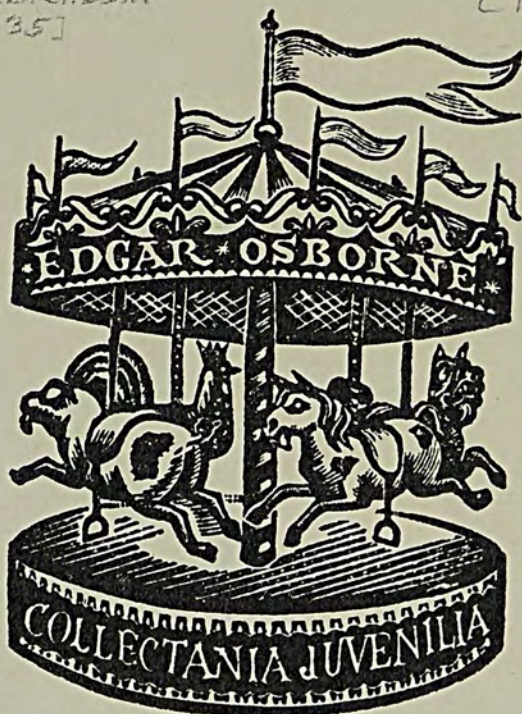




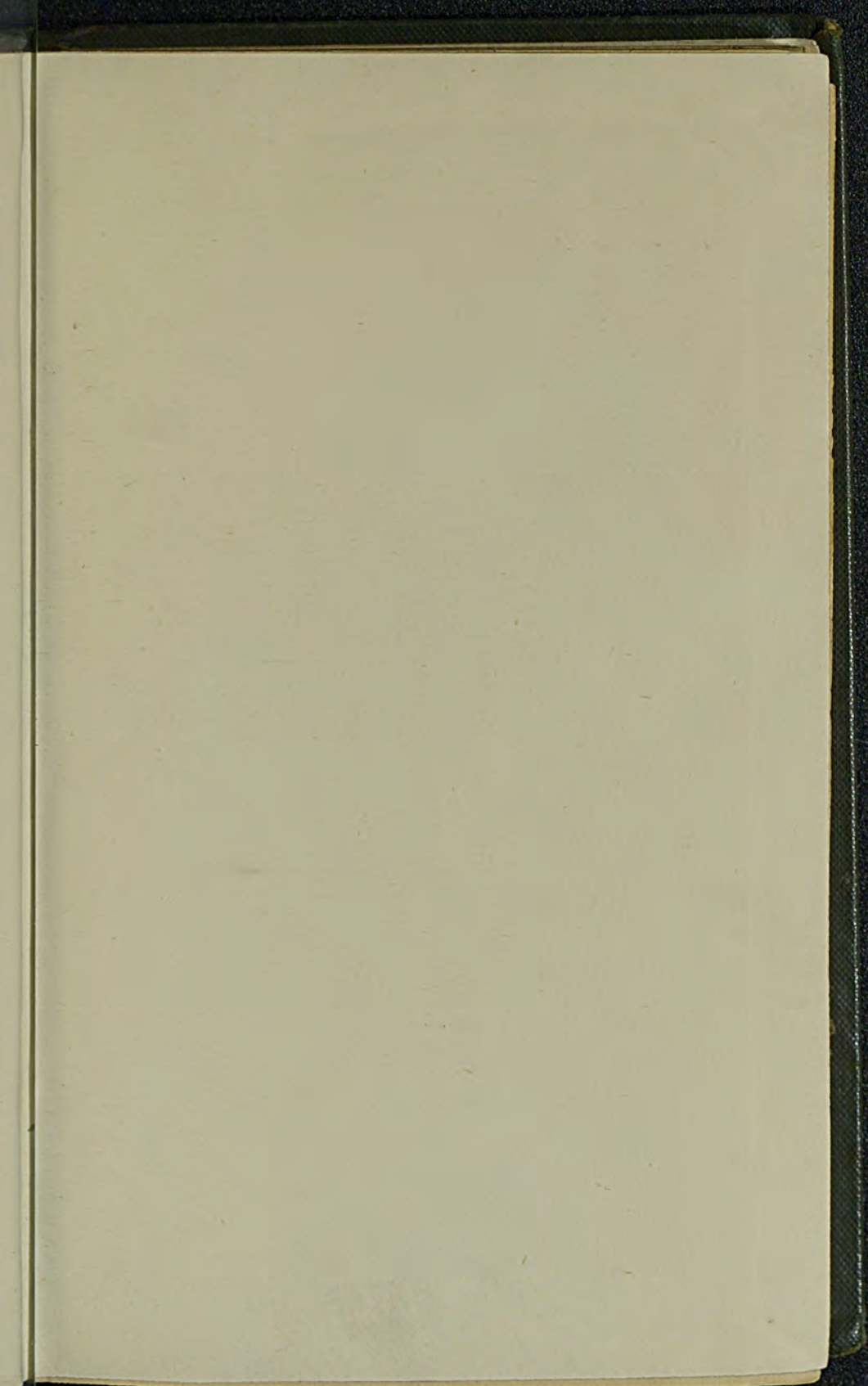
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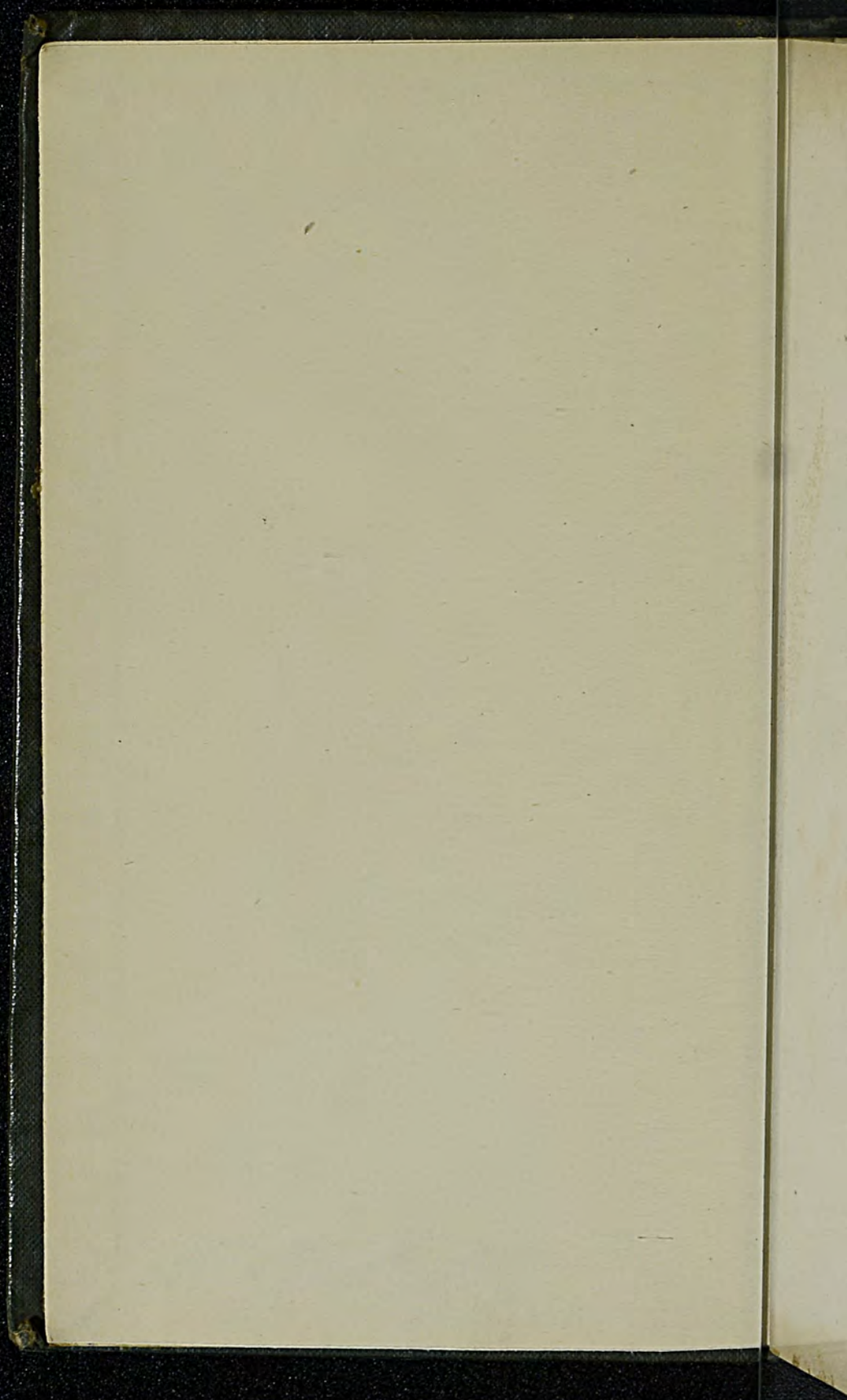
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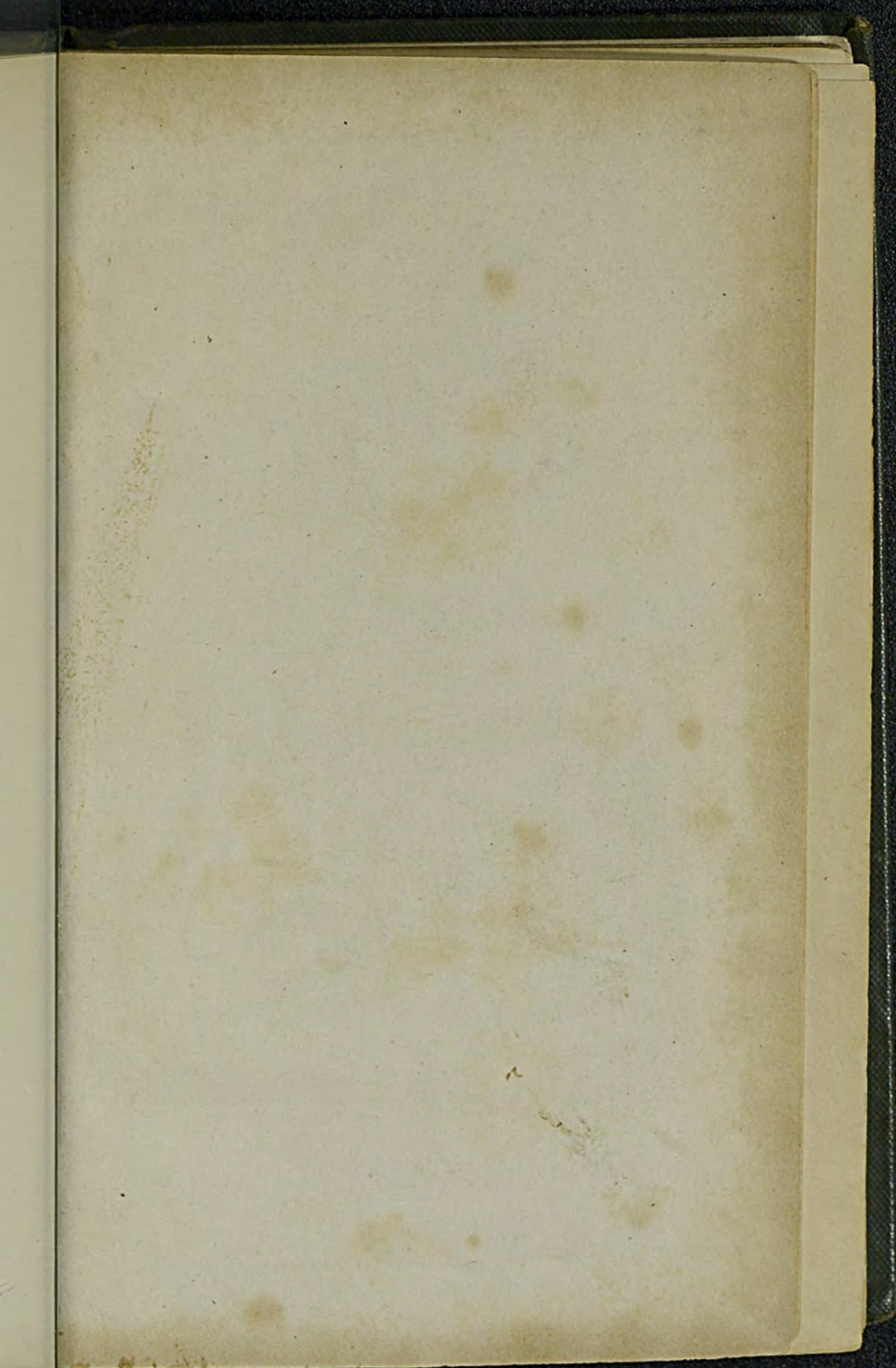


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Mary Ann saw Miss Windermere, but did not run & meet her,
as usual lest it might appear like asking for thanks.

See Page 146.

HARVE

SKETCHES

FROM A

YOUTHFUL CIRCLE.

“Our arguments should not fall and explode with the noise and violence of thunderbolts, but insinuate themselves like the light or the dew of heaven.”

J. A. JAMES.

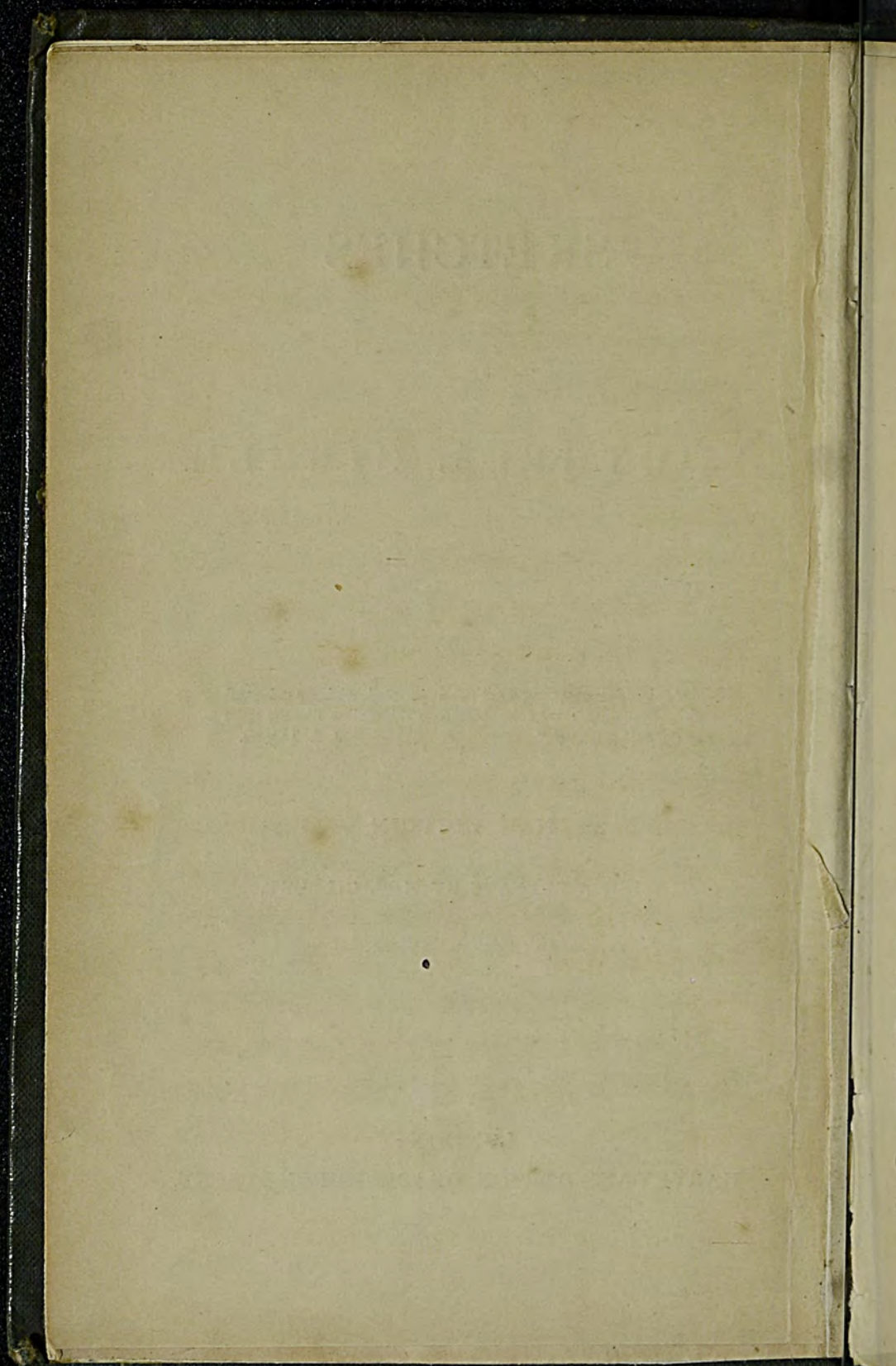
NEW EDITION,

WITH A PREFACE BY MRS. GILBERT,

LATE MISS TAYLOR.

LONDON :

HARVEY AND DARTON, GRACECHURCH-STREET.



PREFACE.

AN opinion so gratifying has already been formed and expressed, of these "Sketches from a Youthful Circle," that further introduction cannot be needed; and to attempt to conciliate public favour to a volume, which, in anonymous modesty, has made its unheralded way into notice, must appear to the reader, no less than it is felt by the present writer, wholly superfluous. Were it necessary to disarm criticism, or to excite interest apart from the merit of the work, the author might be

introduced as very young, and a candid judgment solicited for the first effort of her pen. But, with whatever diffidence the fair writer (herself not beyond the limits of a youthful circle) may step forward to the public eye, a friend requested to appear at her side, feels no occasion for similar hesitancy. A glance at the volume (a second edition of which is thus early called for,) precludes the necessity. There will be found in it a nice discernment, a discriminating perception of character, such as might prove, to a mind less imbued with the Christian temper, a dangerous possession; but within the keen eye the tear of kindness beautifully glistens. The faults of youth are exposed only to be tenderly corrected; christian principle is brought to bear on the daily occasions of early life, with equal ease

and force; and as originals, from which the portraits will appear to have been studied, are to be recognized round every fireside, the Sketches will be welcomed in many a youthful circle, as already familiar or endeared; mothers and teachers will thankfully avail themselves of assistance, at once judicious and attractive; and, so long as the young heart can speak in blushes, the likeness will be acknowledged as the mirror passes round.

Accustomed as we are to the best instrumentality, and to see it fail, we do not anticipate great results of good, even from such as appears, in no small degree, adapted for usefulness; but as far as means are commonly effective, it may be hoped, that many a youthful character, at present irresolute, spoiled by some prevailing fault, or forming on

erroneous principles, will receive timely correction from the lively, graphic portraiture of this interesting volume.

