point of view, I am induced, for the sake of such young persons as may lie under the same kind of temptations as those by which I was exercised in my early life, to give a few specimens of that sort of behaviour, and of that state of feeling, and that mode of acting, by which I, in a very great degree, lost all those opportunities of improvement which were provided for me, at a great expense, by my indulgent parents, during the first twenty years of my existence.

My father and mother, during my early life, had a considerable command of money; but being

much engaged, my father by his business, and my mother by many younger children, it was found necessary for them to devolve the work of my education on other persons. I remember little of my proceedings till I was about six years of age, at which time a governess was engaged to instruct me. I do not recollect enough of this young person to be able to say why she did not continue in our family, or wherefore this plan for my education was abandoned. Indeed, I doubt whether the system of private education, where a child is partly under the conduct of a governess, and partly under that of a mother, can be expected to succeed very frequently: for as the Scripture says, "No man can serve two masters." And unless the mother and governess are more like-minded than can be reasonably expected, or the child is of a peculiar amiable disposition, little disagreements must necessarily arise; and in these disagreements the child will of course take the part of the person who is most indulgent, and most blind to her faults, and with whom she feels most at her ease. How things went on between my mother and this our first governess, I do not recollect; but this I know, that soon after I had entered my tenth year, I found myself

one of the members of a large school, and under the charge of the Miss Harris's, three sisters, whom we called the three degrees of comparison; —the youngest being remarkably stiff and positive; the second, much more agreeable; and the eldest, an actual favourite with all the young ladies. This school, though not a heaven upon earth, was, as far as I recollect, passably comfortable. Our food was wholesome, our beds good, and our rooms airy. We suffered neither from heat or cold. There was no particular tyranny exercised among the young people; and our chief governess, the eldest of the three sisters, was particularly kind to the little ones, and used to take us into the parlour every afternoon in winter, when it was dusk, to tell us stories: seldom using any other punishment than to exclude us from hearing these stories.

Our school house was an exceedingly old black-timbered mansion, still to be seen standing in a garden near the town of Guildford: at least, I have not heard of its being taken down, although it was falling fast into decay when last I saw it.

Such was my first school, and there was no reason why I might not have been happy when there; but some person, I cannot say who, had

put it into my head that it was necessary for me to think myself wretched at school; and this idea was confirmed on the very evening of my arrival at Guildford: for when first introduced into the school-room, a girl, at least three years older than myself, invited me to sit by her at the long table on which our supper was set out; and seeing the traces of tears on my cheeks (for I had just parted with my mother), she said she pitied me from her heart; and in order to console me, began to tell me all the difficulties I had to expect in my new situation, amongst which, she enumerated, cross looks, practising music, learning the pence table, mending stockings, and being silent during school hours. It was well for me that this my new acquaintance, whom I shall call Miss Jane, was not to be my companion in my sleeping apartment; on the contrary, the young people who occupied this room, which was an exceedingly long one, and contained many beds, were playful, simple children, and though much nonsense passed amongst them after the teachers were gone down to their suppers, yet I recollect nothing much amiss. I, however, went to bed, resolved never to be happy at school, and got up in the same state of mind.

I wanted some person to represent to me, that happiness is not the object in life which we are to pursue—it being the nature of happiness to run away from those who run after it, whilst it pursues those persons who, forgetting self, are only anxious to do their duty, and give pleasure to such of their fellow-creatures as are within their reach.

A child who goes to school with the wish of giving his parents pleasure by his improvements when he returns home, has not time to fancy troubles, and often finds happiness where other children are miserable; but that sweet spirit which bestows contentment is the gift of God, and seldom exists in the absence of true piety. My reader will, however, already have perceived that at the time of which I am writing I had very little idea of religion.

There were several little girls in my sleeping-room, for whom I already felt something like childish admiration, for they were pretty, smiling, and good-natured; but it never occurred to me that I might be equally pleasing if I would endeavour to lay aside that sort of gloom and sullenness in which I had persisted ever since my arrival at school. We were called by a bell at

seven o'clock in the morning, and all went down into the school-room, where, after a short prayer, we sat down to breakfast—my friend Miss Jane having again taken me by her side. One of the teachers being directly opposite to me at breakfast, I had not much conversation with my new friend. Immediately after breakfast we were called to our lessons. I was made to read, to write, and to learn a task in English; all these things I had been accustomed to at home, and, therefore, did not consider that my governesses, in making me do what I had already been accustomed to do, were making any violent attacks upon my rights; but when summoned to a French lesson, and called upon to learn the French alphabet, I made the laudable resolution never to pronounce any letter of the alphabet in any way to which I had not been used. In vain did my governess repeat the first letter, and inform me that in French it was always sounded Ah. I certainly repeated Ah, after her, but returned again to my English A, and my English B, whenever we recommenced our lesson. It is not easy for a teacher who is not well acquainted with a child, to discriminate between obstinacy and stupidity; and I imagine that my governess,

on this occasion, had not yet made up her mind in this particular respecting me, for after a few minutes, she sent me back to my seat, simply remarking, that she hoped I would try to do better another day.

Soon after I had concluded my French lesson, I was called into another room, to music. I had made up my mind that I should never like music, and that it was of no manner of use for me to try to learn it, although I knew that my parents were particularly fond of it, and that my father especially, desired me to become a good musician.

Being in this humour, I told my music mistress, after she had made some ineffectual efforts to make me repeat the lines and spaces, that "I was quite certain I never should be able to learn music."

"And wherefore, Miss Fanny?" she asked.

"I could no more run up and down the keys as you did just now," I said, "than I could fly in the air."

"But you are not asked to do so," she answered; "you are merely required to count the lines and spaces in this stave, and to study them well, and give an account of them when I next call you. The instruction I shall give you will

be step by step; each step will be an easy degree from the last, and if you resolve to take one little step with care each day, you will have got on three hundred steps in the course of a year, allowing for Sundays and some holidays."

I gave no answer, for I had made up my mind that I should never make anything of music, and that it was of no use to attempt it; and, in consequence, whilst remaining at that school, I acquired no other knowledge of that art, than just so much as I could not avoid: for it is scarcely possible not to get some little idea of that which is repeated in our ears every day.

English grammar was made a great point of in this school; and some of the small class to which I belonged were very quick at it. I was not called to this class till I had been a week at school. It was taught by the favourite governess, and was made as pleasant by her as so dry a subject could be expected to be.

I had already been put under slight penance on account of my music and French, by the sisters of this lady; but Miss Harris was, I soon perceived, very anxious to induce me to learn without punishments: she, therefore, encouraged me when I took my place at the class, and

said, that she did not doubt but that she should have great pleasure in teaching me, and that I should soon feel delight in my English grammar.

It occurred to me, whilst being thus addressed, that Miss Harris, as the head of the school, was afraid of punishing me, lest she should offend my parents. If others punish me, she could easily say (I thought), that it was unknown to her, and so get out of the scrape; but I will see whether she dare punish me herself: and accordingly, without breaking out into open rudeness, I determined to torment and perplex her as much as possible. Her temper was not, however, to be disturbed. No doubt she penetrated my intentions in a very short time; but she fairly baffled me by passing on to the next child whenever I had made a stupid answer, and taking no further notice of me till my turn came again; by which manner I soon perceived that I only made myself ridiculous in the eyes of my school-fellows by my apparent stupidity, without producing that effect which I wished on my governess's temper.

There are many characters amongst the amiable sons and daughters of Adam to whom it is

agreeable to think themselves ill used, and to appear as such before their fellow-creatures. I was one of this sort, and therefore had a kind of gratification in going without pudding, standing in a corner, and being prevented from taking a walk; for I always found persons enough to express their pity for me, and to hint that I was ill treated.

With respect to my grammar, I, however, found that I might as well give way, for I could obtain no gratification whatever from seeming stupid; and, in consequence, I did not prevent myself from learning, and in a few weeks became the head of the class.

I remained at this school twelve months without going home, but made little progress in any study but grammar, and was far from happy: indeed, I was not in a state of mind in which heaven itself could have satisfied me.

When I arrived at home I made many complaints, and it being seen that I had not improved, I was sent no more to that school, but remained at home, under the care of another governess, who had been received into my father's family, during my absence. This governess had had the charge of my younger sisters for several

months, and was, no doubt, perfectly capable of what she had undertaken. My sisters were entirely submissive to her will, but I made a point of disputing all her commands, and as I had a mother to appeal to whenever she contended with me, and as from these appeals (though my mother did not actually take my part) confusion and trouble always ensued, the young person, after awhile, as might be expected, left me much to myself, and gave her attention to my sisters.

I was ten years of age when I left Guildford, and I dawdled at home more than two years and a half, after which, I was taken to a school in Coventry, the head of which had been highly recommended to my mother. My recollections after this became much more accurate, and I can trace my progress much more clearly.

The school to which I was taken at Coventry had been a nunnery. It was an exceedingly ancient building, standing round a large paved court. The entrance was from the street; and directly opposite the entrance, on the other side the square court, was an arched gateway, beneath which was a passage to a large garden, and above it a long apartment, in which it is said the unfortunate Mary of Scotland lodged, in her

way to Fotheringay Castle. An air of great antiquity and magnificence was shed over the whole place, and the head of the school was a widow lady of a very respectable appearance, who was assisted in her work by her daughters and nieces. My mother having brought me to the school, left me with my governess, and proceeded to pay a visit in Warwick, promising to call again in a few days, to ascertain what was thought of the progress I had made in my education. In this school I found a much more decided discipline established, than at the last at which I had resided; and the young ladies, particularly the elder ones, of a superior description, although, as in all large societies, there were several parties and various descriptions of characters.