Had I a better name, it should be warmly at the service of a young writer, commencing so early a course of honourable exertion, but to such as I have she is cordially welcome.

ANN GILBERT.

Nottingham, June 8th, 1835.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE Author of this little work does not imagine, that she has offered any remarks, which will be strikingly new to those mature and intelligent minds for whom it is not intended. Should it prove attractive, and in any degree useful, to that large and interesting class of beings, to whose dawning faculties almost all thoughts appear new, and who can sympathize, from

personal experience, in many of the scenes here described, she will deem her exertions very amply repaid. To the young of her own sex, it is, therefore, affectionately presented, with earnest wishes, and sincere prayers, for the best welfare of every one whose eye may glance upon its pages.

CHAPTER I.

THE long-expected Christmas holidays had passed away, and the day had arrived when the young ladies belonging to a large and respectable establishment in the west of England were expected to return again to commence the routine of school study. Few arrived the first day; but those few were informed by their governess, that Miss Melville, their late head-teacher, would not be able to return, and that she expected a young lady in the course of a day or two to supply her place. The charms of novelty often cause youthful hearts to forget half their troubles; and it was so in the present case, for parting tears were dried up, and succeeded by smiles, as the young people indulged in the various anticipations to which this interesting piece of intelligence gave rise, while they enjoyed the idea of having something new to communicate to those

of their companions who should arrive on the morrow.

The morrow came ;—the little group now received additions every hour, and as each, after the departure of her friends, entered the school-room, the words, “ What do you think ?—we are to have a new head-teacher !” mingled with the salutations with which they were greeted. Many were their exclamations of surprise, on hearing the news ; many conjectures were formed, as to what kind of a being the young lady in question would be ; and often was the hope expressed that she would not be too severe. “ I hope she will not be over strict with the forfeits,” said a merry little girl. “ It will be a sad thing for you if she is, Mary Ann,” said another. “ She cannot be more particular than Miss Melville was,” said Mary Ann ; “ she almost ruined me with forfeits.” “ No, you ruined yourself, I think,” replied her companion. “ Well, I don’t know how it was ; I never could remember ; while I was trying to escape from one forfeit, up used to come Miss Melville, and give me another for something else. If I tried to put all my things away, I was not in time for the bells, and if I ran as quickly as I could when they rang, I left something about.” “ But,”

said the other, whose name was Charlotte, "I never had so many." "Oh, I know you are a pattern of perfection, but I never could be so particular." "I hope she will be clever," said Emily, an interesting girl of fifteen, "somebody that will take an interest in teaching us; for I dare say I shall not be at school more than a year longer, and I wish to make the most of the time." In this hope she was joined by some of the elder and more intelligent part of the community; but a greater number were ready to second the gay Mary Ann, who said, "I hope she will not be breaking up all our schemes, and thinking we are to have no play, though." "We shall soon see, for she will be sure to come either to-day, or to-morrow," remarked Charlotte. "And I really wish she would come; I cannot bear waiting and wondering," exclaimed Mary Ann. Every chaise that drew up to the door that day, was eagerly watched, to see whether it contained the object of their expectations; but they watched in vain for the present, and retired to rest without having satisfied their curiosity. "Well, we shall see what to-morrow will bring forth," said Mary Ann, as they went up stairs to bed.

Perhaps it will not be amiss, while the young

group are enjoying their slumbers, to introduce some of them more particularly to the notice of our readers.

Emily was, as before remarked, an interesting girl of about fifteen. Her mind was just expanding, so as to enable her to appreciate the opportunities which were presented to her of acquiring knowledge, and to incite her to pursue her various studies with interest and ardour. She was also a very great admirer of the beauties of nature; and a few wild flowers, or the ever-varying aspect of the sky, were to her sources of so much pleasure, that she was often thought a little enthusiastic by her school-fellows. She was, however, too lively, energetic, and affectionate, not to be a general favourite; and her peculiar tastes only caused an occasional smile or joke from those who could not fully enter into them.

Charlotte was a steady, industrious girl, of fourteen, who generally managed to conform to all the rules of the house, and seldom needed reproof. She was never satisfied unless every thing she did was done, not merely well, but the best in the school; not to repeat a lesson correctly, or to fail in anything she undertook to perform, was to her a real trial, nor could she

ever endure to be excelled by any, without redoubling her exertions to overtake them.

Mary Ann, who had just entered her twelfth year, was the very reverse of this character. Light-hearted, lively, and sweet-tempered, the sunshine of her life would seldom have been clouded, had not her habitual thoughtlessness too frequently brought her under reproof and various penalties, which, for the moment, made her sigh. But still she continued much the same; for it was her idea, that carelessness was a slight fault in a school-girl; and she was far less disposed to correct it in herself, than to complain, half in earnest and half in play, of the strict, severe rules, the innumerable forfeits, and the impossibility of her doing anything without a mistake.

Sophia was just fifteen; she was a young lady of very superior talent, though she did not think it worth while, in the general way, to employ it. She could easily have excelled most of her companions, but as she scarcely ever did anything as well as she could, her productions were generally inferior. Few knew the extent of her abilities, but all viewed her as an oddity; and it was very evident, to an observant eye, that she wished to be thought so.

Matilda, who was about thirteen, was frank and open ; but a proneness to take offence easily, and a determination never to make the first advance towards reconciliation, prevented her from holding a very high place in the affections of her school-fellows.

Ellen was an acute, clever little girl, of about ten years old ; her abilities procured for her a place in a class of which she was considerably the youngest member, while much talent for drollery, and engaging manners, brought upon her rather more of the notice of the elder girls than was quite good for her, so that she was beginning to be vain, and fond of admiration. To attract notice herself, rather than to please others, became her aim, and she began to feel secret vexation when a less share of attention was paid her than usual.

Frances was in her sixteenth year ; she was tall, well formed, and remarkably attractive in person ; she excelled also in all the lighter accomplishments which usually attract the admiration of the young ; but she was not beloved, and scarcely admired, by her companions. Conscious of external advantages, and accustomed to the flattery of injudicious friends from her infancy, she seemed to act upon the principle, that she

was superior to every one else; and vanity and selfishness led her into many ridiculous, and many unkind actions. Thus, though on her first arrival, she had been much admired for a few days, her school-fellows soon learned to dislike one who so constantly assumed superiority over them, and who was so unwilling to do them a kindness. Did the young consider of how little importance beauty really is to their happiness, they would not, perhaps, so much envy those who possess it, nor be so anxious for it themselves. It may attract admiration for a time, but, by itself, will never procure for us the blessing of a real friend; for while we soon learn to love the countenance, however homely, on which habitual kindness and sympathy have stamped their sweet expression, the aversion which we naturally feel to conceited selfish characters, quickly causes us to overlook their personal charms.

Clara and Maria were sisters; the former thirteen years of age, the latter nearly ten. Clara was very fond of fun, and laughed indiscriminately on all occasions, but paid little attention to her studies; she was considered an idle, trifling girl, and, in general, was neither beloved nor disliked. Maria was, in many respects, a

pleasant child, though often inclined to be fretful, and not much disposed to encounter difficulties.

Lucy, who had just completed her twelfth year, was a girl of some ability, and still more confidence in herself. She was far too independent to be imposed upon in the slightest degree by the elder girls, and too overbearing and consequential to be loved by the younger ones. She had been accustomed to little control at home; and a high spirit, which required constant checking, had been rather fostered by her large family, of which, being considerably the youngest, she was the favourite.

Louisa was just fourteen; she was a remarkably fine girl, and was generally thought to possess a lofty, but generous, disposition;—she scorned a mean or unjust action, and possessed many desirable qualities, but pride of character often placed her in an unamiable point of view.

These, with about twenty more, whom it is not important to describe, made up the little society, whom, for the present, we will leave to their quiet repose.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, as Mary Ann entered the school-room, she was accosted by Charlotte.—“ Oh, Mary Ann ! what do you think ? ” “ My dear girl, I have thought of nothing but the cold, this morning ; do let me come to the fire ; how long have you been down here, all alone ? ” “ Not long ; I made as much haste as I could, because I did not quite know my lessons ; but do come here, I have something to tell you. ” “ Well, pray make haste and tell me ; you always make so many prefaces to your speeches, that I grow tired of listening before you begin. ” “ Miss Windermere, the new teacher, is come. ” “ Dear me, indeed is she ? who told you so—and when did she come ? ” “ Sally told me that she came last night after we were gone to bed ; and I did not ask her anything more, because, you know, we must not talk to the servants. ” “ Well, you are a very good girl, Charlotte ; I am afraid I

should have been tempted to ask a few questions."

Just then Emily came down with a few more, who slept in a room with Miss Lindsay, the second teacher. "Miss Lindsay says that the new teacher is come," said Emily. "We know that," replied Mary Ann, "but perhaps you can tell us a little more." "The rest will tell you all you wish to know, my dear Mary Ann; I must go and practise," said Emily, as she went out of the room. Accordingly, they began to discuss the subject, while Charlotte seated herself on a form in a corner of the room, and not all the bustle around could tempt her to raise her eyes from the lesson she was learning. Presently Miss Lindsay came down: it was now time to ring the bell for prayers, and Miss Windermere, with their governess, Mrs. Wilmot, soon after appeared.

After prayers were over, Mrs. Wilmot introduced Miss Windermere to the young ladies, and mentioned a few of their names to her; saying—"You see them all now, except my niece, and another little girl, who has never been to school before; I quite expect them both to-day." The young ladies now thought they might venture to look at their new teacher; she was pleasing in

her appearance, and there was something very kind and cheerful in the expression of her countenance, though there was a sort of mild dignity in her manners, which seemed to indicate that she was not a person to be trifled with. She took the first class, of which Emily was one, to their lessons that morning, and quite satisfied those who were anxious to improve, of her ability and willingness to give them useful information; and her anxiety that they should thoroughly understand all they learned. Possessing superior talents, and a highly cultivated mind, she was besides very fond of young people, and she made their studies so interesting, that the attention even of the idle was excited, while the more intelligent were unusually pleased.

About the middle of the day Mrs. Wilmot's niece arrived, and before the close of it, Mary, the little girl before mentioned. The latter was a pretty blooming child, just nine years old. She shed many tears at parting with her mamma, and looked timidly around her, as she was introduced into the school-room, half afraid at the sight of so many strange faces. Miss Lindsay, however, kindly took the young stranger to sit near her, endeavouring to amuse her, so that she

soon seemed to feel more at home. On the first evening the novelty of the scene around, appeared entirely to engage her attention; but afterwards, it became evident that the separation from home was a most severe trial to her. Though she apparently endeavoured to conceal and restrain her feelings as much as possible, yet tears were continually flowing at the remembrance of the friends she had left: she attended to all her lessons very diligently, and would often seem, for a short time, interested in them, or in the amusements of her little companions; but the slightest reference to home, such as the mere mention of her mamma's name, appeared immediately to bring on a tide of recollections too tender to be borne without weeping.

Some might have thought her a silly child, but there were others who could make allowance for the feelings of one so young, on being separated, for the first time, from a happy home; and who knew how to sympathize in the sadness of a little heart, which had, perhaps, never known trouble before.

Among these was Miss Windermere, who was much concerned to see her little pupil so unhappy, and determined to watch for oppor-

tunities of endeavouring to remove the gloom which weighed down her spirits. Two or three days after her arrival, she saw her standing, after their morning studies were over, at the school-room window, which looked into the garden. The view was not one of the most cheering description, for though the grounds were very pleasant, the trees were now bare, the earth damp, and the atmosphere so foggy, as quite to obscure the distant hills. Little Mary's heavy heart invested the landscape with a still more sombre hue, and as she stood she thought, "Ah, how different it looks at home!" the tears came into her eyes, and she stayed by the window, thinking no one would see her wipe them away.

Miss Windermere, however, was looking at her, and now said, "Mary, my dear, if you have nothing particular to do, perhaps you will not mind winding a skein of cotton for me." "Oh, yes, I will do it, ma'am;" said Mary, drying up her tears, and trying to look as if nothing was the matter. "Thank you, my love. And will you come and sit by me?" Mary came, and began to wind, and Miss Windermere tried to draw her into conversation. "Do you often break cotton, when you wind it, my love." "Oh no,

the last time I wound a skein, I did not break it once," replied Mary, and a tear rolled down her cheek; Miss Windermere wiped it away, and, kissing her tenderly, said, "Now do tell me the cause of all these tears." "Oh, ma'am," said Mary, "the last time I wound a skein of cotton, it was for my mamma; you cannot think how much I want to see her." "And is that the reason you have looked so sad since you have been here? you do not cry because you do not like study I hope, my love."

Mary. Oh no, ma'am; I like my lessons; I used to learn them at home; and every one here is very kind; that makes me the more sorry, because you all try to make me happy, and yet I cannot help crying to think of my home, and to think I shall not see mamma again for so many weeks.

Miss W. But as mamma thinks it right for you to come to school, is it not better for you to try and be cheerful, and learn all you can? that will please your mamma you know.

Mary. Yes, ma'am; and I often try to be happy, but then again the tears will come, and I think it is hardly any use trying.

Miss W. But, my love, the more you indulge these sad feelings, the more difficult you will find it to overcome them. I think I can tell you of a remedy, and if you will only promise to try it, I shall soon expect to see you happy again.

Mary. I will if I can ; but pray tell me what it is, if you please, ma'am.

Miss W. Well, it is this : whenever you feel dull, instead of going into a corner to cry, begin some employment directly : no doubt you have brought some little work to amuse you during your play-hours. There are many pretty books in the library, which you can understand, and your little companions too will be very glad to have you for a play-fellow when you wish it ; besides you have various lessons to prepare, and if you try and take an interest in them you will soon find them pleasant. So you see, you never need be idle for want of employment. Whenever you really can find nothing in the world to do, you may come to me and I will soon employ you.

Mary. Well ; I think I will try if that will do me any good.

Miss W. Do, my love ; I am almost sure you

will find it succeed. If you like, I will tell you an instance in which it did answer.

Mary. Oh yes, do, ma'am, if you please !

Miss W. When I was a little girl, I went to school, a great many miles from home, and generally felt rather gloomy during the first few days ; one day, feeling particularly sad, I thought I never should be happy at school, and could think of no relief, but indulging in what I called "a good cry." Just then, however, I remembered something which it was necessary to do directly. I began it ; and soon my employment so engaged my attention that I forgot my troubles, and became happy from that time. Since then I have always found employment a certain step to cheerfulness.

Mary. Well, ma'am I will really try it.

Miss W. I quite hope you will, my dear ; for, besides being the most pleasant, it is your duty to be cheerful. Do you remember a text in the Bible, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content?"

Mary. I have heard it ; I think St. Paul said it.

Miss W. Well, I really knew a little girl who

was consoled in the prospect of going to school by hearing that verse. She thought, "Surely if St. Paul was content in the midst of his great troubles, I ought to be so with such small ones." Perhaps little Mary hardly thought her troubles were small; but she said, "I do not think I should ever have thought of that. St. Paul was so wise, and so good, and wrote some of the Testament, I believe. What a difference there is between him and me!"

Miss W. Yes, a very great difference; and so his troubles were very different from yours. You are separated from home for a few weeks in order that you may acquire useful knowledge, but you are surrounded with comforts, and we all wish to make you happy; St. Paul, on the contrary, not only endured frequent and long separations from his friends, but was often in want of necessities, and in the midst of enemies who would have been glad to take away his life if they could. Yet, while he says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," should you mourn, and say, "I can only be content in one state?"

Mary smiled, and Miss Windermere continued:—"St. Paul's mind was strong, yours is com-

paratively weak ; so he had a great deal to try him, and you have a little. Perhaps these slight troubles may prepare your mind to endure heavier ones in after life."

Mary. Do you think, then, Miss Windermere, that my having this trouble now is a proof that I shall have a great many when I grow up ?

Miss W. By no means, my dear child ; but very likely you will have something to bear. Do not be sad, however, in the prospect ; if you love that kind Saviour whom St. Paul loved, every trial will in some way do you good, and you will never be without comfort.

Mary looked serious, and said, " But may I ask you, dear Miss Windermere, how coming to school, and leaving my dear mamma, who used to talk to me about these things, can in any way do me good ? "

Miss Windermere kissed her, and said affectionately, " I hope it will improve you in many things, but very much do I wish, my little Mary, that now, being separated from your dear mamma, you may be led to seek God for your Father and your Friend." Just as Miss Windermere said this, the dressing-bell rang, which put an end to the conversation for the present ; but little Mary

said, "Please talk to me again, ma'am, when you have time." "That I will, my love," said Miss Windermere, and they separated to dress for dinner.

Mary took the advice Miss Windermere had given her. It was a painful struggle at first to overcome the inclination she felt to cry; but she found that immediate employment removed the difficulty. She now began to take an interest in what was passing around her, and her smiling countenance, and light buoyant step, soon showed how well the remedy had succeeded.

It is now time to speak more particularly of Miss Wilmot, who came on the same day with little Mary. She had nearly completed her sixteenth year, was unassuming and elegant in her manners, and very pleasing in person. Her intelligence, and anxiety to improve every opportunity of acquiring information, interested all who instructed her, whilst her gaiety and kind sympathizing disposition endeared her to her companions. She had one quality not often possessed by the elder young ladies in a school, which was kindness to the younger ones. Many who are anxious to possess the esteem of the elder and leading branches of the community

would think the wishes of a little girl unworthy of their notice. A regard to their character in the school prevents them from doing any thing unkind or unjust to the one, whilst asperity or indifference are habitual towards the other. Some consequential young persons, perhaps, may suppose it very much beneath them to notice a child, but they may be assured nothing is so truly elevating to the character as humility; and the youthful mind which, in the midst of its interesting pursuits, will yet step back to listen to the wants and inquiries of childhood, possesses far more true dignity than the one which, anxious only for admiration, looks on it with disdain or impatience.

But in Miss Wilmot this kind disposition was not merely the fruit of a temper naturally affectionate; a principle of love to the Saviour had shed its sweet influence in her heart, and she therefore no longer lived to herself, but to Him. In her the younger children found a sympathizing friend, who, while she would help them in their difficulties, soothe them in their little troubles, and laugh with them in their pleasures, still constantly, though quietly, sought their best improvement. We can imagine some youthful reader

will be ready to exclaim, "This is not natural; who would be teased with children at school, much less take pains with them in that way?" True, my young friend, this sort of kindness is natural to few; but Miss Wilmot had learned to deny herself, and exactly in proportion as you learn that lesson will your happiness be increased.

We have already mentioned Ellen, whose superior abilities, and lively, engaging manners, had attracted as much notice as these qualities generally do in a large school. She was admired and half envied by her younger school-fellows, whilst among the elder girls she was much caressed, and had become a kind of plaything. Any attempts at reproof, which were sometimes needed, were constantly evaded by some laughable remark, or winning flattery. This little girl possessed remarkable quickness of apprehension, and a most retentive memory; she dived to the bottom of a puzzling question, entered into the sense of a difficult lesson, and rose to the head of her class, almost before her companions had time to consider what they were doing. There was something also in her general conduct and manner well calculated to make her an object of interest; her affections were strong, and their

expression ardent and enthusiastic, while the characteristic oddity of her remarks amused every one around her.

Ellen soon perceived the attention she attracted; and it had an injurious effect upon her. A love of admiration became the leading principle of her mind, and to obtain it was her constant endeavour; accordingly, if she failed in the attempt, she was restless and uncomfortable, and very often rather capricious. None but one possessing a most observant eye, and much knowledge of the human heart, could have detected the innumerable ways in which she sought to be noticed; but there was a watchful eye observing her. The strong love of display produced and fostered in Ellen's mind by daily admiration was perceived and lamented by Miss Windermere, who sincerely wished to check a weed calculated to turn a fruitful soil into a desert, and to choke every good seed sown there.

The person whose affection and approbation were most valued and sought for by Ellen was Miss Wilmot; for as this sweet and interesting girl had become a universal favourite, to be distinguished by her was to ensure the notice of all the rest.

She had been intrusted with a slight superintendence over Ellen, which she discharged with unwearied assiduity and kindness; and though every one in the school experienced her affectionate attentions when needed, yet she was in a peculiar manner Ellen's friend, and felt great interest in all that concerned her. The little girl, on her part, repaid Miss Wilmot's kindness with the most ardent affection of her young heart, manifesting it every day by a thousand of those trifling but fond attentions, which can be better imagined by those who have witnessed them, than described to those who have not; indeed the affection subsisting between them would have been almost as endearing and delightful as that which forms the tender bond of union between the parent and the child, had it not been for the unhappy disposition in the mind of Ellen, which, like a root of bitterness, was daily spreading, and beginning to produce fruits of the most unlovely character. Ellen loved Miss Wilmot dearly, and earnestly wished for her affection in return; but then vanity and self-love prevented her from being satisfied with any thing but her supreme attachment. She could not endure the idea of any one else being loved better than her-

self; and hence a kindness shown by Miss Wilmot to one of her little companions, or, as she imagined, withheld from herself, was sufficient to cause feelings of vexation, and take off the edge of her enjoyments for hours together. Having mentioned these few particulars, we will return to the school-room, and allow the young people to speak for themselves, as they will then doubtless, furnish in their own words a more correct idea of their characters, than the most accurate description could give.

It was an afternoon on which, being a half-holiday, each young lady was at liberty to pursue the occupations most congenial with her own taste. The cold and wintry aspect of the scene from without, the rain mingled with sleet which pattered on the window-panes, and the wind whistling round the corner of the house, added still more to the glow of comfort observable in the large, warm school-room. The young ladies were differently engaged; some drawing, some working, a few were reading, and groups of the younger ones were playing in the corners of the room. Miss Windermere and Miss Lindsay were each sitting at their respective tables, quietly working, when suddenly

Emily started up, and throwing down a book which had engaged her attention during the last hour, said, "Oh, how silly I have been!—how sorry I am!" Miss Windermere, near whom she was sitting, looked up with surprise; "What is the matter, my love?" Before Emily had time to reply, little Ellen exclaimed, "Why this is my book; so, Emily, you have been reading it, and I have wasted the last hour in looking for it; did not you hear me asking every body where it was?" "No, indeed," said Emily, who, when her attention was once fixed on any object, seldom heard what was passing around her; "but I am very sorry, my little Ellen." "Never mind," said Ellen, who loved Emily almost as much as she did Miss Wilmot, "if you will give me a kiss I shall be quite repaid." This payment was soon made, and Emily recollecting herself, said, "Ah! but I am really quite vexed with myself; I was going to tell you the reason, ma'am, only Ellen interrupted me." "Well, my love, tell me now, and I shall be glad if I can do any thing to assist you," said Miss Windermere. "Why," replied Emily, "I had determined this afternoon to do so many things; I hoped to finish the watch-pockets for

my mamma, and write a note to send with them ; and draw, and go on reading Rollin's Ancient History besides ; but when we came from dinner this story-book caught my eye, so I accidentally took it up, and read it almost through. I am so sorry that when I have so much to do, I should lose an hour."

" Well, do not lose any more time, but begin some employment directly ; suppose you come and sit with me. Perhaps when we think about the subject, you will find that you have not so completely lost your time as you imagine." Emily rose for her work, and as she resumed her seat said, " Can you think of any thing, ma'am, then, that will make me think I have not lost any time ?" Miss Windermere smiled, " If you really have lost an hour, it would do you no good to make you think you have not done so, for the sake of getting rid of a few uncomfortable feelings. I merely wished to ask you a question or two, to know if you have really done as you imagine. What book were you reading ?"

Emily. Oh ! merely an amusing tale, ma'am ; though intending to leave off and begin something useful every minute, I cannot tell how it was, I

kept on reading : I have done so sometimes before, when I have had many other things to do, and always felt vexed with myself afterwards."

Miss W. Then you do not think you have gained a single idea worth the hour spent on this book ?

Emily. Oh no, ma'am ; it was really only a silly tale.

Miss W. But are you sure it has not been an hour of recreation, and given you fresh vigour to pursue your studies ?

Emily thought for a moment, and replied : " No, ma'am, I do not think it has ; once I used to like amusing stories better than any thing else ; but now, though perhaps they interest me just for a minute, they never yield me the same satisfaction, that I feel after studying any thing which improves as well as amuses me. I am never more unfit for study, or for common useful duties, than when I have been very deeply interested in any thing of the kind. Besides, at this time of all others, I should not be likely to find it a relaxation, for, having many things to do, I am vexed at losing so much time, and vexation is a most opposite thing to recreation."

Miss W. You are right, my love, and I am glad your mind has been so trained as to prefer the useful to the merely entertaining. I think, then, we must agree, that you *have* wasted an hour; and now the best thing you can do, is not to lose another in unavailing regrets, but to let your present vexation be a lesson to you to avoid wasting time for the future.

Emily. I hope it will be so, indeed; I must be very diligent and make up for lost time, though a fit of idleness sometimes makes me feel so uncomfortable afterwards, that I lose my energy in going on with what I have to do.

Miss W. As I hope you mean to be very economical of your time in future, my dear, you will, I think, find it useful to remember, that diligence can never be correctly said to make up for idleness; it is a true saying, "that time once lost, can never be regained;" for instance, if you lose an hour in the early part of the day, you may indeed, by great industry and perseverance, accomplish as much as you would have done if the time had not been wasted, and you had gone leisurely through your various duties. But then you must recollect, that you would have

done more still, if *every* hour of the day had been diligently and perseveringly improved : besides, Emily, as you have remarked, to one who is at all conscious of the value of time, the remembrance of one lost hour hangs like a weight upon our endeavours to improve the rest. Whenever idleness is indulged, it enervates the mind, and soon settles into a habit ; never therefore, give way to it, thinking to make up for your negligence, by greater diligence afterwards.

Emily. That is very true ma'am ; but—

Miss W. But what, my love ?

Emily. Are we always so very busy as to make it necessary to do every thing in the shortest time in which it is possible to do it well.

Miss W. (smiling). Do you mean, my dear, to ask, if we cannot sometimes spare a few minutes to waste ? if so, I must say, certainly not. But do not misunderstand me, I am not recommending you always to be in a hurry ; habitual diligence will be found one of the best means of preventing that, neither do I wish you to be constantly engaged in sedentary employments ; those moments are by no means wasted which are spent in healthy exercise, or real

recreation of any kind; these things are useful, and it is only in useless or hurtful pursuits that we waste time. But I really cannot find one reason why any should be lost, or why we should not be always diligent. When we have finished our own concerns, you know, we can look round and see if anything can be done to please or help some one else.

Emily. Well, really I think so; for now I recollect, that, by neglecting to take care of half an hour now and then, I have often been hindered, if not from my own studies, yet from doing little things for my friends at home and working for the poor.

Here Mary Ann, who had been sitting by them for some time, interposed. "I hope, Miss Windermere, you will excuse me, but I have been listening to what you have said, and though I love Emily very much, yet I have always thought, I never could be so studious as she is; and I was thinking just now, I am quite glad not to feel vexed after reading an amusing story-book all the afternoon, for there is nothing I like better. Perhaps it would not be so well for any one that was fifteen to be always reading them, but surely it is not wrong of me, when

I am only eleven. You do not expect me to be quite like Emily, ma'am?

Miss W. No, dear Mary Ann. I do not expect of you now, what, however, I shall hope to see four years hence. At your age, proper amusements are as good for the body as the mind; but if you do not wish to be a silly trifling girl at the age of fifteen, you must, in the hours of study at least, begin to lay the foundation of useful knowledge now; and, young as you are, you must avoid idle habits, and foolish books. But mind, I do not call all books foolish that are entertaining.

Emily. Not those, ma'am, which are *merely* entertaining?

Miss W. I do not say, *merely* entertaining, my love, and I think a book is seldom *merely* so; it generally has in it something calculated either to injure the mind or to improve it: as a general rule, I should say, if a book contains nothing that can be useful to you in any kind of way, or above all, which has a tendency to decrease your respect for religion, or give you false notions of right and wrong, it is better to lay it aside, however entertaining. But do not despair, Mary Ann, of being amused, there

are many books written now, which combine interesting information, useful knowledge, and correct religious principles, with amusement.

Mary Ann. Well, I'm very glad of that; but where are all these nice books, I wonder?

Miss W. Many of them are in the library, my dear.

Mary Ann. I have never read many of the library books; I thought by the covers of most of them that they looked rather dry.

Emily. What an excellent way of judging!

Mary Ann. Now really, Emily, I think it is an excellent way; story-books, you know, generally have pretty covers, and grammars dry-looking ones; and, if I read them, I find the stories are pretty, and the grammar dry.

Emily. Well, I need not have laughed either; for I remember, some years ago, when looking over our library at home for something to read, I often passed over one book, because, as you say, the cover did not look inviting; but once, when I could find no more entertaining books, which I had not read, I reached down this, and thought it one of the most interesting I had ever seen.

Mary Ann. What could it be?

Emily. "The Contributions of Q. Q." I have it at School with me, and am not tired of it yet. But I think you would like it, Mary Ann.

Mary Ann. I do not pretend to be so sublime as to like what such a clever girl as you, dear Emily, are not tired of. But I should like to see it, at any rate, if you will be so kind as to lend it me.

Emily. I will, if you will promise to take care of it, and read it every word through.

Mary Ann (laughing.) How tiresome you are to make me promise that! You know I always miss all the dry bits.

Miss W. Do you, indeed, my dear? Those who are anxious to improve the young, know that they will not be much interested in what you call a dry book, however excellent may be its sentiments, therefore, they endeavour to mingle amusement with instruction in their works; but while you merely skim through them, and miss the parts most likely to be useful to you, you say by your conduct: "I have no objection to be amused, but I will not take the trouble to gain useful knowledge, into however pleasing a form it is thrown to allure me; for, if any instruction is mixed with the entertain-

ment, I will defeat the intention of the writer by skipping over it." Whilst you say this, Mary Ann, how is it possible that any book can do you good? reading will be completely lost time to you.

Mary Ann. Oh, no, ma'am! but I am sure I do not wish to say that: only is it not vexatious, that those grave, dull bits, are the only ones likely to do us good?

Miss W. I do not say that, my dear; and if you were only to read them, I think you would seldom find them so very grave and dull as you imagine. Suppose you were to try, and the next time you meet with one of these "dry bits" just read it through, and try to enter into its meaning; the effort itself would carry something pleasant with it, and I am almost sure you would be well rewarded for your trouble. Do not be afraid, then, to comply with Emily's stipulation in lending you this book.

Emily. Oh, do read it all through, Mary Ann; there are some things in it which would suit you exactly.

Mary Ann. Now, Emily, what sort of things are they? for I have no doubt you have some excellent meaning in your polite hint.

“Order and Neatness,” said Emily, smiling.

Mary Ann. Tiresome words, as I find every day to my cost!

Miss W. How is it that these things cost you so much?

Mary Ann. I have so many forfeits every day for them, ma’am.

Miss W. Forfeits for order and neatness! no, my love, you forfeit for disorder and untidiness.

Mary Ann. Yes; but if there were no such thing as order, no one would be angry with one for being untidy.

Emily. Oh! Mary Ann, if there were no such thing as order, what would the world be? How would the earth, and the sun, and the planets, keep in their places? We should all be destroyed. And if there were no order, even only in the earth, what confusion there would be! We should never be sure, when we put seeds into the ground, that they would come up; we should not know how to go on at all. Dear, I cannot conceive what the world would be without order.

Mary Ann. Yes, that’s all very good; but I was not thinking of the earth and the sun, only of the way we go on at school. Will you let

me ask you, if you please, Miss Windermere, do you think we are any the happier for being kept so very, very strict? Now when we leave any thing about, would it not be better for some one to pick it up and give it to us, than to have a forfeit for it; and is it not very tiresome to be obliged to attend to the bells, and leave off whatever we are doing? The only thing which makes me at all dislike school (except, you know, being away from my friends) is, we are obliged to be so excessively neat, that I very often get into trouble.

Miss W. I will only answer your questions, my dear, by wishing that, through timely diligence in overcoming careless habits, you may never know the uncomfortableness and vexation that habitual disorder brings with it. You may try to imagine, if you like, what would be the consequence if each young lady were allowed to do as she pleased. How could any instruction be conveyed? and what a long catalogue should we have at the end of the half-year, of books lost, and different things injured; for it would be in vain to hope, amid such general confusion, that when we left any thing about, some one would pick it up and give it to us. I know, my

dear Mary Ann, that the young often laugh at habits of order, as if they were of no consequence, and only designed to tease them while at school; but you would cease to think so if you had seen, as I have, many merry school-girls, so affectionate and obliging—so lively and amiable—that no one could help loving them; and yet, whose careless habits caused more vexation, both to themselves and their friends, than you could imagine without witnessing it. Carelessness causes vexation sometimes, Mary Ann, even when not connected with a forfeit. Do you remember any instance to the point?

Mary Ann coloured slightly, and said, with a sigh, “Ah, yesterday.” Miss Windermere had no wish to carry the subject further, as she saw her remark had recalled rather painful recollections to the little girl’s mind, and she thought her reflections might be useful to her. The truth was, Mary Ann had brought to school a little geranium from her papa’s green-house, and very fond she was of it. It had gone on prosperously till the day before, when, as it was very fine for the season, she had placed it outside the window, for the benefit of the fresh air. As it drew towards dusk, she began to think of taking

it in, but, being seated very comfortably by the fire, and disliking the disagreeable exertion of moving to open the window, she delayed a little longer; something else happening to turn her attention, the shutters were closed, and she never once thought of the little tender plant till the morning, when, going to look at the frost on the window pane, she saw it quite dead. This accident had vexed Mary Ann more than any forfeits could have done, for the geranium had been planted for her under her kind papa's direction, and was doubly valued by the affectionate child on that account. She had, moreover, long watched it, and fondly anticipated, that its bright red blossoms would be in full perfection, when her friends came to see her: this too, was simply the effect of her own negligence, for there was not one in the house who would have wished to inflict such a punishment on her for carelessness.

Perhaps some such thoughts as these were now passing through Mary Ann's mind, for she sat still after Miss Windermere had done speaking, with more thoughtfulness than was often seen on her usually smiling countenance: indeed, so much did she appear engaged, that

little Mary soon had occasion to say, " Mary Ann, do you not hear the tea-bell? I never saw you thinking so before." Miss Wilmot smiled, and patted the head of the artless little girl; and Ellen said, " What a pity that the tea-bell should interrupt Mary Ann the first time she is thinking! But I will ask Miss Windermere to let you wait till we have done, if you will promise to tell us your meditations afterwards." Mary Ann jumped up: " Oh! dear me—no! we shall be last; come, let us make haste, for of all things again, I will not be too late now."

CHAPTER III.

SOME weeks had now passed away since the return of the young ladies to school, and Miss Windermere was no longer regarded as a new comer. Her general kindness, and constant cheerfulness, had won much upon the hearts of her pupils, though, at the same time, there was something in her manner, which at once inspired respect and prevented improper liberties. She was, as we have before mentioned, very fond of young people, and, viewing the station in which she was placed as one of great responsibility, she daily studied to fulfil its important duties, and to improve aright every talent committed to her care.

She knew that she was not merely educating her pupils for time, but for eternity; and therefore, while she sedulously laboured to cultivate their minds, improve their habits and dispositions,

and impart to them every kind of information that might contribute to render them happy and useful characters, she was supremely anxious that they should early learn to walk in those ways of pleasantness and peace which lead to life everlasting. To be useful to them in this point of view, was her earnest desire and constant aim; and to exhibit religion to them in an attractive form, was one of the motives which secretly animated her to cultivate every thing that was kind and amiable in her own character. She was anxious also to impress upon them the importance of true piety, not merely by her own daily example, but also by improving any favourable opportunity which might occur of speaking to them upon the subject; though she felt this to be a task requiring much prudence and discrimination, and always endeavoured to introduce religious conversation in such a manner as would be likely to interest rather than to weary.

Having stated these few particulars of Miss Windermere's character, we will revisit our young friends, who, as it was Sunday evening, were assembled in the school-room, prepared to set out for public worship. As Miss Lindsay was to

stay at home that evening, with the younger children, and Mrs. Wilmot generally preferred walking with her niece, Emily begged to be Miss Windermere's companion ; consent was readily obtained, and they soon set out.

The weather was clear and frosty, and the moon shone brightly, almost eclipsing the stars which studded the firmament. Emily looked up directly she came out of the house, and exclaimed, "Oh, how lovely the moon is ! How long I could look at it, gliding along the deep blue sky : I should never be tired."

"It is beautiful indeed !" said Miss Windermere, turning to look.

Emily. I always think of mamma when I look at it ; though we are so far from one another, we both see the same moon, and perhaps she is looking at it now. I can fancy exactly how it is shining over the lawn, and in at the drawing-room window. Is it not a pleasant idea, that the same moon does shine over us now we are separated ?

Miss W. Yes, my love, and pleasanter still that the same Providence watches over us ; the one is a beautiful emblem of the other. You seem fond of the beauties of nature, Emily.