After my mother had left me in the parlour, at the school, Mrs. Clarenham, my governess, took me up stairs, and through many long passages and wide chambers, which occupied the right wing of the building, into the school-room, where I saw at least fifty young persons, some of whom were day scholars, just putting up their books after their morning exercises.

There was an appearance of good manners

and respect displayed by all these young persons, when their superior entered, which did not escape me, and formed a strong contrast in my mind, with the sort of treatment which I had bestowed, not only on my governess at home, but on Mrs. Clarenham herself during the short interview I had with her in the parlour, where I resolved not to bestow any title upon her of any kind or sort.

"I hope, Miss Fanny," said Mrs. Clarenham, "that I shall be able to place you in my second class, and to remove you from that to my first, in a very short time. I shall associate you, therefore, with a young lady nearly of your own age. You will sleep with her, and will, I trust, be guided by her in respect to your school duties." So saying, she called a very pretty young lady to her, and taking her hand and placing it within mine, "Mary, my dear," said she, "you will oblige me by showing any kindness in your power to Miss Fanny Barclay." The young lady gave her hand cheerfully, and Mrs. Clarenham then withdrew.

It was a fine morning, and the young people were made to go out to play in the garden. My new friend was presently engaged in puss in the

corner, with the utmost vivacity; and as I had refused to play (for I was that sort of temper which is far from uncommon in young persons, and very common in old ones, which always takes offence at every thing new, unless that new thing is forbidden by those in authority over them), I sat down in an arbour in the corner of the garden, and was presently joined by three or four girls of the least prepossessing appearance, and the least of ladies of any in the school. One or two of these were almost women in stature, and were of that description of persons who come to school for a year to patch up a neglected education, and to do the work of ten years, in about as many months.

The first thing that these young ladies did, was to question me respecting my family,—the number of my father's servants,—what carriage I came to school in, and what clothes I had brought with me: and when I had answered all these questions, and made myself out to be as great as I well could do, they, in return, opened to me all the tittle-tattle of the house,—told me the nicknames given to their governess and teachers, and finished by doing all in their power to set me against the young lady to whom my govern-

ess had recommended me. These seeds of discord and contempt had found a fertile soil, and sprang up more rapidly than the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus.

In consequence of this conversation I was very cool to Mary when she returned to me, and there was henceforward no prospect of our acquaintance ripening fast into friendship.

I endeavoured, during the rest of the day, to find as many subjects of discontent as I possibly could: and it would have been heaven, and not earth, if so careful a gleaner had not been able to collect a few blasted ears within so large a field.

The next day was a mortifying one to me, for I went through a strict examination, and was found extremely deficient. Mrs. Clarenham did not conceal my deficiency from me. "You are extremely backward, Miss Barclay," she said; "I cannot put you in my second class, you will injure the rest, but I hope you will endeavour to get on; you do not want sense, I see, but if you have not been ill taught, you have either been idle or obstinate." I was very angry at being addressed in this manner, and prudently resolved that Mrs. Clarenham should not obtain more

credit by me than others had done, not considering who was to be the loser by this wise determination. I had, however, the mortification to find myself placed in almost the lowest class, and again set to the rudiments of every branch of learning.

When my mother arrived, and I was called to her in the parlour, I was full of complaints, and was very much surprised to find that instead of listening to these complaints, she told me that my father was resolved that I should stay where I was for at least four years to come, and that if I were not much improved when I came home at the Christmas holidays, I should return home no more till my four years were out.

This set me to cry violently, but my mother told me that it would be of no avail, for my father was determined not to give way to me. When Mrs. Clarenham came down, I was sent up, with the promise that I should see my mother again before she went; and then, as I afterwards learnt, Mrs. Clarenham explained to my mother the state of my education in its various branches: and, no doubt, much blame was laid on the Misses Harris's, and my governess at home.

It is not at present convenient for me to

enlarge, as I wish, on the various events of my life at Coventry; I must, therefore, content myself with giving a general outline.

There was much pride in my character, and when I understood that I must remain at Coventry, whether I liked it or not, I resolved that I would exert myself to a certain point, and no longer continue in a class, the tallest member of which hardly reached my shoulder.

In those branches of education whereon depended my place in the school, I therefore exerted myself, and in one half year, advanced from the third to the second, and from the second to the first class, and in the first class soon became a competitor with the cleverest girls in the school; but still I was not advanced one step nearer to being an amiable character.

There were many points in which I remained decidedly opposed to the will of my elders; amongst them were some little etiquettes which I never would observe, though told of them sometimes twenty times a-day. For instance, I never would shut the door after me when I went in and out of the room: I chose always to wipe my mouth with my pocket handkerchief, at dinner, and if not with that, with the back of my

hand: I always required to be told to change my shoes after walking, and to say ma'am when I addressed an elder; with many other things of the same sort, in which I most laudably persisted, month after month, and year after year; insomuch that I do not think that there was a single awkward or vulgar trick which I laid aside during my four years' residence in Coventry.

On these awkward manners, however, I grafted some fine notions, taken from the young ladies, and teased my mother perpetually for fine clothes, asserting, of all she provided for me, that this was coarse, and that unfashionable; and that it was necessary for me to have this and have that, as if I had believed that gay and gaudy clothes were all that were necessary to make me a fine lady.

During this time I also carried on the war so successfully respecting music, that after having spent an hour a-day at my instrument, upon an average, for about five years, I was allowed to give it up. French was one of the studies on which my place in the school depended; I therefore gave it my attention, and got on well to a certain point; but when Mrs. Clarenham wished the elder girls to learn to write French letters,

and to converse in that language, and, for that purpose, introduced a very respectable elderly French gentleman to give us lessons, I took it into my head to take a violent dislike to the poor man; compared his nose to that of the knave of spades, and absolutely refused to converse with him; and whenever urged to do so by my governess, insisted upon it that it was out of my power.

When this gentleman was first introduced, we were none of us able to converse without making many blunders; we were, however, then all on a par, and if one could speak but imperfectly, another could do little better; but in half a year, some of the class, indeed most of the class, were so far advanced, that had I then changed my mind and attempted to speak, my imperfections would have been remarkable: and though after having been at home for the holidays, I had almost begun to regret my folly, yet a sense of shame was added to my natural obstinacy, when I returned to school, to prevent my making the attempt to so much disadvantage.

Dancing was an exercise which I really loved, and to that I gave my heart, and in that excelled; and during the first two years of my resi-

dence in Coventry, I made a fair progress in drawing; but, on my father expressing a wish that I might be taught coloured landscapes, I grew restive. I was puzzled by mixing the colours: it required an effort to remember them: and after destroying my drawing box, and spoiling half a dozen pieces, my friends consented that I should give up coloured landscapes entirely, and be allowed to practise my pencilling by myself.

I have not said anything of the religious instructions which were given us at Mrs. Clarendon's. It was not exactly what would be thought very decided in these days; yet, I have sometimes thought, that we do not appreciate as it deserves, that sort of simple, old-fashioned religion which prevailed in those days, when Dr. Watts's Hymns, and the Pilgrim's Progress, were the only religious books, independent of the Bible, which were given to children. We were taken twice every Sunday to church, and walked in the fields after evening service. We had prayers morning and evening, and were made to read our Bibles and the Pilgrim's Progress on a Sunday. When we had done wrong, it was always explained to us that we were

offending God; and we were uniformly taught that there was no hope of future happiness but in Christ. I do not, however, recollect that the doctrine of man's depravity, and the work of the Holy Spirit, were ever clearly stated to us; but, at any rate, much more was taught, and correctly taught, than I chose to learn, and, therefore, I certainly deserved the fate of ignorance, as described in the precious book last mentioned.

I formed several violent intimacies whilst at Coventry, but changed my friends nearly every half-year, for I was particularly fond of new faces, provided they were not recommended to me by any person in authority, but always got tired of my intimates after a few months. It was, however, a great disadvantage to me to be always allied with those young people who were least instructed in the ways of the house, and, as might be generally expected, the most ignorant, and least attached to the heads of the family; and I have no doubt, but that I did mischief to many by these indiscreet intimacies. At length my four years expired, and I returned home for good, as young ladies from boarding schools usually say, although I am not

quite certain whether the expression was well applied, as it related to me.

As my sisters had always been particularly manageable, they had been educated at home, and were far advanced before me in many branches of learning. My sister Ellen, who was only a year and a half younger than myself, was particularly skilful in every kind of needlework; and my mother suggested that I should do well to learn from her this elegant art. But at this idea I took fire; maintained that fine needlework was of no use, and thus deprived myself of acquiring another accomplishment; and though, undoubtedly, neither fine needlework, landscape painting, speaking French, nor music, are absolutely necessary to all females in a certain rank, yet, as a valuable authoress of the present day has said, "There is seldom any thing which is well learnt in youth, which may not be brought to account in after life."

After my return from school, I remained three years at home without experiencing any particular change, or meeting with any thing worthy of remark.

During that period I spent my time in a sort of desultory manner, doing a little of one thing

and a little of another: but habitually taking my own way, instead of that pointed out to me by my parents, and gradually losing what little I had acquired at school. At length, that is, about the end of the second year after my return from school, I lost a far more important advantage than any formerly forfeited.

The religious views of our family had always been dark; and my parents, though excellent persons, had been mere formalists, as far as this most important subject is concerned; but, about this time, our Rector, who was one of the old school, was taken ill, and was obliged to avail himself of the assistance of another person, for six months or more.