Emily. Oh ! yes, ma'am ; they are so astonishing, so curious, so very beautiful : do you not think it is right to like them ?

Miss W. I do indeed, my dear ; they are all the works of God, and are spread open before us for our enjoyment and admiration ; it is very right, therefore, to enjoy and admire, what He has so kindly given us ; but if we make a proper use of them, we shall not stop here. There is another and a higher end, which they are also designed to answer. You have read, that " the heavens declare the glory of God," and " all his works praise him." We may, therefore judge, in some measure, whether we are rightly admiring the beauties of nature, by thinking whether we are led by them to adore the Great Author of them all. Do you find, my dear, that your researches into natural wonders ever lead your mind to God ?

Emily. Why, I think it is hardly possible to see so many beautiful contrivances on the earth, and to look up at the magnificent heavens, without feeling that God who made them, must possess very great wisdom and amazing power.

Miss W. Yes, my dear, all the works of God bear the impress of his hand, and that mind

must indeed be insensible which does not trace it there. But have you ever considered, that it is quite possible, when viewing a beautiful landscape, or admiring a delicate flower, to believe and feel that the Creator of works so fair, must be a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and love, and yet not really to love God, or listen to the voice which speaks to us in his word, "My son, give me thine heart."

Emily. Yes, ma'am, I think I have heard that persons, who do not even believe the Bible, admire the character of God in his works.

Miss W. Yes, my love; but they are not the class to which I was particularly referring: I was speaking of others, who do profess to believe the Scriptures, and have been instructed in the principles of the Christian religion perhaps from infancy. It is just as easy for them to admire the loveliness of nature, without loving its Creator, as for those who do not pretend to acknowledge a divine revelation at all. My dear Emily, it is infinitely important for you, and for us all, to reflect upon the wide difference which there is between a mere nominal belief of the Bible, and such a cordial reception of its delightful truths into the heart, as to induce a love for the sacred

record ; between a cold admiration of the Divine Being as the God of nature, and a heartfelt delight in Him as the God of grace. We are very liable to self-deception here, and as our everlasting destinies are involved in the subject, and a mistake would be fatal, do you not think, my dear girl, that it is supremely important to examine ourselves, and see if we are only adoring a God of our own imagination, or whether we have begun to serve Him in that one way, where alone we shall be accepted, where only we can ever be saved ?

Miss Windermere said this with a solemnity which showed how deeply she felt interested in the important question. Emily's religious education would have led her at any time to give an assent to such remarks as a matter of course ; but there was something in what Miss Windermere had said, which really arrested her attention, and made her say rather earnestly, " But how are we to know whether or not we are in the right way ? "

Miss W. The Scriptures, my dear, under the divine blessing, are the only guide. They tell us, as I am sure you know, that we are sinners against the blessed God, and that our hearts are

so evil, that unless they are renewed before we die, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Emily. Yes, ma'am, I have heard that a great many times.

Miss W. Have you ever felt it, my dear?

Emily. (hesitating a little). I do not know that I have, particularly, ma'am. Surely we are not always doing wrong; when, for instance, we endeavour to improve in our studies, and be obliging to our school-fellows, how do we sin then?

Miss W. Do you ask wherein you have sinned, Emily, my love?

Emily. Yes, I think I wish to know.

Miss W. My love, God has crowned your early days with the blessings of his providence, and given you a capacity greatly to enjoy them; and, more than this, he has permitted you to receive religious instruction from your childhood. Sabbath after Sabbath he is giving you the privilege of hearing of a Saviour. The solemn obligation which he has laid upon you, and all the race of man, is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." Look into your own heart, and see if you have ever fulfilled this unlimited command.

Emily. I cannot say I have, dear Miss Windermere; but, can any body say so?

Miss W. No, my dear, the natural heart is enmity against God—against a most holy and merciful God; all, therefore, deserve his everlasting wrath. From that endless wrath there is but one escape; Jesus died in the stead of sinners, and now our heavenly Father invites us to repent of our sins, to seek forgiveness, and a new heart and right spirit, which will incline us to love Him. These blessings he promises for Jesus' sake; he invites and even entreats us to come and partake of them; he assures us that he is plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon him; and solemnly warns us, that unless we accept this way of salvation, and turn from our rebellion, there is no other way of escape, and the wrath of God, and of the Lamb, must be our portion for ever. Do you understand these solemn truths, my dear Emily?

Emily. Yes, ma'am.

Miss W. Well now, to apply them to your own case. You have confessed, my love, that you never have loved your Creator with your whole heart; therefore, you have been living a life of rebellion against him: you have yourself

declared your sin. And have you never sought to have a heart changed that can hear of all the love of God without loving him? Have you never repented of sin so great, nor sought forgiveness simply through the blood of Jesus? Death is often sudden, my dearest Emily, and what hope have you, if death should overtake you this night, that you should find mercy from the Lord, if that mercy you have never sought? What hope can you have that your spirit would be found in the hands of Jesus, if you have never committed it there?

Emily sighed, and pressed Miss Windermere's hand. She continued, "Oh! my dear girl, do not delay to seek Jesus for your Saviour. There are many amiable points in your character which I have observed with pleasure, and which endear you to your friends; but place not your dependence on these things, nor on any thing but Jesus. You are a sinful, helpless creature; without Him you must perish. Let it not be so, my love; but seek him with your whole heart, and you will find him: let the time past of your life suffice you to have lived without God, and consecrate the remainder to his service. Do not think you will be entering on a gloomy path; it is certainly

one of pleasantness and peace. Try it, my love, and you will find that no earthly pleasure is comparable to that of having for your friend the gentle Shepherd of Israel."

Emily said seriously, "Have you found it so, dear Miss Windermere?" This was an important question: Miss Windermere felt it so; but she was able sincerely to reply, "I trust I have, my dear." They were now arrived at the house of prayer, and nothing more was said; but, as they entered, a silent petition ascended from Miss Windermere for a blessing on the dear girl with whom she had just been conversing. Emily was prepared to enter upon the solemn engagements of the evening with deeper interest than she had ever felt before, and she listened attentively to the discourse. The text was, "Yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary," 2 Chron. xxx. 8; and she thought, more than once, that had the minister heard what had just passed between herself and Miss Windermere, a more suitable subject could not have been chosen. She began to feel astonished that she had thought so little on these important subjects, or that she could have felt easy without seeking an interest in the Saviour: she was

surprised at her carelessness of the great salvation.

Yet Emily had never considered herself a worldly character. She was blessed with pious parents, who had been anxious to lead her youthful footsteps in the narrow path from infancy; and their instruction had so far affected her mind, that she had a respect in general for religion, and would have considered it very wrong to treat it either with ridicule or contempt. She was extremely amiable, and very anxious to cultivate her mind; she had, also, often been impressed with the importance of commencing a life of piety in the season of youth, but she rather rested in a hope that, as her parents were pious, she should, as she grew older, become like them. She thought, too, that she had often felt more seriously impressed in her later years than when she was a child, and she knew that her general conduct met the approbation of all around her. Besides, she greatly admired the beauties of nature, and was not unwilling to ascribe the glory of their creation to God. All these pleasing features of her character she inwardly approved, and with them she was willing, for the present at least, to be satisfied.

Such had been, perhaps, as clearly as can be defined, Emily's views on the subject of religion, and ideas of her own character. But this evening, while listening to an impressive discourse, the remembrance of many things Miss Windermere had said to her came frequently across her mind. She was quite sure that she had never really loved God, yet she knew that she had never felt herself sinful in his sight, nor placed all her dependance for salvation on the Saviour of sinners. Nay, she could scarcely tell on what she had really been placing her hope of heaven. "Surely," thought she, "I cannot be a true Christian!" But, then, if she were not, her soul must be in danger: she was not too young to die, and many were removed suddenly. These thoughts made her feel anxious, and so much occupied her mind, that her walk home with Miss Windermere was nearly silent.

On their return to the house the young ladies went up stairs, for the purpose of taking off their walking-dresses. Emily occupied the same room with Mary Ann, Charlotte, and Frances; and, as they entered, Mary Ann said, "Charlotte, were you not asleep this evening?" "No, indeed, Mary Ann, I was not; I thought altogether the sermon was tolerably interesting to-night."

“ Dear me,” said Frances, rather scornfully, “ how very good you were ! I dare say, after all, you were not listening much.” “ What business have you to think so, Frances,” replied Charlotte ; “ you make remarks of that kind about every thing.” “ Well,” interrupted Mary Ann, “ don’t begin to quarrel the minute you come in, that is not a sign you have gained much good. But now, Charlotte, to prove to me that you were awake ; did you see that lady with the blue and white feathers there this evening ?”

Charlotte. Yes, I did.

Frances. So you were looking about, then ?

Mary Ann. Perhaps, Miss Frances, you will be kind enough to leave Charlotte and me to talk by ourselves. “ Excuse me,” she continued, laughing, as she saw the cloud gathering on Frances’s brow ; “ your remarks are always delightfully edifying, but, just now”—

“ Do not be afraid, Mary Ann, I shall not waste them on such a silly child as you,” returned Frances, haughtily ; and walking to the glass, she began to arrange and re-arrange her glossy hair. Mary Ann was silent for a minute ; she was too good-natured to wish for disputes, and

her playful, easy temper was not soon ruffled :
 “ But now,” said she again, “ about this lady,
 Charlotte ; what a height she looks ! if I were as
 tall I would never wear those high feathers.”

Charlotte. Oh, ridiculous ! She looks taller
 than the gentleman who comes with her ; and
 that simple, quiet young lady looks like a little
 girl beside her : I suppose that is her daughter.

Mary Ann. Her daughter !—as if she could
 be old enough to have such a tall daughter : no,
 no, you may be sure she is the governess ; that
 little tiny one, dressed out in a white silk hat,
 must be her child.

Charlotte. Well, I dare say it is so ; that is
 the reason why the young lady always keeps the
 child close to her in the pew, and brings her out
 afterwards ; she looks kinder than the mother, I
 think.

Mary Ann. Oh, I am sure she does ; I heard
 that lady speak so crossly once, when we were
 coming out. I had a great mind to turn round
 and look at her, but I was walking with Miss
 Wilmot, and I know she would have said it was
 very rude. She is such a sweet creature that I
 would not do any thing she does not like for the
 world.

Charlotte. She is a lovely girl, but a great deal too particular in some little things.

Mary Ann. Now, be quiet; I will not have you say one word against Miss Wilmot. Whatever goes wrong, it cheers me to look at her dear, smiling face: she is so sweet-tempered!

Charlotte. Ah, Mary Ann, but you often do things she does not think right. I know she thinks it wrong to have a little fun on Sunday evenings, when we come home: for my part, I think nothing can be more natural, when we have been kept close all day.

Mary Ann. I really never say any thing that she dislikes in her presence for her sake, if I remember.

They were going down stairs as Mary Ann said this, when Matilda overtook them, saying, "What does Mary Ann say about remembering? when does she ever remember any thing?" They laughed, and went to the supper-table, where, as one and another joined them, the same kind of conversation, if such it may be called, was carried on, of which we have already given a specimen in one of the bed-rooms. Miss Windermere soon entered the room, and took her seat, waiting till all should be ready to ring the bell for even-

ing prayer. She heard for a minute the satirical observations, the idle wonderings, the silly and too often impertinent remarks that were passing around her. Some of those by whom they were made she knew to be girls of sense; some had been seriously brought up. She resolved to make an effort gently to put a stop to a habit which she felt assured was injurious. "My dear girls," she said, "I am really sorry to find you take pleasure in making such remarks as I have just heard. From some of you I had expected more good sense, and others of you, my dears," said she, looking affectionately around her, "I well know have been taught that this is not a right way of concluding the Sabbath. I cannot, therefore, allow this trifling conversation to go on, especially on this day; and I hope you will see the evil tendency of the habit itself, before it permanently injures your characters." The young ladies were silent, and Miss Windermere, who had no wish to invest the Sabbath with an air of gloom, read to them a short narrative, which was well calculated to interest young people. "I know, my dears," she remarked to the elder young ladies, "that this will be more interesting to the younger

children than to you, but, as there are so many of them, I hope you will excuse it."

When Miss Windermere had finished, most of the young ladies thanked her, and as the bell was now about to ring for prayers, nothing more was said.

After prayer, the young ladies, as usual, one by one, bid Mrs. Wilmot and the teachers good night, and Mary came to Miss Windermere, and throwing her little arms round her neck, as she stooped down to kiss her, said, with more warmth than was usual, in her artless affectionate manner, "Oh, ma'am, I do love you so much, for you are almost like my mamma." "How, my love?" "You do just as mamma does on Sunday: she reads to us, as you do; and we are always so happy!" "I am glad you like it, my love: but see, all the young ladies who sleep in your room are gone. Make haste after them, good night." "Good night, ma'am," said Mary, and with another kiss from her friend, she ran up stairs.

"Do you not think," said Charlotte to Mary Ann, as soon as they were in their bed-room, "that Miss Windermere is very religious; almost too particular?" "Why, I do not quite know,"

said Mary Ann. "I like her very much, whatever she is. I really think she wishes to do us all good : she is so kind, and there is nothing dull about her."

Charlotte. No ; she seems always happy ; and when vexing things happen, how patient she is ! I have sometimes quite wondered, when some of the girls keep on being so stupid and provoking ; I thought she would be sure to lose her temper, but she goes on in her own gentle, firm, way.

Mary Ann. Do you know, I think I should like to be just what she is, when I am a woman. I do not think she is too religious, considering she is grown up ; but, of course, it cannot be expected that we school-girls should be just like her now. But, by the bye, Miss Lindsay will be coming in for the candle ; I must make haste. Frances, I think you must be a little quicker, or else you will be left to finish your hair in the dark, and then, perhaps, you will not curl it right, and your ringlets will not be so pretty to-morrow. Only think ! suppose any one should come to see you, and your hair did not look nice. How grieved you would be ! you would be almost ready to send word to them, to go away again, and come another day.

Frances made no answer, but gave Mary Ann a look of supreme contempt, and Emily whispered, "My dear Mary Ann, I think you should remember how much younger you are than Frances; you should not make such remarks." "I will do any thing to please *you*, Emily; but is she not sadly vain?" Emily sighed, but made no reply. "I hope you are not unhappy, Emily," said Mary Ann. "Good night, love; I cannot talk to-night," said Emily, kissing her. Mary Ann wondered why, but continued talking to Charlotte till the candle was taken away, when they were all quiet.

Emily lay awake, after the gentle breathing of her companions had given warning that they were wrapt in slumber; she looked at the moon-beams which fell at the foot of her bed, and thought of her conversation with Miss Windermere. She had often before, when all were sleeping around, passed that silent evening hour in gazing with delight at the distant worlds which glittered above her head, in the deep blue sky; and as in thought she ranged from one fair planet to another, she wondered if it would ever be permitted to her disembodied spirit, when it had dropped its fetters of clay, to visit those distant regions, and satisfy

the ardent curiosity she felt, to know what they were, and by whom inhabited. Often had she said to herself,

Oh ! the hour when this material
Shall have vanished like a cloud !

But now the current of her thoughts and feelings was altered. She could no longer regard death as merely an entrance into a higher state of existence ; the thought, " Am I prepared to meet my God, if death should come ? " fixed itself on her mind. " I have indeed admired the works of God," thought she, " but I have never felt really penitent for my sins in his sight, nor sought Jesus for my Saviour. I have thought myself religious, but I have neglected the Saviour." Such thoughts as these had much occupied Emily's mind during the evening, so that she had felt little disposed, on her return from public worship, to enter into any trifling conversation ; but now she was alone, they returned with greater force, and made her feel very anxious. She wished to become a real Christian, but felt she did not know where to begin ; she thought, however, that she would take the first opportunity of speaking to Miss Windermere again, and then

remembering a text which she had learned when a little girl, "Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," she tried, perhaps for the first time in her life, to offer sincere prayer to God for his guidance : this she found rather calmed her mind, and she fell asleep.

Is it necessary to offer any comment on what was passing in Emily's mind ? Are there any of my young readers who think she was wrong in indulging these serious thoughts ; who believe it would have been as well for her to wait a little longer, before she troubled herself with religion ? Perhaps there are ; —but oh, consider, my dear young friends, what can be more foolish, than to delay for an hour, the settling of that momentous question, on which eternity depends :—"Am I a child of God, or an enemy to Him ? Am I walking in the way that goeth down to destruction, or in the narrow path that leadeth unto life ?"

Perhaps there are some who would feel the force of these remarks, but still be unwilling to commence a religious life in their early days, from an idea that it would cast a gloom over that interesting period. Let them read on, and see if

it produced that effect on the mind of the dear girl whom we have just mentioned. Rather let them seek for themselves, truly to walk in the ways of wisdom, and assuredly they will find them to be pleasantness and peace.

And now, will not any one say, "True, I believe them to be so; and I trust I am really wishing to walk in them?" Sincerely would I congratulate you, my dear young reader, if this is the case; but whilst I would direct you to the many promises given by the Good Shepherd, for the encouragement of the lambs of his flock, I would warn you carefully to guard against self-deception, and, seeking divine direction, seriously to examine the rock on which your hopes are built, and see whether you are simply and entirely depending on that blessed Saviour, "who is the only name given under heaven, whereby men may be saved;" whether you are willing *fully* to comply with his requirement, "My son, give me thine heart."

CHAPTER IV.

THE following morning Emily thought, almost as soon as she awoke, of the subjects which had occupied her mind the night before, and renewed her determination of trying to converse again with Miss Windermere, as soon as possible. Accordingly, she watched all day, for a suitable opportunity; but as might naturally have been expected, amidst the business of so large a school, was often disappointed. All the morning she calculated upon walking with Miss Windermere round the garden when they went out for exercise, as usual, in the middle of the day; but before they had finished their morning studies, a heavy shower of snow came on, which precluded all hope of going out for that day. In the afternoon she indulged again an expectation of accomplishing her wish, for it was the custom, during the winter, for the young ladies to dance in

the music-room, at dusk, when they had been prevented from taking exercise during the day. This evening, directly Mrs. Wilmot had left the school-room, and Miss Windermere had announced the conclusion of their afternoon employments, Mary Ann bounded across the school-room—"Come, who is for a dance?" "Oh, I!" and "I," resounded on all sides, and in a few minutes almost every one had left the room.

Miss Lindsay accompanied the young ladies, but Miss Windermere remained behind, and Emily declined dancing in the hope of having a quiet half-hour with her. To her annoyance, however, Frances took her seat by the fire, as though she meant to stay: after waiting a minute, she ventured to say, "Frances, are you not going to dance to-night?" Before there was time for a reply, Charlotte entered, and said, "Frances, are you not coming to play that new country dance? no one knows it so well as you, you know." "No, I shall not come to-night," said Frances. "Dear, why not?" returned Charlotte; "what shall we do without you?" "You must do as you can," said Frances, coldly, "for I shall not come; it is so disagreeable, playing to you girls; you don't know the dance, and one has to begin

again half-a-dozen times for you." Charlotte stood still for a minute, and then said, "Well, I think it is very unkind." Miss Windermere looked up, and gently said, "My dear Frances, if your school-fellows wish it so much, would it not be kind in you to oblige them, even if it should be a little unpleasant to yourself? you would, I think, find yourself happier, and far more beloved, if you were to try to please others now and then, in these little things." This was not indeed, by any means, the first or the second time that Miss Windermere had observed in Frances a disobliging disposition; but it was the first time she had spoken so pointedly to her on the subject. Indeed, she would not probably have done so in the present instance, had any little girls been in the room; for she was particularly cautious, when giving reproof, to avoid wounding the feelings; and considered that a kind admonition, given as though really intended for the good of the offender, was likely to make far more impression than animadversions, which had merely a tendency to produce keen though temporary vexation. As it was, however, Frances felt half ashamed of herself, and was glad to leave the room, which she did, saying, "Well, I

will play for you this once ; but I wish you were not all so stupid." There was, however, no grace in her compliance ; and her manner of acceding to the wishes of her companions, was almost as disagreeable to them as her refusal would have been. As she entered the music-room, she said, "Now I give you all notice, that this is the last time I play for you, if you make me stop once ; if you cannot learn the dance, some of you must learn to play." "Well, begin, if you please, Frances; and lecture afterwards, for we have been waiting long enough now," said Matilda. This remark by no means tended to conciliate Frances, and she did not exert herself to play well. We will leave them now.—If any of our young readers have ever felt the unpleasantness of associating with persons of an unkind disposition, let them endeavour to cultivate an opposite temper themselves.

We can easily imagine how different would have been the feelings of the young group, had Frances cheerfully and kindly complied with their request. The sprightliness and good-humour which doubtless many of them were disposed to feel, in commencing the dance, would have been preserved unbroken ; instead of which, angry

feelings had now been excited, and they felt all the time Frances was playing, that they would rather be without a musician in future than ask for her services again.

But we shall probably have to speak more on this subject hereafter. Let us now return to the school-room, where Emily is rejoicing to be quite alone with her kind friend. When Frances and Charlotte had left the room, Emily stirred the fire, and sat down near Miss Windermere; she longed to speak, but now that there really was an opportunity, she felt as though she could not begin. Her companion, however, soon commenced conversation. "Do you not wish to dance this evening, Emily, my dear?" "No, not this evening, thank you, ma'am," said Emily.

Miss W. I do not generally leave the school-room when Miss Lindsay is kind enough to go with the young ladies; for, after the bustle of the day I am rather glad to be still.

Emily (half rising). I hope, ma'am, I am not an intruder.

Miss W. Oh no! my dear girl; I did not at all mean to convey such an idea. I am very glad of your company at any time; and you know," added she with a smile, "that a little

quiet chat, with a pleasant companion, is a refreshment rather than otherwise.

Emily. Well, I am particularly glad to be alone with you this evening, ma'am ; I have been wishing it all day.

Miss Windermere looking at her with some surprise, but with much affection, said, " Have you any thing particular to say to me, my love ? do not be afraid to speak freely, for I should be glad to do any thing for you which is in my power."

Emily. Oh, Miss Windermere, I have felt so anxious since you talked to me last night : I have been taught to feel the importance of religion by my dear friends ; but I am afraid I am not a real Christian. I am sure it is time to begin, and very dangerous not to be one ; but still I do not know what to do. I thought about it a great deal last night, after I went to bed, and I feel I shall never be happy till I am truly religious ; but I thought, ma'am, I would ask you about it ; for you surely know the way.

Miss Windermere took Emily's hand affectionately, and said, " My dear girl, though I sympathize with your anxiety, yet I cannot help feeling thankful that you have begun to view the

subject of religion in this light. It is an affecting proof of the hardness of the human heart, that we ever can feel unconcerned whether we really have an interest in Jesus. What can be more foolish and dangerous, than week after week, often alas, year after year, to delay forsaking our sins, and returning to that gracious Saviour who now stands ready to receive us? Now he says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock;’ if we delay to open unto him, we know not but that he will come in a day when we look not for him, and in an hour that we are not aware of, and appoint us our portion with the hypocrites.”

Emily. Ah, that is what I feel I have been doing for years. I have really been neglecting the Saviour, even when I have seemed to be going on very well; and now, what must I do, dear Miss Windermere? I am afraid that I do not feel so sorry for my sins as I ought, and I seem to have no love to the Saviour. Do you think I can ever become a Christian?

Miss W. Yes, my dear Emily; if you come to Jesus, he assures you he will in no wise cast you out. But you must go to him as a helpless sinner; you have transgressed, and wandered and you cannot save yourself, nor change your

own heart. Go, just as you are, and confess to God, through Jesus Christ, all your sin, your long neglect of his gracious invitations; implore his mercy alone and simply through the precious blood of Jesus, which can fully atone for all sin. Pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you how to repent of and forsake all your sins, and to renew your heart. When you do this, depend alone on the name of Jesus, and resolve in his strength to devote the remainder of your life to his service.

Emily. Is there really hope for me then, in this way, do you think, ma'am?

Miss W. Yes, my love; this is that way of salvation so clearly marked out in the Scriptures that it is said, "He that runneth may read;" this is the only way to heaven, which, if we neglect, we must perish: to come, poor sinners as we are, to him who died that he might save, who lives that he may save all who come to him. If you will be a happy Christian during life, my dear Emily; if you wish for the presence of the Saviour in death; if you would enjoy his approving smile through eternity—look to Christ now, and be saved.

Emily pressed Miss Windermere's hand, and sat motionless, thinking deeply on what she

had just heard; a crowd of mingled emotions rose to her mind, and she longed to be alone. Her kind friend seemed almost to read her thoughts; for, as the candles were just then brought in, she said, "Will you come with me, my love, for I must fetch some work?" They went up stairs, and when Miss Windermere had procured what she wanted, she said to Emily, "Now, my dear, if you like to stay in my room till the tea-bell rings, you are welcome to do so; and you may come here whenever you please, if you can do it without neglecting other duties." Emily could only kiss Miss Windermere, for her heart was very full, and this delicate kindness particularly touched her.

Miss Windermere had not long been re-seated in the school-room before the merry group came in from dancing, and her season of repose was over. She much enjoyed these intervals of tranquillity, and, it must be confessed, she sometimes felt a little sorry when the sound of footsteps in the hall announced the return of bustle, a little of which, even among well-managed young people, must naturally be expected. She remembered, however, that she was not to live merely for her own gratification; the path of

duty was, she well knew, on the whole, the path of happiness ; and she always endeavoured to return to her arduous duties with cheerfulness and activity. It was curious to trace the different characters of the young people in their modes of employing the ten minutes or quarter of an hour, which yet remained before they expected to be summoned to tea. Charlotte sat down with a slate, to see what ideas she could elicit for a French letter she had to write ; Frances seated herself listlessly on the first chair that offered, to wait for the sound of the bell ; Sophia waited also, but took up a story-book to beguile the time ; Maria and little Mary played at cats'-cradle ; and Lucy still lingered in the music-room, practising the air which Frances had refused to play again. Ellen sat close by Miss Wilmot, who was patiently teaching her to net ; while Mary Ann was looking about for her pinafore and dreading lest the bell should ring before she had found it. Miss Windermere noticed her, for she had turned nearly all the work-boxes out of the closet in which they were usually kept. " What are you about there, my dear ? " " I am looking for my pinafore, ma'am ;—oh, here it is : now somebody tie it for me, please ? and, then,

let the tiresome bell ring when it will, I shall be ready. I thought ma'am, it would be better to find it, for fear I should be too late, and have a forfeit." Miss Windermere smiled, "Well, Mary Ann, I am glad you are beginning to have some little forethought, but you have many steps yet to advance before we shall be able to say, 'How neat Mary Ann is!' Your pinafore should not have been in that closet, my love: but, come here, and let me tie it." "No, ma'am," said Miss Wilmot, "allow me." There was a gracefulness of manner, and perfect sense of propriety, about this young lady, of which those around her felt the benefit every day. Politeness manifested itself in little things, trifling attentions it is true, but never-failing, which threw a charm over her whole character. There was not one, from the oldest to the youngest, whose feelings she would not consult, or to whom her assistance was not readily offered in any case of need; and it is probably to this source, that, in a measure, may be ascribed much of that unmixed affection, with which all her school-fellows regarded her.

But Mary Ann's pinafore was tied, and, once relieved from the fear of a forfeit, she began to

look around for amusement. "Why, Charlotte, have you begun your French letter? I never knew such a girl; if you have only two minutes to wait, out comes your book, or your slate, or your work, and you go plodding on. You reached out your drawing-book yesterday evening, and actually sketched, I believe, as much as three straight lines, and an inch of tree, while we were waiting, as we are now. This time, I dare say, you will produce half a sentence." "Well, but what harm is there in it?" said Charlotte, calmly. "Harm! oh, I don't mean that there is any harm; but what good is there in doing so? I never begin any thing when I know I must put it down in a few minutes." "Well," replied Charlotte, "I always like to employ these little scraps of time. I can sometimes learn two or three of my lessons in the course of the day, five or ten minutes at a time; and then I have the evening to myself. When, too, we have any thing very difficult to prepare, you know I am glad to take all the evening as well." "Oh! Mary Ann," said little Ellen, "I think there is a great deal of good in it; I mean to net a purse for mamma in the little odd times; and she will be so pleased: I'm sure it's worth while."

“ May I ask what you think about it, Miss Windermere ?” said Mary Ann, playfully.

Miss W. I was just going to say, my love, that I think you would be well repaid, if you were to improve these ‘ scraps of time,’ as Charlotte calls them ; it might amuse you, perhaps, to put down all the odd minutes you lose in one day, and add them together at night ; then think what you might have done in that time, and I imagine you will not feel disposed to laugh at Charlotte again.

Mary Ann. Well, but I do not wish to waste time, ma’am ; only I don’t exactly know what to do.

Miss W. Indeed ! But if you have nothing to do for yourself, cannot you think of any thing that will be useful to some one else ?

Mary Ann thought for a minute. “ Oh, yes, ma’am, I can ; I have such a bright thought come into my head about what I will do.”

Miss W. I am glad of any thought that will give you a habit of industry, Mary Ann ; if you accustom yourself to improve every minute, now you are a little school-girl, you will be very likely to make an active, useful character when you grow up.

“ I think,” said Miss Wilmot, “ we are often

apt to say, when we are asked to do any thing, 'I have not time;' while we forget how much we lose by neglecting the odd minutes."

"Undoubtedly, my love," replied Miss Windermere, "that is often said, when the true answer would be, 'I am not disposed to be diligent enough.'"

Frances rose slowly from her seat at this remark, and fetched her work-box: Mary Ann begged Miss Wilmot to teach her to net. "Certainly, dear," was the reply; "and we will begin now if you like." "Mary Ann," said Miss Lindsay, "I do not wish to interrupt any of your pursuits; but have you mended your gloves, as I told you, this morning?" "No, ma'am;" said Mary Ann, colouring—"I quite forgot it." "Well, my dear, do them directly; you know how inconvenient it will be, if you want them in a hurry, and find them in holes."

Mary Ann quickly produced her gloves, and looked in her work-box, which was not in the best possible order, for some silk to mend them with: she, however, found none, and said, "Dear, dear, where is all my green silk gone, that I brought to school on purpose for these gloves? Matilda, I lent it you this morning."

“ I returned it directly after school, in the afternoon,” said Matilda, quickly. “ Ah, so you did ; and I am sure I don’t know where it went then ; I can’t find it now, at any rate, so I must mend my gloves with white thread, I suppose : now, how tiresome ! this reel is so coarse, and the other so very fine, they will not do at all. Well, then, I must do them with black.” “ No, no, Miss Mary Ann, that will not do indeed ; the green silk must be found,” said Miss Lindsay. Poor Mary Ann sighed, and looked hopelessly round the room ; for the idea that any lost article *must* be found, was to her mind almost an insurmountable difficulty. Just at this moment of need, Ellen said, “ Come with me, and I will shew you where it is, Mary Ann ; see, in this corner, just in the place where you were standing when Matilda gave it you. You ran away to dance and left it ; and, do you know, I saw it, and was naughty enough to let it be there till you made some bustle about it.” “ Dear, thank you, Ellen,” said Mary Ann ; “ but why did you leave it there ? ” “ I thought it would do you good to have a hunt for it, because you left it about,” said Ellen, laughing, and looking round. Some of the young ladies laughed with her ; but Miss

Windermere said, "My dear Ellen, it would have been all very well if one of the elder young ladies had used such a method of correcting Mary Ann, but it was not quite in place for one younger than herself. You would feel it rather unsuitable if little Mary were to do so to you." "Yes, I should, indeed; so I will not do it any more," said Ellen. "I beg your pardon, Mary Ann." "Oh, say nothing about it, dear Ellen," said Mary Ann, good-humouredly, "I am very glad to find my silk, at all events." Just at this moment the sound of the bell was heard, which put an end, for the present, to their various occupations.

In due time Mary Ann's netting was begun, but she found it rather more difficult than she had imagined; and Miss Wilmot found it necessary to say to her one day, when she was complaining how singular it was that the stitches never would come right with her, "Come, Mary Ann, you must be as persevering as my little girl here was; I must really praise her for her patience." "No, dear mamma," said Ellen, for this was the name by which she always called Miss Wilmot: "it was you that were patient in teaching me; you have such an inexhaustible

store of patience that I think you could afford to give some to every one in the school, and they would all be the better for it." "You do not know me, so well as I know myself, little flatterer, if you think my patience inexhaustible," said Miss Wilmot, smiling. At this moment their attention was arrested by Maria, who had a tangled skein of netting-silk in her hand, which she had for some time been trying to wind, till, finding all her endeavours fruitless, she said, in an impatient tone, "Oh, what shall I do with this silk? I can't disentangle it at all; how excessively tiresome it is!" "Dear," remarked Matilda, who was sitting near, "how silly not to wind it before it was in such a state: you can do nothing with it now; you must get another skein." "No," returned Maria, "but I cannot get another, and so I must give up making the chain for papa;" and she sat down, and began to cry. "Oh, Maria!" said Matilda, "crying for such a trifle! You wonder why we don't like you, and that's the reason; you are so very fretful." "Do not cry, Maria," said Miss Wilmot; "come, and let me see this formidable skein; perhaps, if we both try, we can wind it after all." "Oh! thank you," said the little girl; and,

quickly brightening up, she brought the silk; and Miss Wilmot, having declared she did not think it beyond the bounds of possibility to unravel, they began the task. Half an hour's patient labour completed it; and Maria was unbounded in her expressions of delight and gratitude: "It is so very good of you, Miss Wilmot, to give up half an hour to my poor tangled silk, for you are always busy."

Miss Wil. Well, Maria, I am glad to be able to help you; but I really felt sorry to see you so impatient at first. You so often let these trifles put you out of temper.

Maria. Yes; and I very often think I never will do so again: but still I am cross sometimes, and then feel sorry afterwards.

Miss Wil. Do you not remember telling me so once before; and what did I tell you to do?

Maria (in a low tone). You told me when I felt cross to pray to God to help me to overcome the temptation; and I have, sometimes; but still, after that, I was just the same.

Miss Wil. My dear Maria, either you did not pray with your heart—I mean by that, you did not really wish for what you asked; or you

did not try afterwards to resist your ill-temper. Which was it?

Maria. Why, I think sometimes I have felt so vexed, that perhaps just then I did not much want to be good-humoured; and I don't know that I have ever tried a great deal; I scarcely know how. Indeed, often I have quite forgotten all about it.

Miss Wil. Well, but you wish just now to be a good-humoured little girl, do you not? you know these naughty tempers are wrong, and displease God.

Maria. Why, yes, I wish it now; but I feel so different when I am really cross. Just when tiresome things happen, that you say I ought to bear patiently; that is the very time when I cannot, and I think it is no use trying.

Miss Wil. You must not think so, *Maria*; you must first ask God to forgive all that is past for Jesus' sake, and then you must try as well. You are a little girl, but not too little to love Jesus, and to attempt, in some measure, to be mild and gentle as he was.

Maria. Yes, *Miss Wilmot*. I know that; but about trying; how shall I try?

Miss Wil. If you know it, try and remember it, and pray that you may feel it, my dear little Maria. And now I will tell you, how I think you had better endeavour to overcome your fretfulness. When you meet with a difficulty, like your skein of silk for instance, instead of crying, look patiently, to see if it really can be remedied; then, if it can, resolve that you will do it, and go on steadily, watching against impatience. If you begin to feel this too much for your temper, leave off a little while, and make another attempt when your courage has returned. This is rather difficult I know, but quite possible; and though at first you may not succeed, try again and again, and I think you will improve in time. But come, we have been sitting a long time, and the others are all in the garden; suppose we go to them.

They were indeed all gone, except Ellen, who still remained, for she seldom had any wish to leave the school-room while Miss Wilmot was there. Now, however, a walk in the garden seemed very desirable, and she said with her usual eagerness, "Oh! mamma, are you going out? let me get your bonnet, and walk with you." "But I wish I might walk with Miss Wilmot," said Maria.—"No, Maria, you have had

her a long time, and so I ought to be with her now." "Come, I happen to have two hands," said Miss Wilmot playfully, "and I shall be glad to have you both: let us have a run round the garden." They went, but Ellen did not feel satisfied; it was not simply to have Miss Wilmot's company, but to have it all to herself, that she wished, and as that object could not be attained, she soon ran away to play with the rest of her companions. When, shortly after, Maria joined them, Ellen said, "What, have you left Miss Wilmot all alone? I shall go to her." "Oh," remarked Mary Ann, "she will do without you, Ellen, for a little while, I dare say." "Yes, that she will," said Maria; "Miss Windermere is walking with her." "So there is no hope," said Ellen to herself. She no longer felt inclined to play, and ran to a retired part of the garden to amuse herself with her own wild thoughts. As her imagination was very lively, this was a method of passing time to which she often had recourse; and she was never more disposed to do so, than when some trifling cause of chagrin, like the present, had occurred. She had sometimes congratulated herself on possessing a fund of entertainment in her own mind, which was a constant

resource under all vexations from without; but had she examined herself a little more closely, she would have seen that her troubles, as well as their remedy, were chiefly imaginary. Some fancied neglect, or slight omission of the attention which vanity and self-love prompted her to think were her due, caused our little Ellen more mortification than an act of real unkindness would have done to most of her companions. And is such a disposition a happy one? Let any who feel, or have felt its baneful influence on their own minds, answer the question; let them ask themselves whether it is not true, that in proportion as we live to ourselves, that is, think how we can most please self, and display it to the best advantage, we shall be exposed to innumerable petty sources of vexation, which pass unnoticed and almost unknown, by those in whose minds this principle has ceased to reign.