This gentleman, whom I shall call Mr. Darnley (not choosing to give his real name), was one of the most clear and luminous preachers, perhaps, ever known; and my mother, having once heard him, declared that he had given her a more correct view of religion in one single discourse, than the Doctor had afforded her during his course of preaching, which had continued more than thirty years.

It happened that I had not attended my mother to church on occasion of this first preaching

of Mr. Darnley's, and, after that time, I was confined to the house for more than six weeks, by some slight ailment; but, during that period, I had heard of little else than this same Mr. Darnley, who had, it seemed, offended some persons to as great a degree as he had pleased others. I believe that it will not be disputed, that a preacher often does as much good to those whom he offends as to those whom he pleases; for nothing is more to be dreaded in the spiritual state of any individual, than a dead sleep; and he who sleeps on the brink of a precipice, ought to be awakened, though it may be at the risk of disturbing him from some agreeable dream, and thereby incurring his displeasure.

It had always been a habit of mine to take that side in all disputes which was not upheld by persons in authority over me,—a fatal propensity, which is more or less indulged by all unregenerate young persons. On this occasion, therefore, I encouraged in my own mind a sort of prejudice against Mr. Darnley, and when, on being taken to hear him, I found that he was a short ungraceful figure, wore a bushy wig, and had a slight cast in the eye, I conceived an ex-

treme contempt for him, and from that time, used every means to avoid going to the church where he preached, or, if obliged to go, resolved to shut my ears to all instruction. In the mean time, my parents and sisters grew rapidly in the knowledge of true religion. Neither was the good seed destitute of its correspondent fruit in these my beloved relations; and as I have since thought, this excellent man, whom I had so cordially despised, was sent to prepare them for the trials which awaited them, but of which we had, at that time, no apprehensions.

Immediately after Mr. Darnley had left our town, my father, who was in business, as I have before said, experienced one of those reverses to which all persons in trade are particularly subject. When aware of his perplexities, he immediately called his creditors together, laid open his affairs to them, and was enabled to arrange with them more to his satisfaction than he had expected: at any rate, he had the pleasure of knowing that he had not willingly injured any one. However, it was necessary for us to leave the town in which we had long lived in credit; and as my father's health was broken down, and my brothers were still too young to assist him,

nothing could be devised for the support of the family but a school; and we accordingly hired and furnished a house in my mother's native place, where we established a seminary, which presently filled. My mother undertook the management of the domestic concerns, and my two sisters, next in age to me, set themselves to work with all their strength to instruct the young people; and then it was that I was first made to feel the consequences of my pride and obstinacy in early life.

More had been spent on my education than on that of any of my sisters. I had never apprehended that the time might come when I should have nothing but my talents wherewith to support me. I had every reason to suppose that I should receive as good a fortune as any of my schoolfellows; and I was now, perhaps, the poorest and most destitute of all who had ever been my companions.

I cannot describe what I felt when the duties of the school were divided amongst us, for it was found that as I was very far behind my sisters in all elegant accomplishments, it was necessary to give me more than my share of the drudgery of the work.

It was done in the most delicate manner by my sisters, under the direction of my mother; but necessity has no law. It was needful for us either to work or starve; and where the labour of all would hardly suffice, it was requisite to put the talents of each to the best account.

The music, the drawing, the fine needlework, and the religious instruction, therefore, devolved on Ellen and Maria, and I was soon made to feel that my accomplished sisters were much more respected by the young ladies than I was; for abilities always, I believe, command the respect of young people under a course of education. I also derived mortification from another source. Whilst at school I had, as I before remarked, exhibited a vast deal of obstinacy on the subject of good manners, and had persisted in many awkward tricks for several years; taking it for granted, as many young people do, that when I left school I should be enabled, as if by magic, to lay aside all inelegant ways at once, and to become a perfect gentlewoman, merely in consequence of change of place. Undoubtedly, on my return home, I had found it necessary, and in some degree not altogether impossible, to lay aside many of my gaucheries; but there is a

wide difference between being decidedly vulgar, and having fine manners. These last I never could obtain by any effort: my politeness never could become a second nature, since it was opposed to all the habits of my childhood; hence I retain, to this day, a constrained and stiff manner; and though, I trust, I do not now give offence to any one, yet I must ever remain inferior to my sisters, in the habit of making myself generally agreeable in society.

I was most deeply depressed and mortified by all these circumstances, in addition to the other distresses of the family; yet I have reason to think that these mortifications were blessed to me, for I was humbled under them. Yet still my pride was such that I could not bring myself to open my mind to any friend. And when the sinfulness of my former conduct exhibited itself more and more to my mind, I became, as it were, an astonishment to myself, and suffered a long time under a sense of sin, for which I could find no relief; for I was ignorant of the depravity of man's heart, and of the nature of the remedy provided against it,—an ignorance which had at first been wilful, and was afterwards, as it were, judicial, at least so for a time. My mother

had, for a considerable period, ceased to expostulate with me on religious subjects, finding that hitherto she had only excited irritation and enmity by so doing; I was, therefore, left for a long time to suffer alone, and without consolation, under the anguish of a wounded spirit.

At length, on my sister, next in age to myself, falling ill, I was made to feel my deficiencies still more deeply, for we were actually obliged to engage our former governess, the one who had educated my sisters, and had attempted to instruct me, and to pay her, poor as we were, to fulfil those duties which I was unable to perform.

Thus was grief added to grief, and mortification to mortification, till, being no longer able to contend with my sufferings, I, at length, opened my mind to my parents, confessed all the sins of my youth, implored their pardon on my knees, and was led, by these tender parents, to throw myself on the divine mercy, as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to seek the teachings of the Holy Spirit, whereby peace was restored to my soul, and I was enabled to submit, without further repining, to that state in life to which I had, in some measure, brought myself.

Soon after this, my dear sister recovered her health, and from that time to the present, being ten years, I have, I trust, with Christian humility, and even with cheerfulness, submitted to perform the most ordinary functions of my situation, and been the stocking-darner, and horn-book teacher, and the drudger at rudiments, of our large, and, I thankfully add, our prosperous school; and if I have had no higher earthly pleasure, I have, since that time, been blessed in the approbation and affection of every individual of our numerous family.

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.

My father's house was just such a place as would have led a stranger, passing by on some fine summer's day, to have said, "Oh! what a sweet peaceful scene is that!—how happy may those peasants think themselves who have such a home as that!" It was an old-fashioned, black-timbered cottage, not very small, and was situated in an orchard, on the brink of a clear trout-stream—its gable ends being covered with ivy, and its old-fashioned porch with eglantine; and this house and orchard were held by our family on a very long lease: the rent being little more than one quarter of its real value. Hence my poor father, had he been what he should have been, might have been numbered among the decent landholders of the parish, and might have brought up his children in respectability, instead of which he was, poor man! the pest and nuisance of the whole neighbourhood; and as I, his

eldest son, grew up, there was not a bit of mischief done in a garden or orchard in the parish, of which I was not suspected. Our family name is Gamson, and my Christian name is Benjamin, after my father. My mother died when I was so young, that I do not remember her; she left a fair name behind her, and the neighbours did not scruple to say that she died of a broken heart. I had one own sister, two years younger than myself, and if I loved any thing on earth beside myself, it was Fanny—and though I quarrelled with her when we were together, from morning till night, yet I would not suffer any other person, not even our father, to give her a harsh word in my presence.

My father had married again, about ten years after my mother's death, and had brought into the house as unfit a woman as was ever set over poor motherless children; hence, all things went on with us from bad to worse. Within and without our pretty dwelling was nought but slovenliness and waste. My sister and I were the two most ragged, forlorn creatures in the whole parish; and four little ones, whom my step-mother gave, one after the other, to my father, were the most disagreeable, pampered, and yet

neglected, squalling, dirty, and unhappy brats that ever filled a cottage doorway.

No one knew how the money—brought in on occasion by my father, for I have seen him put a guinea or more at a time into his wife's hand—went out of the house, for if we had now and then a feast, we had much oftener a fast; and Fanny and I, when little ones, have gone out to endeavour to satisfy our cravings with blackberries, raw turnips, and such like trash—being the scorn of all decent persons, and so insolent and coarse in our habits and manners, that even those who pitied us most, hardly knew how to set about to do us any good.

Morals we had none, though we had a great deal of cunning in avoiding being caught in any mischief—and, as to religion, I have not much more to say. We certainly did know that there is a God, because we often used his name to swear by; we had also heard of a place of punishment for the wicked, and had often wished that our step-mother and her brats were in it—nor had I scrupled to tell her so sometimes when she offended me; we also knew that there was one called the Saviour, having gathered so much from a certain carol which I had been

made to learn, first by my mother, and in which my memory had been refreshed, in order that I might get a few pence at Christmas, by roaring it at the doors of such houses as were within my reach—and in those particulars our information was bounded, as it regarded religion; for, as to entering a church, it was what we never thought of; the service hours on a Sunday being our harvest times, and therefore not to be thrown away in listening to what did not concern us, as we then thought.

But not to make the worst end of my story the longest, as if I gloried in my shame, and the shame of my father's house, which God forbid! I shall say, in as few words as possible, that we all went on from bad to worse, and from worse to worst, till, when I was just turned nineteen, my father and I were taken up together for poaching, and thrown into the county jail, where we stood our trial. My poor father was sentenced to be transported for fourteen years, and I, being pitied on account of my youth, was condemned to solitary confinement for several months; my character and that of the family going sorely against me; for, to speak the truth, I had been in the House of Correction

several times before, for smaller offences, and was known to be one of the most hardened young fellows in all the country side.

And now begins the better part of my story ; and truly may I say, that I was found of Him whom I never sought, that I was heard before I called, and that ere I had found a voice for prayer, my prayer had been granted.