But how, may we not ask, shall a principle so deeply rooted in every human breast be eradicated? where can we find a motive strong enough to overcome it? There is only one which even professes permanently to conquer it; but that one always succeeds, where it is brought into exercise. Love to the Saviour, and a desire to glorify Him,

are the most powerful means of overcoming the supreme love of self, and the constant desire of aggrandizing ourselves. Perhaps some may think this unnecessary, or at least unattainable; but it is so necessary that it is the one thing needful; and unattainable it cannot be, while the Saviour says, "Ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." The real objection lies in the human heart, which would rather retain a disease, the end of which is death, than accept the healing balm which Jesus freely offers in the gospel. Oh, that some of our young readers may hear the voice that calls from above, saying, "Come unto me!" may they forsake their sins, and return unto the Saviour! "If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever."

CHAPTER V.

PERHAPS some of our young friends may feel interested to learn a few more particulars respecting Emily, in whose mind religious impressions were beginning to take deep root. The evening on which Miss Windermere, after conversing with her, had left her for a little while alone, she for the first time really endeavoured to confess her sins to God, and entreat pardon through the blood of Jesus : she remembered the words, “ Return unto me, and I will return unto you ;” and her anxiety began to give place to a feeling of hope. She thought much on the mercy of Jesus, and felt encouraged to place some trust in Him, and to pray that she might be his disciple.

Thus did this youthful wanderer return to the Good Shepherd ; thus did she take her first trembling steps in the narrow way. But still she had much to learn, for her religious character was but

in its infancy. In this respect, she found a constant friend in Miss Windermere, who took frequent opportunities of conversing with her ; and under the instructions of this gentle guide, united with prayer and reading the Scriptures, the way of salvation was made more and more plain to the mind of our young friend : she began to rejoice in the all-sufficiency of the Saviour, and wished no longer to live to herself, but to Him. She now found verified in her own experience the promise of Jesus to his disciples, “ In me ye shall have peace ;” and she longed that all around her might be taught as she had been, the way of true happiness. She was one day mentioning some of her feelings on this subject, to her friend, who replied, “ My dear, that is a wish in which I can indeed sympathize with you ; but we must use the means to lead them in the narrow way, you know, as far as possible ; and when we have done all, it is a satisfaction to remember we may pray for them.”

Emily. Yes, that I think, ma'am, is some satisfaction ; but there are several of them I love dearly, and I do so wish that they may not satisfy themselves without real religion. There is dear Mary Ann, what a sweet, lively girl she is ! and

many others besides : I feel so sorry when I think perhaps they are neglecting the Saviour whom we need so much.

Miss W. Well, my love, we are permitted to carry these anxieties to a throne of grace, where encouragements are not wanting to hope that our prayers will, in some degree, be answered. And it is certainly our duty to do all in our power to render religion attractive.

Emily. My dear Miss Windermere, that is just what I so much want to know : how can I, for instance, make religion attractive to others ?

Miss W. Why, my dear girl, there certainly is something within your power. You should endeavour to make your actions speak for you, by aiming to mould your conduct according to the precepts of the Gospel, and to avoid even the appearance of evil. In particular, you should study kindness and gentleness towards those around you ; one simple word should be the rule of your actions, and that is, *love* ; love which will lead you to embrace every opportunity of doing a kindness to any one who may need it. Favourable occasions also may sometimes arise of speaking to one and another ; and if you follow the course I have been recommending, all you may say will come with

greater weight. But why do I say, the course I have been recommending! it is the path our Lord himself has marked out, and it is our solemn duty to follow him in it, if we would be his disciples. Take up your cross then daily, my dearest Emily, deny yourself, and follow your Redeemer.

Emily. Oh, I do desire that my conduct should be such as to honour the Saviour; but I feel how difficult such a course is. I should sometimes feel discouraged, were it not for the hope that God will help me, if I seek the assistance of his Holy Spirit.

Miss W. Well, my love, it is a mercy to feel your own insufficiency, and you must pray to be kept humble, and free from self-dependence; but you may safely place all your confidence in the compassionate Saviour. Go on in the narrow way, simply looking to Jesus, seeking every day, through Him, the influences of the Holy Spirit, to renew your heart, to lead you in the right path, and strengthen you to walk in it; and He will be found faithful who hath said, "Ask, in my name, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." You see from that text, my love, that it is the will of Jesus that we should rejoice in Him. Depend therefore, fully for yourself upon that Saviour,

to whom you are anxious to win others ; and this will assist you also in the attainment of that even cheerfulness which it is our duty to cultivate, both on account of its beneficial effect on our own minds, and the favourable influence it is apt to have on others, particularly the young.

Emily continued thoughtful for a minute, and then said, " Miss Windermere, now that I have an opportunity, there is one thing more I wish to ask you. What do you think of those studies which are not exactly connected with religion ? do you think it is right to bestow so much attention upon them, as I have been in the habit of doing ? "

Miss W. Yes, my dear, most certainly I do ; it is your duty to avail yourself of the advantages of cultivation by which you are surrounded. Improve the talents which God has given you, and remember, all useful studies *may* be connected with religion if you pursue them with a view to his glory. Your mental powers may be called for in after life, in ways that now you do not foresee.

Emily. So they may ; I really did not think of that before : I think these ideas will make me pursue my studies with greater interest than ever.

Miss W. I think it is very likely, my dear.

Your natural fondness for the beauties of nature will probably increase, now that you wish to "look through Nature up to Nature's God." Drawing, of which you are so fond, is useful in leading us more closely to notice and admire the works of creation; and poetry comes in beautifully to assist in forming our ideas and directing our taste. I am persuaded that pursuits of this kind, dispose us to enter into many beauties of Scripture which would otherwise be disregarded. When, for instance, do we understand that passage respecting the sun, "which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race," so fully, as when early in the cool of some lovely morning, we watch the first approach of his bright beams, till he shines full upon the dewy landscape? What language could then more beautifully describe the scene? And yet there are some to whom such a sight would convey little pleasure.

Emily. But do you think there can be persons then who do not care about seeing the sun rise?

"Do not you be one of their number, my dear," said Miss Windermere, smiling; "you see how much you would lose."

Emily smiled in her turn, and said, "And then,

ma'am, as to reading—I have found great pleasure in history, and also in some of the works for young people on different branches of science : would you advise me to continue them ?

Miss W. Undoubtedly, my dear, go on endeavouring to gain useful knowledge on all subjects within your reach : some pursuits will contribute to the strength, others to the enlargement of your mind ; and the farther you advance in life, the more you will understand their utility. But only let your talents be laid at the feet of the Saviour, my love ; ask the blessing of God upon all your studies, and his direction how to use them for the promotion of his glory. Thus, and thus only, will you be secure from every snare attendant on the pursuit of human knowledge ; for neither the “ fool ” nor the wise man will err, if taught of God. I would advise you also to form habits of reflection, and try to glean some useful lessons from all you read. Thus cultivate the soil now, and hereafter I trust you will reap fruit which will amply repay the toil.

Emily. Oh, ma'am, it is less a toil than a pleasure.

Miss W. Ah, I know it is so ; I made quite a mistake to call it otherwise.

Emily. You have removed my difficulties so nicely, dear Miss Windermere, as you have often done before : what a kind guide you always are to me !

Her friend kissed her affectionately. “ Emily, my dear, I trust you will have an infinitely higher and better guide, when I am far away from you.”

Here the conversation ended, but it long dwelt in Emily’s remembrance ; the counsels of her friend were often revolved in her mind, and carried to a throne of grace, and their effect was visible in her daily conduct. She was still cheerful, industrious, and intelligent as before ; while humility, gentleness, self-denial, and disinterested kindness, became the objects of her constant desire, and began to shed their mild lustre over her character. She listened to the voice which speaks from heaven, “ Wilt thou not from this time say unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth !” and the reply of her heart was, “ Thou shalt guide me with thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory.” Which of our young readers will follow her example ? Perhaps some are almost disposed to do so ; but let not this satisfy them, for multitudes are *almost* persuaded to be Christians, who never become *al-*

together so ; and the way of the almost Christian leads as surely to destruction as that of the hardened sinner. If then we would be saved from a doom so fearful, we must strive with our whole hearts to enter in at the strait gate ; we must do it *decidedly*,—and we must do it *immediately*.

Miss Windermere had not been exclusive in her attentions to Emily, for she sought opportunities of impressing the supreme importance of religion on all her pupils ; but though in the minds of some, it was to be hoped her affectionate admonitions, enforced as they were by her consistent example, left an impression which was never totally effaced ; still, the hope she entertained of Emily's decided piety, gave her most cause for pleasure and thankfulness. She was, by this time, regarded with respect and affection by all the young ladies, and had herself become much attached to them ; but in Emily and Miss Wilmot she found kindred spirits, and she felt for them a friendship which she trusted would never be broken.

There was, however, one little girl in whom our young friend felt much interest, and who excited in her mind the most pleasing hopes as

to future character ; this was little Mary. The wish she on one occasion expressed, that Miss Windermere would talk with her again, had been frequently complied with, as she was permitted to come early on Sunday mornings to the chamber of her friend, who used then to spend a short time in reading and explaining the Scriptures to her. These were seasons of great delight to the affectionate little Mary ; she would enter the room with her rosy face beaming with joy, and, laying her red morocco Bible on the table, she would set a chair near the window, “ And now, dear Miss Windermere,” she would say, “ every thing is ready, and we are quite alone :” and she used then to enter with great interest on their morning engagements. Often was her instructress gratified with observing the pleasure which the dear little girl took in hearing or reading of the Saviour, and with listening to the expression of her artless desires that she might be one of Jesus’ lambs. On one occasion, when they had finished, Mary threw her arms round Miss Windermere’s neck, and said, “ Oh, ma’am, I do love you so dearly ; I will tell mamma all about you, and how kindly you talk to me, when I go home.” “ You may tell

mamma," said Miss Windermere, kissing her fondly "how much I love my little Mary, and how I hope she will be a good child, and learn to love Jesus while she is young." "Oh!" said Mary, "that is what I wish very much. I think it would be better to be poor, and to belong to Jesus, than to be very rich, and not to love him. Do not you think so?"

Miss W. Yes, indeed, I do, my dear child, because whatever troubles we have in life, if the Saviour is our friend, he will still make us happy, and when a few years are passed away, he will take us to dwell with him above. You know where he says to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions."

Mary. Do you know, ma'am, I think being away from dear mamma has made me wish more to have God for my father in heaven, as you told me. I know I have often sinned against him; but I sometimes hope he will forgive me for Jesus' sake, and teach me how to be good, like the Saviour.

Miss W. He certainly will, love, if you pray to him in the name of Jesus; for he has said, "Seek and ye shall find."

Such conversations as these often passed in

the quiet chamber, and while they afforded Miss Windermere much pleasure, she was not less gratified with the general tenor of Mary's behaviour in the school-room. This little girl was remarkably conscientious in avoiding every thing she knew to be wrong; she was always mild and gentle towards her school-fellows, and very tractable and obedient to all who had the management of her. Though in general a sweet sprightliness mingled with every action, her natural disposition was timid and retiring, and her feelings peculiarly tender. Her affection for the kind friend, who had taken so much pains with her, was unbounded, and she almost instinctively brought to her all her little cares, and communicated to her her feelings, whether of pleasure or pain. Miss Windermere felt, on her side, an almost maternal fondness for the little girl, and endeavoured to instruct her, and watch over her opening mind with unceasing care. She saw, that in a large school, there were dangers, which rendered this watchfulness necessary even for the most well-disposed child, and, indeed, there was one circumstance that sometimes gave her uneasiness, though as yet she had not seen any ill effect arising from it.

Mary possessed much of that childish beauty, which is calculated to win the admiration of young minds; and when she first came to school, her fair and blooming complexion, delicate features, mild blue eyes, and pale flaxen ringlets, attracted general notice, and soon became the object of many remarks: these began occasionally to be passed in the little girl's hearing, and many things were said, which were likely to have an injurious tendency. Miss Windermere noticed this, and only waited for a suitable opportunity to correct the growing evil.

One fine spring morning, not long after, the young ladies were all in the garden, excepting the first class, who had asked Miss Windermere to read Paley's Natural Theology with them, a request with which she had readily complied, only stipulating that it should not be in the hours of study, those being already fully occupied. This morning they sat round the table with their work, and Miss Windermere was reading, when Mary entered the room with some little message for her from Miss Lindsay. The young ladies were some of them half impatient at being interrupted, and, directly the business was settled, Sophia said, "There, pretty little messenger,

now run away as fast as you can, and do not let any one come again till the bell rings ;” and, as she was running out of the room, Frances exclaimed, quite loud enough for her to hear, “ What a lovely child that is ! she looks so nice, too, in her straw hat.” “ Yes,” said Sophia, “ like a little shepherdess.” Miss Windermere here looked up, and said, “ She is a sweet little girl ; but, really, my dears, I have long been wishing to speak to you about her : I am sometimes afraid you will do her a serious injury.” “ Do any harm to Mary ! Miss Windermere ; dear, how ?” was heard from one and another.

Miss W. By speaking in the way that some of you have done just now, my dears, with regard to her looks : remarks of that kind, which you think trifling, often dwell upon the mind of a child, long after you may have forgotten them. I should not, perhaps, have noticed this to you, had I not heard so much of it, that I am fearful you will excite feelings of vanity and a love of display in Mary’s mind, which you will afterwards find very disagreeable.

Miss Wilmot. I think Mary is not the kind of child to be much injured by flattery.

Miss W. Perhaps not, my dear; and I assure you, for my own part, I should be extremely grieved if I saw any effect of that kind produced; but human nature is weak, and if she *can* be spoiled, continual allusions to her beauty are very likely to do it. I never thought on the subject much myself, till I saw its effect on a lovely little girl whom I once knew, and I have ever since dreaded seeing others injured in the same way.

Emily. Sophia, do you remember little Henrietta?

Sophia. Yes, I was just thinking of her; she was a nice little dear when she first came to school; but I suppose we made too much of her, for none of us liked her at last.

Miss W. No, that is too often the way; and it is frequently the case, that those who are most apt to spoil children, are the first to dislike them, and leave them to themselves, when the mischief is done. This is an evil which prevails very much in schools; but I hope you, my dears, will endeavour to avoid it. With regard to Mary, you will really oblige me, by no longer flattering her as you have done. It is certainly unkind,

and indeed wrong, to run the risk of doing a permanent injury to the little girl.

“ Oh certainly, ma’am,” said they all. “ But may I ask, ma’am,” added Charlotte, “ why you have spoken to *us* particularly, because all the others do just the same.” “ Why, in the first place,” said Miss Windermere, smiling, “ because just at present there are no more in the room ; but besides that, I know that admiration injudiciously bestowed by any of you elder young ladies, is apt to make a greater impression than when coming from the younger ones ; what you say and do has an influence upon the others, and that influence you must endeavour to exert usefully. But I hope to take an opportunity of mentioning the subject to your companions also.”

The young ladies having assured Miss Windermere that they would attend to her wishes, with respect to their little favourite, she said, “ Well, my dears, as we have had a long digression, we will go on reading. Which of you can remember where I left off?” Emily was ready with a reply, and the book was resumed, in which all soon became so much interested as to forget the

cause of their interruption;—all, indeed, but Frances, who thought to herself, “ So Miss Windermere does not approve the practice of telling people if they look pretty;” and she now discovered, why she had never received from her any of those flattering remarks, which her personal loveliness, in spite of her other unpleasant qualities, sometimes drew from her companions.

Though she could not avoid admiring Miss Windermere’s character, she had often thought her conduct, in this respect, singular; but now it occurred to her, perhaps for the first time, that outward charms alone, will never secure the esteem and affection of those from whom they are most worth having. For a moment she thought Emily, in her quiet enjoyment of affectionate friendship, and the pleasure she appeared to take in religion and mental cultivation, was happier than herself. But immediately the remembrance of her own brilliant appearance, amidst the circle in which she moved among her friends, and the admiration she there excited, dispelled graver thoughts. She preferred living the life of a butterfly, and the termination of such a course she was willing to leave, and glad to banish

constantly from her mind. Many before her have made this fatal preference; and those who have been suffered to abide by it, have, it is to be feared, experienced the truth of the words, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

CHAPTER VI.

WE have, till now, spoken but little of Sophia, in whom natural talent, eccentricity, and indolence of character were remarkably combined. From her general habits, it might have been supposed, that she thought her talents too good to need improving; satisfied with knowing she could do a thing well if she tried, she scarcely ever made the necessary exertion, and whatever was really well performed, seemed done, as it were, by accident. Negligence seemed an element of her character, and pervaded all her pursuits, even extending to her personal appearance: her graceful figure was disguised under an air of lounging listlessness; whilst a countenance, which would have been sufficiently interesting had it expressed half the intelligence of its possessor, was rendered unmeaning by a look of habitual indifference. Most of those who endeavoured to improve her, had given it up as a hopeless task; for neither teachers nor masters

could do much for one, who, to use her own expression, thought it of "no consequence" to do any thing for herself; all, however, agreed that she was a singular character; and there, with them at least, the matter rested.

It was not so, however, with Mrs. Wilmot; she felt herself, in some degree, responsible for the future character of every young person who was placed under her care; she knew, at least, that she was considered so by others, and she was anxious that each one should be a blessing and an ornament to the society in which she was hereafter to move.

Though she was well aware that the best means of instruction will fail in producing effect, if not followed up by exertion on the part of the pupils themselves, and therefore that the excellence of any system of education cannot always be known by observing the characters of the young people on whom it has been tried, she was still very desirous of fulfilling her part, and of using every possible method likely to promote their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement. As the performance of the various duties arising from the management of her large establishment, prevented her from being

constantly with the young ladies, she was extremely particular in the choice of her principal assistant, whom she encouraged to her confidence, and by means of whom, added to her own habits of quick observation, she perhaps obtained a more intimate acquaintance with individual character, than any person could have done alone. She had watched Miss Windermere, on her first arrival, very closely, and felt increasing confidence, not only in her talents and method of teaching, but in her piety and general superiority of character. She was now accustomed frequently to converse with her on the various dispositions of the young people, and sometimes, with that view, sent to request her company in the parlour for a short time, after they were retired to rest.

On one of these occasions, after a few general remarks, she said, "Well, my dear Miss Windermere, I think you have now had an opportunity of judging, and I wish to know your opinion of Sophia."

Miss W. I can hardly trust my own opinion of her, ma'am; her abilities are very good; indeed, superior I think to those of most young people, but she employs them so little to useful purposes,

that I am sometimes afraid, as she scarcely tries to direct or control them, that they will either remain dormant or lead her astray.

Mrs. Wil. I do not remember ever having under my care, a young person who caused me so much perplexity as she continually does. When I have had occasion to reprove her, I have never observed in her countenance the least expression of contempt, still less of insolence; on the contrary, she hears all I say with a kind of passive submission, but it makes no alteration in her conduct afterwards. I am not now referring to actual disobedience, but to the indifference and want of energy which pervade all her pursuits. How does she generally conduct herself with you, and Miss Lindsay?

Miss W. As far, ma'am, as I have had an opportunity of observing, she never takes any trouble with her studies. She will sometimes enter upon them with her usual listlessness, and just at the conclusion, when the attention of her companions is beginning a little to flag, she will surprise us all, by the intelligence and good sense which appear in her remarks, and the interest she seems to take in our subject for a little while. In her essays, too, I have often noticed

many good and original ideas, though they are written in so confused and careless a style, that it is not, at first reading, easy to understand what she intends to convey. Any indirect hints as to altering her conduct she constantly evades by endeavouring to prove that all these things are of very little importance; under more serious reproofs, she behaves very much as you, ma'am, have described.

Mrs. Wil. And do you think you have been able to discover any imaginable reason for her conduct?

Miss W. I should be sorry to judge unfavourably, ma'am, and should be unwilling indeed to mention my opinion, if you had not requested it. I certainly have considered, that a desire of being thought eccentric, and of appearing like nobody else, greatly influences her. This is a way of attracting notice, which is favourable to her indolent and rather capricious turn of mind. Her talents, when used at all, seem principally directed to that object; and this it is which makes me fear, at least if no alteration takes place, that they will be worse than useless to herself and society.

Mrs. Wil. I assure you, the same idea has struck me before, and I wished to know what you

thought on the subject. It is to be regretted that her talents should be thrown away, to attain so undesirable an end. Singularity is not often a quality which gains real friends; and affected singularity, adopted from motives of vanity, generally meets with the pity of the more estimable part of society, and often with the contempt and dislike of the rest. All we can do, while she remains here, is to endeavour to counteract what is wrong, and look for a blessing from above. I feel happy, my dear Miss Windermere, in the hope that your influence is combining with that which I wish to exert, in leading the young people in the way of true happiness, and fitting them for usefulness in after life.

Miss W. I feel, indeed, that it ought to be so; I have felt sorry, ma'am, to be obliged to speak so much of Sophia's faults this evening.

Mrs. W. I certainly do not approve of expatiating upon the faults of others, unless there is some useful purpose to be answered by it; which there is in this case, because it is necessary for me to know the characters of my young people, that I may discover the means most likely to benefit them. Without doing this, I am not fulfilling the responsibility, which, if conscientious, we must

feel in undertaking the care of the young. And such a responsibility this is, that if we had no higher source than our own powers, to which to apply for strength and direction, our spirits would often sink beneath its weight.

Miss Windermere's heart responded to her reply, as she said, "It is so, indeed, ma'am." These conversations with Mrs. Wilmot often contributed to enliven her mind, and give her renewed vigour, in cheerfully fulfilling her arduous duties.

A short time after this, on a half-holiday, as it was very fine, most of the young ladies repaired to the garden. "I think," said Charlotte, "I shall draw before I go out this afternoon; my hand shakes so much after I have been taking exercise." "Well, I will stay with you," said Emily, "for I find it just the same." "Dear, are you both going to draw?" said Sophia. "I have half a mind to stay too." "I think you had better quite make up your mind to stay, Sophia," said Charlotte, "for to-morrow is the day for our drawing-lesson, and you have done nothing since last time; I think you will be sorry when the time comes." "No, I shall not, my dear; I shall get on very well, I dare say; however," said she, reaching down her portfolio, "I am

going to take your advice, you see." They seated themselves at the table, and began drawing ; but every one else seemed to prefer the open air to the confinement of the school-room. Miss Windermere alone remained with them ; she was reading, and occasionally read aloud passages which she thought likely to interest them. They pursued their engagements silently for a short time ; at last Charlotte looked at Emily's drawing : " Ah, Emily, how nicely you go on ! every thing seems so easy to you. I never shall be able to draw as well as you do, I am sadly afraid." " Oh, yes, you will, dear Charlotte ; a year ago I could not draw nearly so well as you do now, and in another year, when I have left school, and leave off taking lessons, I have no doubt you will get far beyond me." " Oh, no," said Charlotte, with a sigh, " every one says you have so much taste, and I do not think I have any."

Emily. Why should you think so ? you improve very fast.

Sophia. Now, Charlotte, I believe you only say you have no taste for drawing, on purpose to hear us persuade you that you have ; and so, my dear, I shall not tell you so. But you are so exceedingly industrious, that I have no doubt you

will rise above the natural defects which you so much deplore, find every difficulty vanish before you, and oustrip us all.

Charlotte could not help feeling that the first part of this remark came very near the truth, and wishing to turn the subject, she said, "I cannot take things so easily as you do, Sophia; it is very well for you to laugh at us, when you are so strange, you know. You never care what people think of your drawings, or any thing else." "No, indeed, I do not," said, Sophia, as she idly proceeded. Charlotte looked at her sketch, and pointing out a mistake, said, "Would it not be better to rub out that little piece? you began so very nicely." "No, let it alone," said Sophia, in a languid tone, "it does not matter much; I scarcely ever take any thing out." Sophia's drawing, indeed, presented a strange medley; for while skill and good taste were visible in some parts, others might well have been taken for the performance of a beginner. "Dear," said Charlotte, "if I had half your abilities, I would——" "Finish your sentence," said Sophia. Charlotte, however, seemed reluctant to do this; and Miss Windermere said, smiling, "Perhaps you meant you would employ them better than Sophia does."

Charlotte. Yes, I did ; but I did not quite like to say so.

Miss W. I can imagine that, my love ; it was kind in you, certainly.

Sophia. But I should not have been in the least offended at hearing what I have often heard before.

Miss W. Perhaps not, my dear ; it is well to be able to avoid taking offence when told of our faults ; but there is another error into which we are too apt to fall, and that is, hearing of them with indifference. I can scarcely tell which of these two offers the greater obstacle to improvement. But do you not think, my dear Sophia, that though you may escape the one, you may be in danger of falling into the other ?

Sophia. I do not know. I certainly do not much mind what people think of me ; what they say makes no difference as to my real character, and that, probably, they do not always know.

Miss W. If we are conscious that we are really pursuing the path of duty, it is right, then, to be uninfluenced by the opinions of those who wish to turn us from it. If, for instance, you are fully satisfied that you are improving your talents to the utmost of your power, it need not much dis-

turb you to hear hints to the contrary ; but if, on the other hand, you know you are wasting them, whatever others may say of you, my dear girl, Scripture, you know declares, what I think your own conscience must whisper at times, that it would have been better for you never to have received these blessings, than to incur the sin of abusing them.

Sophia. But, Miss Windermere, really—about wasting talents—these things, such as drawing, and all that we have to do here, are but trifles ; I do not much care about being a proficient in them. It cannot be so very wrong, as you say, just not to play well, and so on.

Miss W. In themselves they are comparatively trifling, my dear, and under many circumstances, there certainly is no harm in not excelling in these pursuits. When kept within due bounds, they are pleasing, however ; and if you cannot yourself find pleasure in them, the wishes of your friends should, I think, influence you a little. You should at least improve the time allotted for the cultivation of these accomplishments ; for, at any time, it is better to be diligent than idle. Besides, my dear, music and drawing are not the only occupations you are desired to

follow ; you have opportunities, whilst at school, of gaining useful information, enriching and cultivating your mind, and laying the foundation of a superior and useful character. Even trifles, as you call them, rise into importance when they are made subservient to the pleasure and comfort of others, and are therefore deserving of some regard ; so that, unless you are above being useful, and think it of no importance to be loved and valued through the whole course of your life, I really do think you may find objects worthy to engage your attention, and employ your talents. Tell me, do not you think so ? Does there seem to you no object in life worth living for ?

Sophia's expressive eyes were raised to meet Miss Windermere's inquiring glance, as these words were uttered : she fixed them for a minute in deep thought, and then suddenly exclaimed, " I do not wish to reply to your question, ma'am, before such an audience ; if you will excuse me, and allow me the favour of your company when we go out in the garden, perhaps I shall be better able to form my ideas of the subject into words ; and in the mean time, I will rub out the branch of this tree, which was the beginning of the contest."

Miss W. Contest, my love !

Charlotte. Now, that is so exactly Sophia's way ; she never uses right words for any thing ; for I am sure, ma'am, we never have what we can call a contest with you.

Emily. Sophia only meant the beginning of our pleasant chat.

Sophia. Yes, very pleasant chat ! and as I wish to prolong it, and feel myself to have been long enough the subject of conversation, I shall beg leave to put Charlotte in my place, and hope Miss Windermere will correct her defects as well as she has done mine. You are too restless, my dear Charlotte, and anxious to be praised, and to be the very best of us all.

Miss W. (playfully.) Well, dear Charlotte, I am quite sure you never hear of your faults with indifference, and I hope you will also bear to have them mentioned without being offended.

At these words, Charlotte struggled to overcome the feelings of vexation, which Sophia's remark had nearly excited, and good-humouredly replied, " Well, but from all that you have said, ma'am, it is surely right to do every thing as well as we possibly can, and to feel glad when people say it is well done ; is it not ? "

Miss W. Yes, we ought to perform every duty as well as our abilities will allow, and, to a certain degree, I think we may indulge the pleasure we naturally feel in knowing that others are satisfied with us. But where this motive is much indulged, it is apt to lead to the love of praise, so that we shall not value our pursuits so much for their intrinsic worth, as for the commendations we may receive for our proficiency in them.

Charlotte. But how are we to know where the right feeling of liking to have people pleased with us ends, and the mere love of praise, which you say is wrong, begins?

Miss W. In order to explain it to you, my love, I will suppose a case, like your own, with respect to drawing. A young person, intending to pursue this art, thinks, "Well, of what use will drawing be to me? Why it will enable me to take sketches of pleasing natural objects; and if I should ever travel, it certainly would be very pleasant both to myself and my friends, to be able to bring home such a memorial of the scenes through which I have passed; and it may also assist in the cultivation of my taste, and give me an eye to admire the beauties of nature." Such

a young person would think justly on the subject, and valuing the pursuit for its own sake, would enter on it with interest, and probably succeed. Commendations might very likely ensue; but as to obtain these would not be her chief object, she would never be on the look-out for admiration; much less would she use any unworthy arts to extort it, such as appearing to undervalue her own abilities, for the pleasure of hearing herself contradicted, &c. This will apply to every other pursuit; and if you think, Charlotte, you will not find it difficult to judge, whether you are really anxious to derive benefit from your studies, or whether you merely view them as a means by which you may excel your schoolfellows, and obtain praise.

Charlotte slightly coloured, and said, "Well, perhaps it may be a little of both; but, really, in such little things it is very difficult to know what is right, and what is wrong;—and then to alter—and—"

Miss W. Perhaps you think it is better not to enter into such minute particulars, and you do not exactly see the advantage of correcting every little defect in your character.

Charlotte. Oh, yes, I know it is right to cor-

rect our faults ; but will you tell me, ma'am, what would be the particular use of trying to overcome this ?

Miss W. Yes, I will, my love ; in the first place, then, you would be much happier. If you give up the restless desire of being commended for every thing you do well, and apply the same assiduity and diligence which have been exerted in the mere pursuit of praise to deriving real advantage from your studies, you would receive more pleasure from the interesting information you might acquire, than the most flattering compliments could afford ; and you would escape the mortification you may now sometimes feel, when these have been withheld.

Charlotte. I really think it may be so.

Miss W. Well, try ; and tell me if you do not find your happiness increased. But, my dear Charlotte, before we quit this subject, I must remind you that there is one motive, which when brought into exercise, will cause all others to fall into their proper places. A desire to please God will equally preserve us from squandering our talents, and from merely using them to obtain praise of men ; and if we do not possess, because we have never truly sought that favour of God,

through the Saviour, which will endure for ever, it is of little consequence indeed to be held in estimation by our fellow-mortals, who in a few fleeting years will have passed with us into eternity.

The young ladies were silent for a few minutes, when Miss Wilmot entered the room : “ Emily,” said she, “ are you going to waste all this sweet spring afternoon in doors ? I want you to come with me to your garden, your primroses and polyanthuses look so beautiful !” “ I think,” said Miss Windermere, “ we had better all go out now, or it will be getting late.” Emily quickly put up her drawing, and went with Miss Wilmot, and the others soon followed. As they entered the garden, Mary Ann ran up, “ Oh, Charlotte, I am so glad you are come ; I want to sow our seeds, and I did not like to begin without you.” “ I am very glad you did not,” said Charlotte, smiling ; “ if you had, I should never expect to see one of them come up.” They ran away together, and Sophia putting her arm within Miss Windermere’s, turned down a retired walk.

Miss W. Well, my love, now you have brought me here, I hope you mean to try and answer my questions ; you must be aware of the indolence

and indifference which you generally manifest towards your pursuits, and I wanted to know if there really was any object in life which you thought worthy to engage your attention ?

Sophia. Oh, yes, ma'am ! but I never thought much on that subject. I am sure it is of consequence to be loved and valued through life—but really, I cannot make myself so anxious as some do ; and to tell the truth, I never could take so much trouble, and go on like any one else : I always was an odd kind of being.

Miss W. Well, do you mean to continue an odd kind of being, constantly exciting surprise all your life ? or would you rather be an active, amiable, useful character ; filling up your place in society well ; loved and respected by all around you ? I speak now of merely which you think most desirable—to be singular, or to be useful—to excite wonder, or to gain affection ?

When the subject was placed in this light, Sophia's views began to be somewhat changed : she thought she should not like always to be “ an odd kind of being, merely exciting surprise,” but she could not give up her favourite idea of being distinguished from other people ; so she replied, “ I should certainly like to be loved, but surely

one need not be exactly like every one else: I never have liked the idea of being a common character."

Miss W. It certainly is a melancholy fact, Sophia, that indifferent or extremely undesirable characters are too common, and any one who rises above mediocrity must, in some respects, be singular. But if you are endeavouring to obtain this singularity, by letting your abilities be unemployed, you are taking exactly a wrong method; for we meet far more frequently with persons who abuse their talents, than with those who diligently use them. You may, indeed, if you wish it, be thought eccentric, by affecting indifference to the common affairs of life; but this is not an enviable distinction, as one possessing the most ordinary mind could easily attain it.

Sophia (thoughtfully). That is certainly true; but now, at what kind of character would you advise me to aim?

Miss Windermere, with a look full of affectionate concern, said, "I can advise, my dear; but you do not know how rejoiced I should feel if you were to take my advice. I should certainly wish you to become amiable, active, cheerful, self-denying, and concerned for the comfort of

others ; I should like you to be an affectionate and dutiful daughter, a sensible and interesting companion, and attentive to all the duties which your station might require : but whilst this would please, yet, alone, it would not satisfy me."

Sophia. My dear Miss Windermere, I should honestly like to become such a character as you describe ; and I do not quite understand what you mean by saying, it would not satisfy you. I shall begin to think about trying to be such a one ; and if I succeed, what more can be needed ?

Miss W. My love, these qualities are well worth endeavouring to obtain, and will command the esteem and affection of our fellow-creatures. But to gain the love of those around us, is not the only, nor yet the chief end of our existence ; that will be very pleasant during life, but we are destined to live for ever, in a world of happiness or misery ; and, in which of these states we shall pass eternity, depends on the course we pursue, during the few years we may spend on earth. Then, my dear girl, since we know not how soon, nor how suddenly, life may be snapt asunder ; do you not see true religion to be that one thing needful, without which all other qualities are comparatively trifling ?

Sophia. Yes, ma'am. But if our characters are as excellent as the one you mentioned, will not God be pleased with us, and take us to heaven when we die?

Miss W. Our characters may be excellent, my dear, in the sight of men, but our hearts are open to God, and He knows all our motives. He has commanded us to love Him with all our heart, and He sees if we love any object better than himself. But to wander from God, and not to love Him, are what our hearts are naturally inclined to do; and hence in His sight, we are utterly sinful, and deserving only of his condemnation.

Before we can enter the kingdom of heaven we need an entire change, and this God has promised to give us, if we seek it through the Saviour. This is what I wish you, my dear girl, to seek, because I know that without it you must perish. If you will ask of God, He will freely give to you.

They walked on in silence for some minutes, till they came to an arbour, up the trellis-work of which, a pretty creeping plant had been carefully trained: one of the long stalks had, however, escaped the notice of the gardener, and after

having been blown about by the winds, it had been beaten to the ground by the rain, and while its sister stems were just unfolding their delicate buds, it lay on the damp mould, to all appearance dead. Miss Windermere noticed it. "Look at that poor plant, Sophia; it seems to be spoiled for want of training. Do you know, it is rather singular, but I observed it yesterday, and it gave me some painful thoughts."

Sophia. Why should it, ma'am? There are plenty of flowers to bloom without that.

Miss W. I was sorry to see the little plant dead: but that is not what I was chiefly thinking about. It made me recollect a young friend of mine, who has abilities, which if improved, *might* enable her to become a lovely flower, diffusing her fragrance all around, and adorning the spot where she dwells. But from appearances, which then struck me, I feared that, after her useless talents had been squandered for a few years in desultory pursuits, she would at last sink into a character worse than useless, as unpleasing as the dead stalk. In one respect the comparison would not hold good; the stem of jessamine had been left to itself, or it might have been saved; but many had attempted to train this

young person, and found her unyielding. This thought struck me very much, and I began almost to feel melancholy; but I could only anxiously hope that my fears would not be realized, and there I was obliged to leave them.

Sophia. Oh, Miss Windermere! now do you not mean me?

Miss W. Yes, it was certainly of you I thought. Do you think the resemblance sufficiently striking to give a just cause for unpleasant reflections, my love?

Sophia. Yes, I am afraid it has been so, though I really hope it will not continue long. But, dear Miss Windermere, why should you have made yourself unhappy about me? I shall go away in a year or two, and then you will have nothing more to do with me.