Being on the way back from the court to the jail, in the covered cart, I sate opposite to my father—I was trying to brave it out, and was saying, “ Well, I reckon that I shall not quarrel with my company for the next few months,” when my father groaned, and, looking me hard in the face,

“ Ben, my boy,” he said, “ I have wronged thee”—his voice faltered.

“ How so ?” replied I ; “ you have made me a fine fellow ; one who does not flinch at a few troubles. Father, be of good cheer ; ’tis fine living where you are going, they tell me. I only wish I was going along——”

“ Ben,” he answered, “ thou hadst a mother.”

“ So have most men, I reckon,” I replied.

“ She was a good woman,” he added ; “ I had

been another sort of man had she lived. Ben, don't follow my example."

We had no time for more discourse; we were already rumbling over a sort of drawbridge, in the gateway of the jail. My father was permitted to give me a parting embrace, and I had something to do to enable me to say good-by, in my usual careless tone; but the eyes of many were on me, and I turned away from my parent to follow the man who was to lead me to my cell; stepping along to a tune which I had in my head, and which I was half-minded to whistle aloud, as I followed the turnkey.

I saw the man look hard at me more than once, as much as to say, "You will sing to another tune, youngster, before you have been here many days." However, he said nothing, but led me up one stone gallery and down another, till at length he stopped at a strong door in a low archway, built in the deep wall, which door being opened, he directed me to walk in, closing it after me as soon as I had entered, and then turning the key upon me.

The place into which I had been turned was a low covered stone chamber; it might be ten or

twelve feet square, having a bed in a corner, and a small strongly staunched window in the wall as high as the top of my head; this window scarcely admitted full daylight at noon, from being faced by a high wall belonging to some other apartment of the prison, only a few feet distant from it.

My eye was instantly caught by this window; but I saw at once that even could I have forced out the bars, the aperture would not have served to have admitted my shoulders; and more than that, if I could have got even head, and shoulders, and all, clear, I should still be within the jail walls, and should have little or no chance of farther escape; so nothing remained for me but to submit to my fate, such as it was. And thus I began to reason with myself: "Am I a man?" said I; "what is there, then, in being shut up like a bird in a cage for a few weeks, that I should not be able to bear it? Do they think to break my spirit in this way? do they think I want others about me to keep up my courage? I'll let them see that I am not so easily dashed, neither. When I get out, they shall find what I am made of; and, if they catch

me again, it shall be for something somewhat graver than nabbing a poor hare, and bagging a few birds."

I then began to imprecate in thought, if not in words—wishing the judge, the magistrates, the jailer, his people, and all my informers and accusers, in a place of everlasting condemnation; cursing them all aloud, and with many oaths; but my voice seemed to return to me in hollow threatening murmurs, and so strangely, that I could not help turning my head round to ascertain if any one was speaking behind me.

It was a queer creeping sensation which I felt on this occasion, and being cold, I threw myself on the bed, and tried to forget myself in sleep; and so I did for a few minutes, but started up again presently, thinking that I heard my father cry, "Ben, Ben! come along, Ben: I am going to look at the gins."

"I'se hear," I exclaimed, as I sprang up; for I had a very vulgar way of expressing myself at that time; and there I stood in the middle of my cell for a moment or more, not knowing where I was, for the light had quite faded away, though it was broad daylight, no doubt, at the same time in the open air; but recollection pre-

sently returned, to my sorrow, and I groped my way back to my bed, and sate down on it, thinking of times past—of my father and sister, and the liberty I used to enjoy; and truly I believe that it is never that any one in trouble can think of past days without experiencing a softening and a saddening of the heart, which at any rate tends rather to that which is good, than that which is evil. I have, indeed, known old sinners to chuckle over past offences, and, as it were, thus to live their lives over again; but mind ye, my reader, it is in company—at a carouse, perhaps, when the head is full of the fumes of drink, when bad companions are applauding, or wise ones opposing, that this sort of self-gratulation takes place. I think, for my own part, that very few minds have strength to keep themselves up alone, without praise or blame, without applause or censure; without any one to say “well done,” or “ill done;” for with some minds “ill done” sounds fully as encouraging as “well done.” But in my solitary and silent cell, there was no one to say either the one or the other to me, and my mind had nothing whereon to feed for a long time, but my own miserable reflections. Still, however, I fought hard against

any thing like good feelings: I tried to think of every thing I could to while away the time; I rubbed up every word which had been said to me by the other folks in the jail, with whom I had associated before I had been brought to trial, and tried to recollect all the tricks they practise to elude the vigilance of justice. These are clever, shrewd fellows, thought I, but then another thought came in to cross the first:—clever or not clever, shrewd or not shrewd, they are all in jail, or were so when I talked to them; and they are all suspected, and in consequence avoided and despised; they all are poor too, living by shifts and stratagems;—what is it they get by their tricks?—nevertheless, they are smart fellows. When I get my liberty, I will seek some of them out: poor father was not up to half their contrivances, otherwise he would not have let himself be nabbed as he was. Then again came the second thought, but it was in jail that I made their acquaintance; so, though some of them had a longer run than father, they had all been laid up in lavender for a longer or shorter time at last. I can't see, then, what all their contrivances come to, but to shame and disgrace in this world, come what will in the

next world—the next world—the next world—how those words rang in my ears all that night! for, being in the dark, I had got into bed, and there was nothing to disturb my cogitations, especially after every one was in his place for the night; for then there was no sound heard through the whole place, excepting a sort of low chill continued murmur of the wind, sweeping along the passages, and never varying its melancholy note. So, as I said, whilst I lay trying to dose away my time, for a man cannot sleep most soundly when he wishes it most, these words would be ringing and singing in my ears, viz., “the next world—the next world;” and after a while these words changed into that of eternity—eternity; it having been an expression which I had often used when angry with any one, viz., “I wish you were ——,” but I will not repeat the shocking expression, “all eternity.” Eternity then was united in my mind with condemnation; and so when the one idea came into my head, then was not the other far behind; and there I lay all that night, trying to put the one and the other of these frightful words out of my head, by thinking of every thing that used to please and divert me, but all in vain; the more

I struggled with my uneasy thoughts, the more I got beleaguered with them; so that when the turnkey came in the morning to bring me my allowance, he looked very hard at me, as much as to say, "What! down in the mouth already! I thought thou wouldst have stood it out a little longer!" This man spoke in a rough tone, and, although by no means hard in the main, truly a softer heart would not have fitted him for such services as he had to fulfil.

In the manner above related did I pass the first few hours in my cell, and thus passed other days and other nights, only that my mind grew feebler, and fancies came thicker, till it seemed to me almost as if my cell was filled with evil imaginations and phantoms, so that I could hardly distinguish the creations of my own brain from realities; but I was so sullen withal, that when the turnkey asked me if I was sick, which he did once or twice, I would make him either no answer at all, or one so rude that he would turn out of the cell, saying, "Well, please yourself—it is nothing to me; if you won't render a civil answer to a civil question, the next time I ask you how you be, you shall give me a civiller reply."

It is almost like a dream to me, what followed after this.—I reckon that I had a pretty smart fever, which came on with such shiverings, that I wrapt myself up in the bed-clothes; and these shiverings were followed by hot fits, and I was light-headed, both in one and the other, but I had made my own bed, and I must needs sleep upon it. Had I given the turnkey a civil answer at first, he would not have come in and out several days, as he did, without endeavouring to exchange a word with me. Persons were not managed fifty years ago as they are now; there were not so many kind persons as there are now to visit jails, or pious friends and pious chaplains, to point out to the poor convicts who are suffering for their crimes, that there is a salvation provided for the worst of sinners. We had a chaplain then, it is true; but I, for one, never saw the colour of his face but once, and that was in the chapel, on the Sunday before I was convicted, when he gave us such a discourse as made me resolve never to go into a place of worship again by my own good will. His text was, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations which forget God," and in opening this text he had made it appear to us all, that as we

were already all in the way to hell, there was so little chance for us, that it would be but labour in vain to try to get out of it; for he failed not to add to this his first threat, that we were, every man of us, to give an account of our deeds before the judgment seat of Christ, and to abide by them, were they good, or were they bad.

So you see, having only mentioned Christ once through all his discourse; he had then set him forth as a judge and an avenger; and this, I suppose, he would have called Gospel, though, as I have since learned, the very word Gospel signifies good news. Such chaplains, however, as these, are, I trust, rare in these days; but so it was then, and I was left accordingly entirely to my own company, though I was really very ill, yet I had nothing to complain of, inasmuch as I owed this neglect to my own sullenness.

Now, to give an account of what I suffered during those days of which I speak, would be no easy matter. It happened at that time,—if the word happened is not altogether an heathenish one,—that it being winter, there fell a tremendous heavy snow whilst I lay in my bed, by which my little window was blocked and closed up, so that for many hours I was almost in total darkness,

and being light-headed, I took it into my fancy that I was already in that place where I had so often wished to send my step-mother; and what with my hot and my cold fits, and the burning and shooting of my head, and my total absence of hope, surely a hell had begun within me. I thought of God only as an angry judge, and I fancied myself already condemned; nevertheless, I had, at least, one gracious feeling granted to me even then, and it was this, that I was made to see that if God allowed every creature to follow his own devices and be as wicked as he would, things could not go on. For, thought I, if such fellows as we now in this jail, were to be let loose in a palace of gold, where every luxury of victuals and drink, and soft clothing, was to be had for the asking, there would be no living till one had made himself the master of all the rest, and then I was brought to see that if one man be the master, why should not that master be Him who made us, and whose commands, as far as I knew them, were only these, viz. that we should be kind to one another, and leave each other alone; and what, thought I, can be more reasonable than that command, and it is also reasonable to think that the Creator should be angry, when

his creatures live in constant breach of his commandments.

The next thought which came was this: Well, if I get out of this, I will do better; but then again the words of the preacher came over me, viz.: "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and Christ shall come to judge the world, and then every evil thing which we have done, will meet its punishment." Well, thought I, if it be so, I must abide the chance, I cannot undo what I have done.

Again I sank into a fit of despair and groaning for several hours, after which sleep stole over me, and I had a dream, which was so sweet to me, that I awoke all in tears. I thought I was at home and standing by the brook, just where there grew a few rushes, of which my sister and I, when little ones, used to make baskets, and I thought I saw my mother standing on the other side of the water, smiling and holding out her arms to me, and almost before I could look at her she had vanished. This was all my dream, but I awoke weeping like an infant, and the same minute the carol I had been taught when a little one came back to my mind.

This carol, as my father had told me, had been

a great favourite of my poor mother, and the first verses had been taught to me by herself, ere yet I could clearly pronounce the words.

Hark ! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,—
God and sinners reconciled !
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,—
With th' angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem !

Hark ! the herald, &c.

Christ, by highest heaven ador'd,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,—
Late in time, behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb !
Veil'd in flesh, the Godhead see !
Hail th' incarnate Deity !
Pleased, as man, to man t' appear,
Jesus our Immanuel here !

Hark ! the herald, &c.

Hail ! the heaven-born Prince of Peace !
Hail ! the Sun of Righteousness !
Light and life to all he brings,
Rich with healing on his wings !
Mild he lays his glory by,—
Born, that man no more may die,—

Born to raise the sons of earth,—
Born to give a heavenly birth !
Hark ! the herald, &c.

Come ! desire of nations, come !
Fix in us thy humble home ;
Rise, the woman's conquering seed ;
Bruise in us the serpent's head !
Adam's likeness now efface !
Stamp thine image in its place !
Second Adam, from above,
Reinstate us in thy love !
Hark ! the herald Angels, &c.

Now, I had always been accustomed to repeat these words like a parrot, without a thought of their meaning; but in this hour of my utmost need, when they came back to my mind, and as it were rung in my ears,—their sense opened to me in a most extraordinary manner, and thus I remember reasoning upon them. Why did the angels sing when Christ was born? Because the new-born Child brought peace and mercy to men. These were good angels, then—angels who wish well to us poor men;—but who was this new-born Child? and how was He to bring peace to men?

The second verse of the carol answered this

inquiry, and with the divine blessing opened to me the mystery,—for truly it is a wonderful mystery, how God was made flesh in the womb of a pure virgin, and became a man, in order by his perfect obedience and death, to take away the sins of the world. I don't say that I took this blessed doctrine in at once, in the same fulness in which I have since been enabled to understand it; but I comprehended something of it,—and so much, as to look upon God as a friend willing to do a great deal for sinful man,—aye, more than any of us would do for a fellow-creature.

Then the passage in the third verse, “light and life to all he brings;” to all, thought I, and stuck a long while there—to all—surely not to all;—for what did our chaplain tell us? that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. Well, but who are the wicked? for that matter we are all bad enough. Then, are we all to be excluded from salvation? Would God have become man, to save only one or two here, and one or two there?—for I had not then taken in this truth, that all men are sinners. However, I did not long stick at this point. I had already, I am well convinced, been

brought under the divine teaching; and pleasant thoughts would prevail, and I began to feel that if Christ had already done so much for me, he would not now cast me off when I was wishing to know more of him; and I was very right, though I did not know the ground of my hope, for the truth is this, that the natural man may fear death and hell when they stare him in his face; but whenever any man desires to come to Christ for love of what he has heard of His mercy and goodness, it is certain that the thought has been put into him by God himself; and God having begun to work with him, He will not stop until he has finished his work.

The fourth verse staggered me a bit; but nevertheless, it was in part opened to me, and I was made to have some idea that I was to ask Christ to come and be with me spiritually, and that he would drive the devil out of my heart.

It was wonderful, it was marvellous, how from that time, without a visible teacher, without the knowledge of a single letter of the alphabet, without having aught to recur to of former holy instruction given in childhood, and truly, without another text but my carol, various of the most important truths of true religion opened to

my mind.—I have turned the Holy Scriptures over and over again, in after life, to find a case like mine described, and have never been able to find any thing descriptive thereof, but in Job xxxiii., where the secret dealings of God with the soul of man, in entire independence of man's ministry, is spoken of. Job xxxiii. 14 to 30, inclusive. And this I believe to be the truth, that it is pride that darkens man's understanding; and that when pride is there, the inflowings of the Lord the Spirit is hidden from man,—then he is made to see that God is wiser than he is, and is ready to close, as it were, with any plan which the Almighty has formed for his good.

If, then, being brought into a state of child-like teachableness through the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, he has but heard the name of his Saviour,—and what man living in a Christian country has not heard that name?—he begins to look into the meaning of the word Saviour, and to find its sweetness, and so he is led on from one thing to another, till every means, however small, is blessed to him, and he finds the earnest of saving love, even in the woods, and hills, and fields, the bright colours

of the morning, the freshness of showers, the songs of birds, and the warmth of the sun.

Oh ! what a different creature was I after my fever and ague had left me, and I was able to sit up upon my bed. They had removed the snow from off my window, and I could get a little glimpse of day-light, and when the turnkey came in and saw me sitting, all pale and wan as I was, and asked me what ailed me, and I answered civilly, he seemed surprised, and said I should have had help, if I had told before how bad I was.

"It is all my own fault," I replied ; and if I had been left to die, it is only what I have deserved, and no blame to you ; only I trust that when I am about again, I may be helped to do better than I have done, and so may God forgive me !"

The turnkey opened his eyes wide, and said, giving me a searching look, "You beant canting, be you, to serve some sly end?" and so, without giving me time to answer, he turned out, and locked me in. I was feeling my corruption rising against him, and even thinking what I should say to him when he came back again the next day, for I did not expect him

sooner, when he returned, bringing me a jorum of soup, which he had begged for me, seeing how ill I looked; and thus my reproaches were turned into blessings, and another lesson given me, viz. that my own temper was no more to be trusted to then, even after my heart had been somewhat changed, than it was before; though not understanding then the doctrine of human depravity, I could not understand myself. I was very thankful for the soup, and it seemed to do me good; and I spoke so gratefully, that the turnkey said, "I could have got you another favour a while ago, had you not been so sulky; but I shall speak for you now, if you are so mended."

I was anxious to know what this favour might be; and he replied, that there was a worthy old gentleman who had the privilege to visit such of the prisoners as were desirous of improvement, adding, that he could have made interest for Mr. Colegate to have visited me some time before, had I not been so sulky and perverse.

"I deserved no favour," I answered, "then, nor do I now; but if you would get for me the favour of seeing this good man, you will for ever oblige me." The turnkey looked hard at me,

as not understanding me. However, he was as good as his word, and sent the good gentleman, who, finding his ground as it were prepared, was so rejoiced, that he visited me every day, and gave me much instruction on the essential doctrines of Christianity, laying them out so simply, that what he then taught me has been a guide to me, by God's blessing, ever since.

He first spoke to me of the doctrine of the Trinity, viz. that there were three Persons in one God,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and he made me to understand that the good and happiness of every creature depends on his abiding close to his God. The evil one, he showed me, had made it his business, and succeeded but too well in so doing, to draw the creature man from his Creator, and to lead him to set his will against his heavenly Father, filling his mind, through sin, with hard thoughts of his Maker.

"Aye," said I, "you have touched the right nail on the head, Mr. Colegate; it is the persuasion that God is an angry God, and an irreconcilable God, which made me the hardened wretch I was."

"At any rate," replied Mr. Colegate, "al-

though I believe that the soul cannot be drawn to God, but through the power of God, yet whenever man's ministry is used for that work, it is seldom used in the way of threatening and terrifying. Why," added he, "who has not seen a vixen of a mother, at a cottage door, calling to a recreant son, who is running away, and saying, 'Come back, I tell you, come back, and I will have it out of you;' and whilst she shakes her fist, and mayhap stamps her foot, what does the urchin do, but take to his heels, and get as far from her as he can; so it is with the thunderers of the law, they drive more away than they ever draw; and so it will ever be, whilst ministers forget that they are, or ought to be, the heralds only of good news."

And then the worthy man took out his Bible, and read many sweet verses to me, one of which was, from that hour, graven on my heart; it was thus—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 16.

The second time Mr. Colegate came, he brought me a spelling-book, and would have me begin to learn to read; and he gave me my let-

ters to con, and he encouraged me, and he bade me to thank God for his mercy, in appointing that I should be shut up for a time from the world, with leisure and opportunity for improvement.

It is dull work learning the alphabet and spelling small words; but God had given me a willing mind, and I worked hard,—and before my time was out I had been enabled to master the first chapter in the Old Testament.

The day before I was to leave the jail, Mr. Colegate called, and we had much talk, and he prayed earnestly with me, and promised soon to come and see me when I was at home; and it was then he gave me a handsome large Bible, as he said, to be used in family worship, for he had given me a little one before; and he put a guinea into my hand, in order, he said, that I might not be tempted to dishonest shifts before I could earn any wages. He did more,—he spoke to a farmer of our parish, who attended market in the country town, to give me a trial as day labourer, for which I was to have eight shillings a-week, and a bottle of drink each day. Thus, through the forecast of Mr. Colegate, all was in my favour, excepting my bad character;

and, as the old gentleman said, it depended on myself only, with God's blessing, to get rid of that burr, which sticks close to every man who has once seen the inside of a jail, in the capacity of a criminal. I well remember the morning, when, having received my dismissal, I set out from the gate of the jail to return to my father's house, which is about four miles distant from the town. I had heard nothing of what had been doing at home since my imprisonment. My father, my poor father, was at that time far distant, in what situation I knew not, and I had not even heard what had become of the rest of the family;—indeed, though I saw one or two persons in the street, whom I knew, I was ashamed to speak to them, and scarcely had I got out of the town, than I skulked into bye-ways, and so came into my father's garden the back way, unseen by any one.

I remember that it was a fine morning in the beginning of April; and having been so long shut up from all the works of God in the green fields, I was filled with wonder and delight, and could not help asking myself how I ever could have thought hardly of Him who causes it "to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the

wilderness, wherein there is no man ; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth." Job xxxviii. 26, 27. It was easy for me to find such a gap in our garden hedge, as would admit me without difficulty, and I could not but be struck with the miserable and neglected appearance of all about the house ; for bad as things had been in my father's time, they were now far worse ; weeds and rubbish, and rags, were scattered every where ; the thatch was open in some places, and the plaster fallen. I had come in at the back of the garden, and turning round the corner of the house, I started at seeing a pauper's funeral going out of the gate into the road. I instantly thought of Fanny, and stood where I was, till it had quite passed away ; for I neither could move nor call. At length, hearing the noise of some one stirring in the house, I came forward and entered the kitchen.

Never had I seen a more wretched place : dirt and slovenliness, and misery, and poverty, were there ; the four poor children of my step-mother, the eldest of whom was at that time not eight years old, and the youngest not two, were all cowering round a few embers on the hearth, hav-

ing scarcely rags to cover them: and an old crone of a woman was sitting on a chair before the fire, smoking a pipe. "Betty!" I exclaimed, as I entered, for I knew the woman well, "tell me in a word, who is dead?"—but before she could answer, the poor orphans all with one voice exclaimed,—“Mammy! mammy! they have taken away poor mammy, to put her in the pit-hole.”

“And Fanny,” said I, “where is Fanny?”

“So you are come, are you?” replied the old woman; “where should Fanny be, but gone to the burying?—the poor lass is broken-hearted for you, Ben; but I tells her, you won’t bring her no comfort, for you always was a wild one, like your father before you,—and always will be one, I reckon,” and so saying, she began to puff at her pipe again.

I had dropped into the only empty chair in the kitchen, and resting my forehead on my hand, could not restrain myself from bursting into tears. With that, William and Sally, the two elder of my step-mother’s children, came running to me, all ragged, and almost naked as they were born, and putting their little arms round me, we all wept together. “Ben!” said little Sally, after the first burst of grief, “the

officers be coming by and bye to take us to the house,—don't let them take us."

"What house?" I asked.

"The workhouse," replied the old woman.

"What for?" I asked.

"Why!" she replied, "the creatures cannot starve. Fanny must go to service,—and who's to keep 'em?"

"I will," I said, "God helping me. I will be their father,—here they shall remain,—and I will work for them."

The old woman laid down her pipe, and laughed, remarking, "and a pretty sort of a daddy will the poor babes have. You will teach Bill to follow your good example, won't you, Ben?"

"I deserve this," I answered, "I have a bad name; and what is worse than a bad name? But, little ones," I said, "with the blessing of my God, I will take care of you,—so wipe away your tears,—we will try to do better than we have done. We have all done wrong; but God has promised that he will have mercy on those, whom he has made to repent of their sins."

"I reckon," said the old woman, "that you have been among the Methodists, Ben." I made her no answer, though I felt the blood mounting

to my cheeks; but taking up my hat, went straight to the farmer whom Mr. Colegate had engaged to take me as a labourer; he was one of the overseers of the poor. I found him in a field near his house: he received me coldly; but became more friendly when I opened out to him my whole mind, and told him that I knew myself to have been a very bad young man, but that it had been put into my heart to wish to do better; and that I desired to be allowed to take care of my little brothers and sisters, and to fill up to them the place of a father.

Mr. Adams, for such was his name, spoke very satisfactorily in reply to this; telling me that I should be tried; that the parish would allow me one shilling and sixpence a week for each child, and if with that I would do well for them, they should not be removed.

"God giving me health and strength, sir, I trust I shall do," I answered; "and, if Fanny will but go hand-in-hand with me, we shall hope to recover the credit of our family."

"Don't speak against Fanny," replied Mr. Adams; "she was always the best of the bunch."

"I believe so, sir," I answered, "and I hope I shall find it so."

Mr. Adams told me that my step-mother had certainly killed herself by dram-drinking; for which purpose she had pawned almost every thing in the house.

It was good news for the little ones which I had to take home, and when I came back again, I found Fanny returned from the funeral, and the old woman gone.

It was a joyful meeting for the poor girl; and when she heard my plan, and how I had the promise of one shilling and sixpence a-week for each little one, she downright wept and sobbed for joy. I sent her to bring in a pound of bacon, and we had some potatoes in the house, and a joyful dinner we had; and because there were four days left of the week, for I was not to go to work till the Monday, we set to work to put things in order in the house. I first stopped the breaches in the thatch, and got some plaster to repair what was wanting in that way. Mr. Adams gave me the plaster, and lent me a white-washer's brush; and I washed the house inside and out, between the black beams—that was my job; and I set all the little ones to pick up the sticks in the garden, and pile them up. Little Billy, however, was able to help me in

fetching and carrying: it took me, however, the whole four days to do these jobs; and Mr. Colegate came whilst we were in the thick of it; however, he was vastly pleased, but my sister begged he would not look at the children; "for," said she, "we must clean the house first, before we can begin with them." The good old gentleman did, however, look at them, as we found out afterwards.

On Monday morning I went to work; and whilst I was out, my sister being very busy setting things to rights in the inside, the old gentleman came again with a great bundle under his arm, in which was a plain suit of clothes and linen, with shoes, for each child. "Here, Fanny," he said, "this is just to set you a-going; and when the house is clean, you must thoroughly wash the children, and put on them these wholesome garments, and then gather all the rags together, and when you have scoured them well, you will see what you can make of them."

Fanny set to work with a new heart on being thus encouraged; and when I came back in the evening, there were all things within the house quite smart, every thing being put in its proper place, and pieces of white paper pasted

where rags had been stuffed to fill the broken panes.

No one would have believed, had they not seen it, what a change was wrought by a thorough cleaning, and by putting each thing in its place, for we had not an article of new furniture; the children were still in their rags; but Fanny told me of Mr. Colegate's present, and had got water over the fire, to give each one a good washing before bed-time; so I had my supper: we lived chiefly on potatoes, and resolved to do so, till we had got a little forwarder in the world, though my sister insisted that I should have a slice of bacon with my mess, the gravy of which was poured over the children's potatoes; but, as I was going to say, when I had supped I called Billy into the garden, for there was a vast deal to do to it, and it was a long time before we got it into any order; however, I contrived to get it dug up and planted with potatoes, before it was too late in the season, and then I mended the hedge, and I employed the little ones to collect round smooth stones out of the brook to lay before the door and along the path to the wicket; the next summer we planted gooseberry and currant slips, which I begged of Mr. Adams;

and Mrs. Adams gave us a few flower seeds, just to set along the borders; and when our hedges were mended, and plucked, and kept clipped, and all the dead wood cut out of our fruit trees, you would not have known us again. My grandfather had used to keep a cow, in our bit of orchard, but we found it better to take sheep; and after a little while Fanny got some washing to do, which brought in what was a great help to us.

I had always, till after I came out of the jail, hated my little brothers and sisters; and whilst their mother lived, and was well, they were what any step-brother might have hated; but misery and starvation had, by the divine blessing, brought down their spirits—for the Almighty has many ways of promoting his good works, and I don't remember that William or Sally ever rebelled against me but once, and then I made them understand that I would be obeyed, and so the matter was settled. But little James, the youngest boy, long remained fretful and sickly, and was a great wear to Fanny; however, God gave her grace to bear with him, and he became a fine boy, and to this day is one of her principal earthly comforts.

As soon as ever things were all straight, I did what Mr. Colegate had desired; that is, I read a chapter and had a prayer every night, and on Sundays I used to teach Fanny to read; making it a rule, that what she learnt on Sunday should be taught by her to the little ones during the week.

God was very good to us, very, very good. Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and would understand that they are happy only when living close to him, and deriving their pleasures from him only.

And now I must go on as much as fourteen years from the time I had been in the county jail. Fanny had remained with me till James was twelve years old, at which time she was married to Mr. Adams's gardener and head servant, a very respectable man, and well to do in the world. He was a widower, older than her, having two infant children, and I verily believe that he chose her, because he had seen her patience and tenderness to her little sickly step-brother. James went with her, and worked under her husband; William still lived at home, but worked at a neighbouring farm; Sally was gone to be housemaid at Mrs. Adams's, and a

pious good girl she was ; and Jenny was still at home, a nice little lively thing, whom I could not find in my heart to part lightly with, especially as I could make her useful where she was.

I too, had entered into the marriage state, having been blessed in my choice of a wife. I had taken a few more acres of ground, and was able to keep two cows and several pigs, so that I was, what my grandfather had been, viz., a sort of little farmer, though we still lived as cottagers, and I did not scorn to earn a little by labouring for others. My wife was also a good hand at rearing poultry and managing pigs, so that, with one thing and another, we were no longer poor. Good Mr. Colegate was become old and infirm, yet he used to come from time to time to see us, and I remember it was on Whit-Sunday, a little more than fourteen years after I had left the jail—he had sent us word that he would be with us after evening service, if we would give him some tea—that I asked Fanny and her husband to come, and got permission for Sally and James, and William and Jenny were always with us on Sunday ; so there was quite a family meeting of the elder generation, to which were added two of the younger, viz., a little girl of mine in her

sixth month, and a boy of two years of age of Fanny's.

It was a fine evening, and we had set our tea-table under a tree in the garden, and the dear old gentleman was come, and was looking about upon us all as if we were his own children. And were we not so? for did we not owe to him, humanly speaking, as much as a child does to a natural father?—and he had already begun, as it were, to improve the occasion in his own way, which was always lively and short, by pointing out that this happy meeting was but the earnest of that future, glorious, and interminable union of the redeemed with their God, which had been effected by Christ, our Lord, when he became man, and as man performed that work of perfect obedience, by which he cancelled the debt which stood in the divine books against the rebellious human race. But whilst he was yet speaking, there appeared in the road, just without the garden gate, a very infirm old man, who stood awhile looking at the cheerful party within, having his hand upon the latch, yet not, as it were, having resolution to raise it.

I sent Jenny to inquire what the person wanted, and she came back, saying “it is an old man, and he asked if you live here, brother.”

"Did he mention my name, Jenny?" I asked.

"He called you Benjamin," she replied, "he said, 'Does Benjamin live here?'"

"Go back," I said, "and ask him what his business may be; mayhap he wants refreshment, and seeing us here, has tempted him to stop."

Jenny went back, and said, "Do you wish to see my brother, or do you want a drink? We are making tea, shall I bring you some?"

"Who are you, my fair little lass?" said the old man.

"I am Jenny," she answered; "and this house is my brother Benjamin Gamson's."

"And those?" asked the old man, pointing his finger to the party under the tree.

"Brothers and sisters," she replied.

"What, all! all!" he exclaimed.—"My God! My God!" and down he fell, as if in a fainting fit.

Jenny screamed, and I and my brothers ran to the gate, and, lifting up the poor man, we brought him into the garden, and laid him on a bank of grass, near where we had set our table.

His eyes had been closed for a moment; and though I was looking intently at him, I did not know him till he opened them, and trying to raise himself said, "Benjamin! poor boy! hast thee quite forgotten me?"

"My father!" I exclaimed. "My father!" and down I was on the grass, clasping him in my arms.

"Hast thee forgotten me, Benjamin?" he said: "hast thee cast me off?—I have deserved it—I was a wretch to thee—but, art thou doing well? Tell me, hast thou followed me in thy ways? Tell me, that thou hast hated my ways; and though I am cast out from hence for ever, yet will I rejoice."

"My father!" I answered, "God has been good to me. I have been enabled to desire to forsake the evil, and to pursue the good."

"God be praised!" he answered, clasping his thin hands; and seeing him endeavouring to rise, William and I lifted him upon a chair, and he was relieved by a violent burst of tears. We made him some tea, which so far refreshed him, that he was able to look round on each and all of his children. He inquired who Mr. Colegate was; and being told how he had strengthened and supported, and instructed us in the way of holiness, he thanked him with a depth of feeling such as I had never seen before.

It was an overpowering meeting: the feelings of that hour were too much for me. Not so will

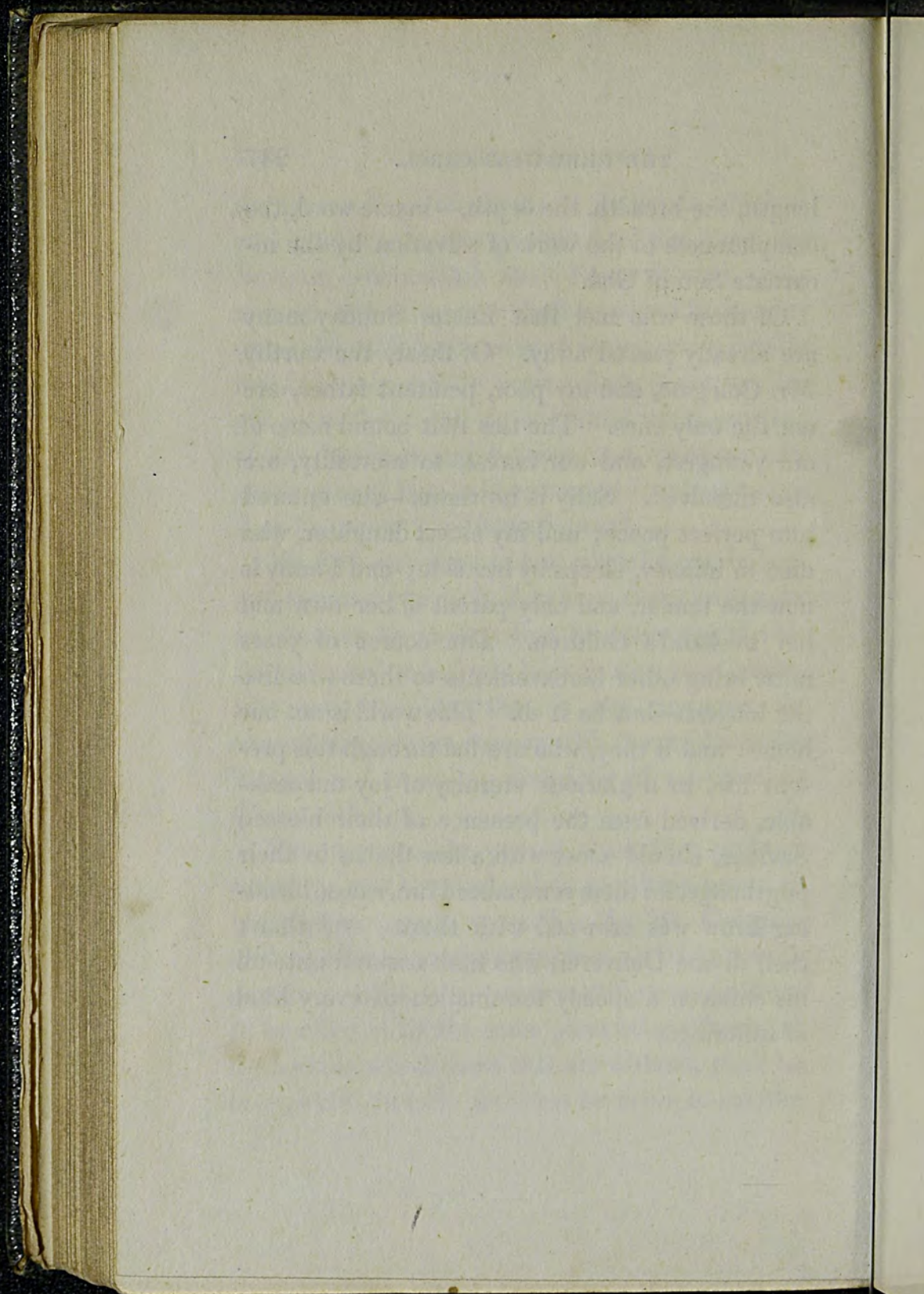
be the meetings of wives and husbands, children and parents, in the presence of the Lord the Saviour, when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and every tear shall be wiped from every eye. My wife had hastened to prepare a bed for my father, in a little room which, since we had got on in the world, we had fitted up in case any of the family should be sick, and there we presently placed him, and entreated him to consider it as his home from henceforward.

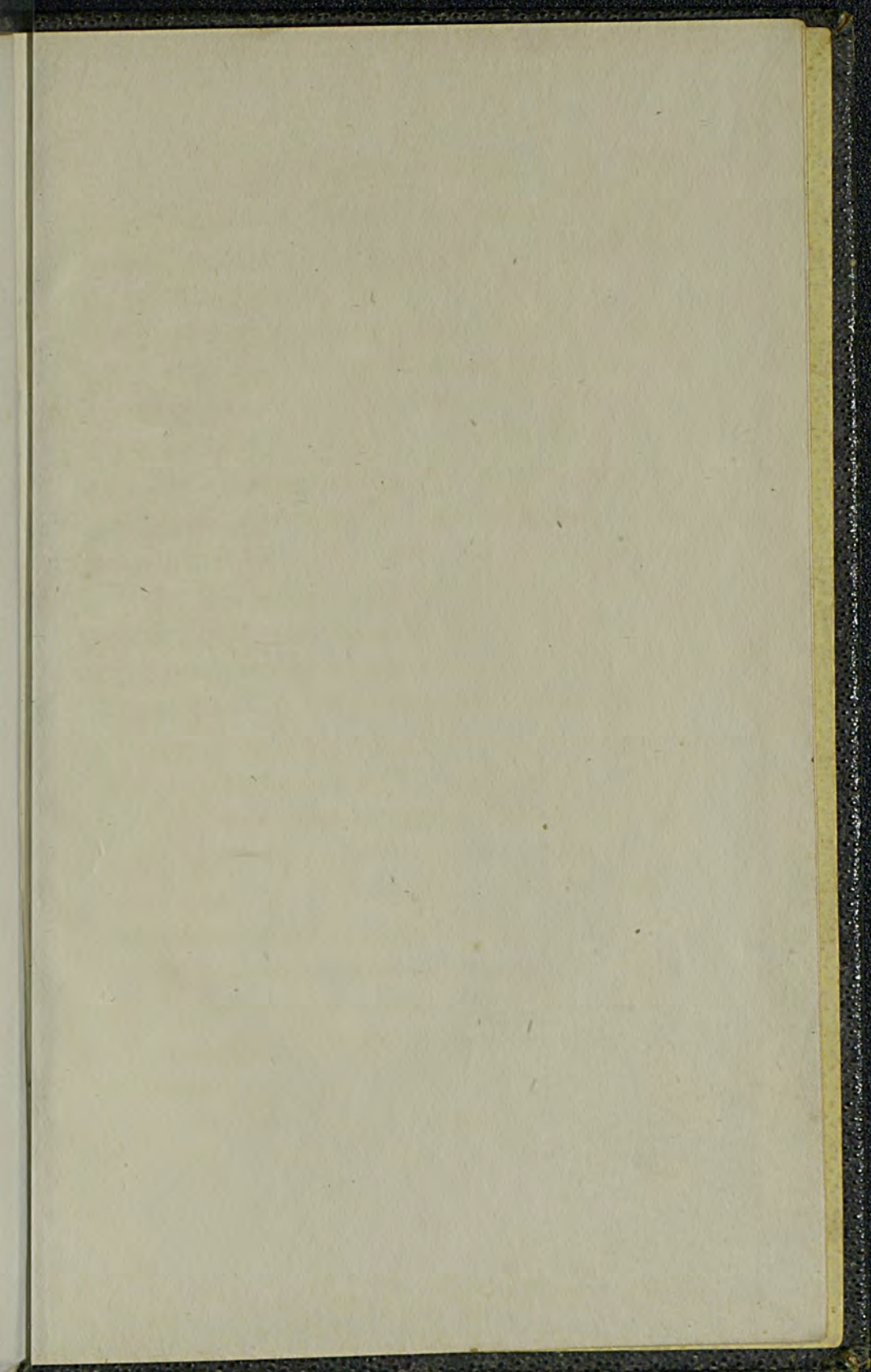
Mr. Colegate went to him when he was in bed, and returning to us half an hour afterwards, gave us pleasure by saying, that he was assured that the old man's mind was in such a state of contrition and humility, that it was prepared, he trusted divinely, to receive with thankfulness the blessed and consoling doctrines of salvation by Christ alone.

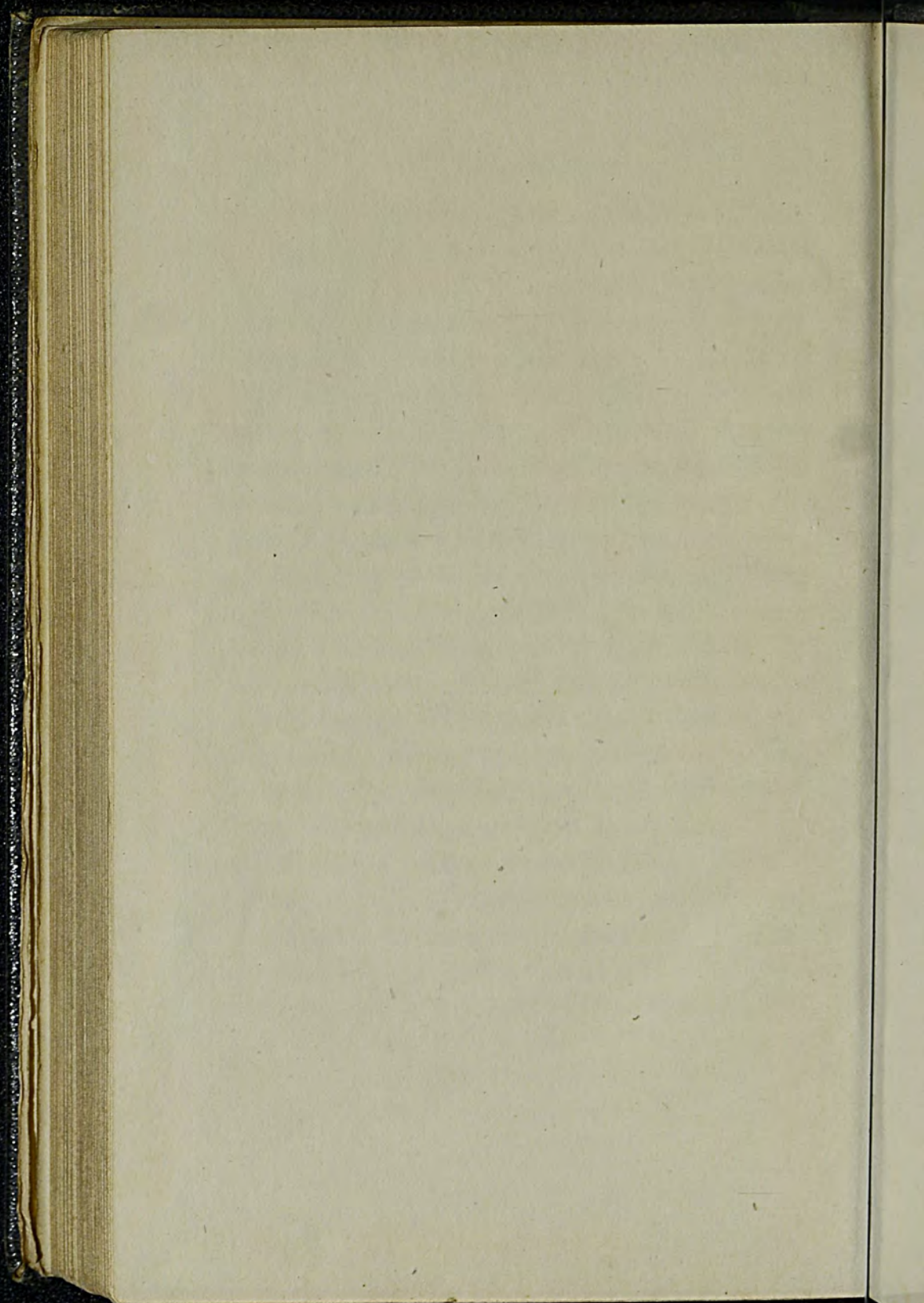
Twenty years are passed since that eventful evening; and those who then met have never all together met again on earth. As Mr. Colegate said, that meeting was an earnest—a faint, though certain earnest, of a re-union still more glorious, to be effected by the same paternal goodness, at a period in which those that are without, shall be brought in, and the universe be made to see the

length, the breadth, the depth,—in one word, the completeness of the work of salvation by the incarnate Son of God.

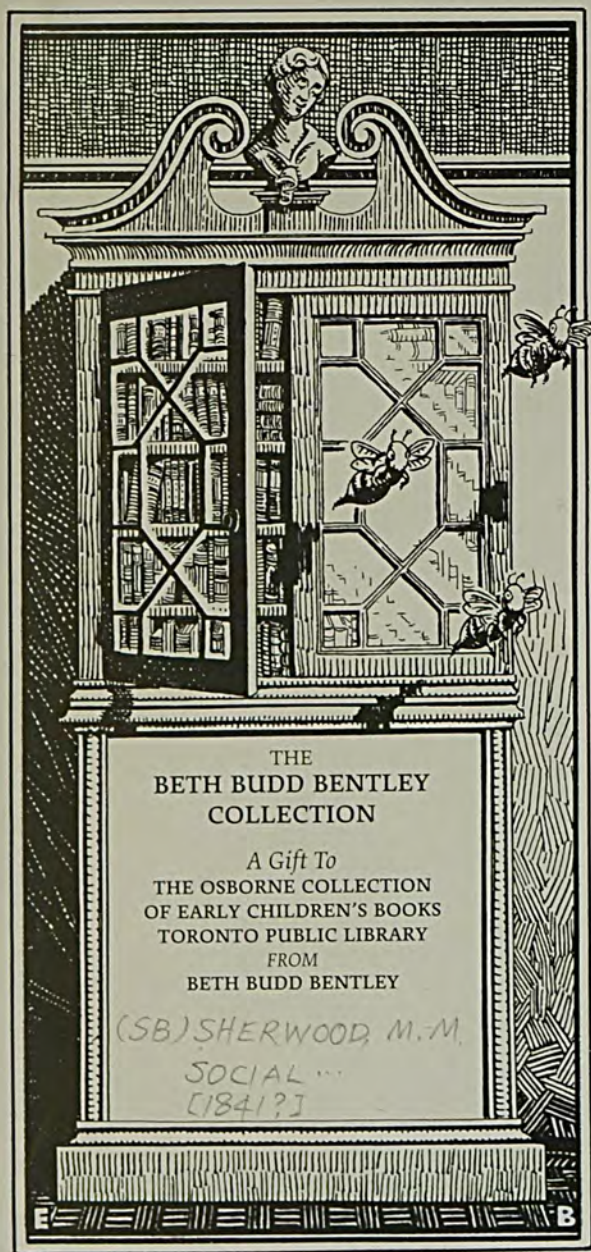
Of those who met that Easter Sunday many are already passed away. Of these, the worthy Mr. Colegate, and my poor, penitent father, are not the only ones. The ties that bound some of our youngest, and our fairest, to mortality, are also dissolved. Sally is no more,—she entered into perfect peace; and my eldest daughter, who died in infancy, sleeps by her side; and Fanny is now the tender, and only parent of her own and her husband's children. The course of years must bring other bereavements to those who live the longest—but be it so. This world is not our home: and if they, who are led through this present life, to a glorious eternity of joy unspeakable, derived from the presence of their blessed Saviour, should meet with a few thorns in their pilgrimage, let them remember Him, whose bleeding brow was crowned with thorns, and thank their divine Deliverer, who hath assured unto all his children a speedy termination of every kind of suffering.







Miss E. M. Ford



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