Miss W. You do not know, then, dear Sophia, how much I love you all, and how anxious I feel for your welfare, for time and eternity. I think to my latest day, I shall retain this peculiar solicitude for all who have been under my care, however much we may be separated by time or distance.

Sophia was touched by these words, for she

knew she had often occasioned trouble and perplexity to her gentle instructress. She looked at Miss Windermere with concern: "You may train the plant now, ma'am, that is, if you are willing, and you shall not find it so difficult to bend again."

Miss W. You may be assured I am quite willing, my dear; but if you wish to be rightly trained, trained for heaven, you must not depend alone upon me; but, as I told you before, you must seek the grace of God, to form your mind anew. It is of immense importance that you should obtain this change while you are young; for every year as you grow older, your character will become more fixed; and if you refuse now to seek this blessing, you may perhaps lose it for ever.

Sophia made no reply, and Miss Windermere said, "Well, suppose we go now, and see what they are all doing."

The path in which they were walking ran entirely round the garden, and was secluded among trees and shrubs, except in two spots; at one place, where it led near the house, and at another, where it skirted a large and level lawn which ran through the centre of the grounds. On either

side of this lawn, winding walks led among the flower-beds and shrubberies; and here were the little plots of ground, which were indebted for their cultivation to the young ladies. The garden was bounded on each side by high walls; but in the front a light fence only separated it from the meadows, allowing a full view of the wide and beautiful landscape, terminated by richly wooded hills at no great distance. Miss Windermere turned down one of the walks which led to the lawn, and they presently came to the garden which belonged to Charlotte and Mary Ann. Charlotte was stooping over a bed in which she had been preparing to sow her flowers; and beside her was a little basket, containing small packets of seeds. Just then, she called to Mary Ann, who was running about, admiring the spring flowers: "Mary Ann," said she, "you leave me all alone to sow the seeds; I do wish you would come and help me. You like to see the flowers when they come up, you know." "Yes," replied Mary Ann, laughing, "I know I do, and I am looking at flowers now."

Charlotte. You know what I mean, Mary Ann; if you will not work in the garden, I suppose I must; but I think—

Mary Ann. Oh, I will come; you could not think I should be so unkind as to let you have all the trouble alone, only I think it would be very pleasant if the flowers would come up by themselves.

“Why, Mary Ann,” said Miss Windermere, who was stopping to admire the pretty little spot which bore testimony to Charlotte’s industry; “I thought, dear, you were so fond of gardening.”

Mary Ann. Yes, ma’am, I like it very much indeed, except in the spring.

Charlotte. Why that is the very time of all others, when gardening is needed.

Mary Ann. Well, that I think very tiresome; just when we are so glad the winter is over, and we want to enjoy the spring, and scamper about to see how the buds and flowers go on, we have to come and work in our gardens, if we wish to see them look nice in the summer.

Whilst the young gardener was thus playfully enumerating her grievances, it is but justice to say, that she had taken up her light rake, and was commencing operations with great spirit. Miss Windermere smiled at the idea of her making so many complaints with such a merry

countenance, and said, "You must not call it tiresome, my love, for it is no doubt so ordered for wise ends: will you not be repaid for a few hours' labour, when you see your flowers coming up?" "Yes, indeed," replied Mary Ann, and she went on in the quick way natural to her, when her ardent mind was interested in any pursuit. Frances was near, and gathering a bunch of primroses, she fixed them in her hair. The delicate flowers mingled beautifully with her dark, glossy curls, and she would perhaps have made at this moment, a *beau ideal* for an artist; but she was Frances still, and conceit unhappily appeared in her most trifling actions, so as to convey to the mind, notwithstanding all her loveliness, an unpleasing sensation. Perhaps, something in her manner, at this time, caught Mary Ann's attention; for she looked up, with her smiling face all in a glow, saying, half playfully, half ironically, "You look enchanting, Frances." Frances coloured, and said angrily, "How tiresome it is, Mary Ann, that one never can do the least thing without your making some ridiculous remark!" She would have continued, had not little Ellen, with an arch look, said, "Never mind, Frances; Mary Ann

only said what is true ; you would not be angry with her for telling the truth, would you ?" This remark soothed the fair heroine ; she was silent, and patted the head of her little flatterer, while Ellen, on her part, was pleased with notice, even from one, whose character she had sufficient penetration to despise. " Ah ! Mary Ann," said Charlotte, " take care ; you are raking just where I have sown the mignonette." Frances was not sorry to have an opportunity of retorting upon the little thoughtless girl. " Mary Ann is as careless in her garden as she is in every thing else," said she. " You must make allowance for her," said Miss Windermere, as they turned away ; " she is indeed apt to be negligent, but she seems anxious to overcome her faults, and I really hope she is improving."

Frances. I don't know, I'm sure ; she always seems to me very careless. I am sure, I think her very far from being a pleasant child ; she is always taking improper liberties, such as you heard just now, Miss Windermere.

Miss W. I believe, my dear, the remarks which you so much dislike, proceed more from her thoughtlessness and buoyant spirits, than

from any wish to offend. Still they are wrong, and I shall take some opportunity of mentioning the subject to her. All that I can recommend you to do, is, not to be offended at these little things, and to take care that nothing appear in you to give rise to such observations. A kind open manner, on your part, would most effectually disarm ridicule of its sting.

“I am not aware of any thing in myself, that should deserve Mary Ann’s ridicule,” said Frances, haughtily.

Miss W. Pardon me, Frances, but now you have entered on this subject, I must say you would do well to look into your own heart, and if you find vanity is indulged there, remember that it cannot be effectually concealed, even from your companions; it will betray itself involuntarily, and, in proportion as it is noticed, will cause you to be despised. If you cannot help being conscious of it yourself, do not be surprised that it is observed and ridiculed by others; and instead of seeking to conceal it, my dear, go to a throne of grace, and seek to have it taken away. Do not think me unkind, I speak from a desire for your welfare; for I know, my love, how many bitter mortifications you will be spared

in after life, by listening now to the voice of Him who says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am *meek* and *lowly* of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." And, how preferable is the rest and peace of mind experienced by the humble disciple of Jesus, in wearing his Master's easy yoke, to the flutter of exultation, caused by compliments the most flattering to our vanity!

Frances. I wish I had not talked to you, ma'am; for you make me feel uncomfortable, and I know what you say will come into my head just when I do not wish it.

Miss W. My dear, I do not wish to make you unhappy, but these matters are far too important to be trifled with or forgotten; and true happiness, I am convinced you will never find, either for time or eternity, until you seek it in the Saviour.

A bell now summoned them all to the house, and the children were assembling from different parts of the garden, when a cry was heard, and a little group were seen gathering round a particular spot on the lawn. Miss Windermere hastened to see what was the matter, and found that Mary had fallen down, and sprained her

anckle severely, having caught her foot in a small hole which was half hidden by the grass. "How did you fall? are you much hurt, dear?" said Miss Windermere, taking the little girl in her arms. A half-suppressed, "Oh, dear! oh, dear!" answered the first question; but Mary said, "Oh, I hope it will soon be better, ma'am. I was running across the lawn as fast as I could, because the bell rung." Miss Windermere carried her in-doors, and the sprain having been examined, and her foot bound up, the little girl was laid on a sofa, in Mrs. Wilmot's dressing-room, where it was thought probable she would have to remain for some days.

The slight confusion caused by this accident was soon over, the young people had taken tea, and it was beginning to grow dusk, when Mary Ann, who had been netting till she could see no longer, jumped up, and frisked about the room, looking for some object on which to expend her lively spirits. Emily was standing at the window, looking at the moon, whose soft radiance was acquiring new lustre as the shades of evening deepened around. Frances stood near, her eyes glancing occasionally at a looking-glass on the wall, which was so placed as to

allow her to observe the effect of the moon-beams reflected on her elegant form.

This was sufficient for Mary Ann. "So," said she, "there is poetical Emily, admiring the moon; but really, Emily, I wonder at your want of taste, in looking at that, when you might gaze upon an object so much more lovely. Frances shows her good sense better; you see what she is admiring—dark ringlets, with pale primroses among them, bright eyes, and the moonbeams shining on her new dress. You had no looking-glass in the garden, Frances, but you need not regret it, for, I assure you, you see yourself now to the best possible advantage." "Mary Ann, be quiet," said Frances, in a subdued tone, which seemed to indicate shame, vexation, and a desire to overcome both these feelings. "Hush," said Emily, "you should not say any thing, dear Mary Ann, that will be likely to tease." "Leave me alone, Emily," replied Mary Ann. "Frances, how can you wish me to be quiet? Are not compliments the things you like best in the world, and I am paying you all I can think of. Don't be angry." Frances caught her hand, and said, "I do not think I am angry now, Mary Ann; and I think the

moon is the prettiest object to be seen at present." Mary Ann looked at her with surprise: "What, Frances, prettier than you! No, honestly, I do not think so; and it is uncommonly kind of you not to be angry." Miss Windermere had heard this conversation, and now said, with a smile, "*Uncommonly* kind, Mary Ann! I hope and believe Frances intends it to be as common an occurrence for her not to be offended at your remarks, as it is for you to make them." Mary Ann sat down by Miss Windermere, and said in an under tone, "But you do not think, ma'am, that it is wrong of me to laugh now and then a little. Frances does admire herself so very much, that I really cannot help smiling at her sometimes. But, generally, before I well know what I am doing, she gets so angry that I go out of her way as fast as I can."

Miss W. Then you have sometimes made her angry, Mary Ann?

Mary Ann. Yes, perhaps, I have; but then she need not have been so; nobody else would.

Miss W. Well; but even allowing that Frances is easily offended, there is the very reason why you ought to take care not to

offend. Some persons are naturally irritable, and they are very wrong if they indulge their ill tempers; but others, possessing more evenness of temper, do not know the temptations attendant on a passionate disposition, and when they try to provoke those who they know are quickly put off their guard, which do you think is more in fault, the one who calmly provokes, or the one who is easily provoked?

Mary Ann. Oh! ma'am, the one who provokes; but I never particularly mean to tease Frances—only I forget:—when I see any thing laughable, I always laugh, without thinking of any thing else.

Miss W. Yes, that is just what I supposed; it arises from thoughtlessness; but you must learn to check it, or else, in after life, you will often cause pain, and sometimes injury to others, which will not be less felt, because you did not mean any harm. You may even sometimes make yourself disliked, where you are only intending to laugh at what is laughable. Let your lively spirits have their play, my love, but try and regulate them; do not let your sprightliness be exerted to tease but to please those around you, and never make a remark that you think

will vex any one, without doing good ; but if you think it will add to the happiness of your companions, make it.

Mary Ann. But, really, ma'am, do you not think it will do Frances good to be laughed out of her vanity ?

Miss W. No, my dear ; vanity is not a fault so very easily cured. Your ridicule may often vex Frances, and will cause her to dislike you, without making her less vain. She knows that, though you may laugh at her, others are not wanting, in her own circle, to admire her. She will, therefore, easily persuade herself that you are unjust, and her opinion of herself will remain unaltered. Besides, persons possessing mature judgment and long experience, often find it a difficult task to correct vanity in the young ; it is not, therefore, likely that you, my little Mary Ann, should be able so easily to overcome it.

Mary Ann blushed, and, looking up archly, she said, with a smile, “ Do not think, ma'am, that I mean to set myself up above your mature judgment and long experience.”

Miss W. I did not refer to myself, I assure you, my dear ; but, at any rate, my judgment is

a little more mature, and my experience a little longer than yours.

Mary Ann. Oh! certainly, ma'am; what you say is always very good; indeed you almost want us to be unnaturally good.

Miss W. I do, indeed, my dear; good dispositions are not natural to us. It is a common saying, "all have their faults;" all, therefore, need a new nature, and must seek it, to become truly happy, either in this world or in the next.

Mary Ann well understood Miss Windermere; but she had no desire to prolong the conversation. She did not wish to be addressed pointedly on the subject of religion, for, though she thought it was all quite right, she trusted, as too many do, to the vain idea, that she should attend to it as a matter of course when she grew older.

Miss Windermere had not said more to her lively pupil on her satirical observations, as she was anxious not to weary her; but perhaps we may be allowed to observe, that many persons who indulge a spirit of ridicule, shelter themselves under the plea, that it does people good to be laughed out of their faults. But on examining ourselves a little more closely, shall

we often find that our wish, in making these ironical remarks, is simply to do good—that they proceed purely from a spirit of kindness? No; satire has been truly called a dangerous weapon, and it needs to be guided by a most judicious and skilful hand; it is not, however, most frequently employed by persons possessing these qualifications, but generally by the young and inexperienced, who sometimes let fly its keen arrows at random, merely to display their brilliancy; and at other times make them an instrument of giving vent to some of the worst feelings of the heart, by inflicting painful and lasting wounds on the unfortunate object of their ill-natured dislike.

If there be a class of persons in whom, more than in any other, a satirical disposition is peculiarly unlovely and unbecoming, it is the young. It tends to damp the glow of disinterested kindness, which often disposes those of more mature years to make all due allowances for their youthful inexperience; it chills the benevolent desire, and cramps the anxious endeavour, to benefit their opening minds. And sooner or later a turn for ridicule will cause its possessor to be disliked and shunned. It may often excite a laugh, but

it will never draw forth affection; and those who indulge it may receive the applause of a giddy multitude, but must be content never to enjoy the endearing delights of mutual friendship. They will never be likely themselves to choose a friend, as few characters are so free from imperfection as not to present some points which may be turned by a trifling mind into a subject for ridicule; nor, on the other hand, will many be found willing to admit to their confidence, those who would be likely to trifle with their most sacred feelings, if they interfered with the display of this dangerous talent. If it is still argued, that satire may, notwithstanding, in some cases be useful, the best guide that can be mentioned to teach us how to make a proper use of it is the golden rule. "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," will distinctly mark the right course, in this and many other cases of perplexity; and under the influence of that spirit of universal kindness, which is the fruit of heavenly wisdom, satire will never be used improperly, and, in our opinion, will seldom, very seldom, be used at all.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL who know the numerous difficulties and vexations encountered by those who have any share in the management of a large school, will easily imagine, that, though Miss Windermere passed many pleasant hours in the midst of the youthful group, by whom she was now so much beloved, yet her life was not without its trials and its cares. Many little occurrences take place every day in such a situation, which, though too trivial to be often thought of after they are past, are sufficient at the time to perplex the mind, and, without watchfulness, to ruffle the temper. These trifling disappointments and vexations, our young friend constantly found in her endeavours to train and instruct her pupils. She engaged in her duties with all the energy of youth, and the interest natural to her ardent and highly cultivated mind; but among so many

different dispositions, discouragements often occurred. Much patience and firmness of mind were necessary to allow her to encounter with calmness the indolence, carelessness, dulness, or perhaps impertinence, of some with whom she had to deal. But this she was enabled to exercise; she knew from what source she must derive all her strength, and often, in the midst of bustle and perplexity, she remembered the Scripture precept, "Be instant in prayer;" and in following it, she frequently found her strength renewed, and her spirits cheered. Thus, though the waters were sometimes ruffled, the spring of her peace was untouched; and the streams of the water of life, so freely open to all, still refreshed her, as she passed along the wilderness, on her way to that heavenly home on which her hope was fixed.

The esteem and love of those around, though only the natural results of her own unwearied kindness, were no small solace to her affectionate heart, and frequently gave her cause for thankfulness. One morning, her engagements had been more than usually harassing, through the inattention and neglect of some of her pupils, whose names it will not be necessary to men-

tion. After their studies were concluded, Miss Windermere went up into her room as usual, to dress for dinner ; she was feeling a little discouraged, and thought to herself, as she went along, “ How trying it is to attempt to teach them, when their own minds are not engaged ! How can I improve them, with all my endeavours, unless they will let me have their attention ? ” However, she remembered it was wrong to indulge impatience ; she felt that numberless mercies outweighed her little trials, and she determined to renew her efforts, and to conquer all difficulties that did not seem absolutely insurmountable. With this resolution she entered her apartment, where the first thing she saw on her dressing-table, was a small packet, directed to herself. With some surprise she opened it, and found it contained a pretty green silk purse with steel tassels, and a note directed in a juvenile hand ; she hastily tore it open, and read as follows :—

“ MY DEAR MISS WINDERMERE,

“ I am very much obliged to you for all your kindness to me, and hope you will be repaid by seeing me improve under your

care. Will you add to all your other favours, that of accepting the accompanying trifle; it is the first thing I have finished in my 'scraps of time.' I have indeed had great pleasure in employing the odd minutes, which you first taught me to improve, in netting it for you, and much hope you will like it. With best love to you, in which all the school unite,

I remain,

Your affectionate little friend,

MARY ANN."

In the glow of pleasure with which Miss Windermere received this mark of affectionate attention from her little open-hearted pupil, she felt ashamed that desponding thoughts should have found place in her heart; and, dressing quickly, she hastened to seek Mary Ann, and thank her for her unexpected present. Mary Ann was in the garden, waiting till the dinner-bell should ring; she saw Miss Windermere, and guessed her intention, but did not run to meet her, as usual, lest it might appear like asking for thanks. Directly, however, that she felt the affectionate kiss, and heard the well-known voice, saying, "My dear Mary Ann, I am very

much obliged to you for your pretty present, and very glad that you have improved your time so well:" she threw her arms round Miss Windermere's neck, and, kissing her eagerly, said, in her own frank, warm-hearted manner, "Oh, ma'am, I am so happy to give it you; I have been longing so much for it to be finished, and have been working at it all my spare time to get it done. Do you know, ma'am," continued she, "this was the bright thought that came into my head that evening, and you said you would be glad of any thought that would make me industrious, and I think this has; for I have been so anxious to get time to go on with my netting, that it has made me try to be quick, and not lose a minute."

Miss W. Well, my love, I shall keep it for your sake, and I shall always look at it with pleasure, not only as a mark of your kindness, but as the first-fruits of your industry and perseverance.

Mary Ann. No, do not keep it, if you please, ma'am, but *use* it for my sake. I thought of netting a purse that it might be useful to you, and I will net you another when that is worn out, if I am at school then.

Miss Windermere smiled, "Thank you, my love, then I will make use of it: we cannot tell what circumstances may take place before this is worn out, but if we should be separated then, I shall still keep it in remembrance of you. And now, my dear little girl, I hope the habits of industry you have begun to form, will not be laid aside." Just then the dinner-bell rang, and as they went to the house, Mary Ann said, "I do not think I shall lose my habits of industry, ma'am, for I begin to like improving the odd minutes so much, that I shall never feel happy to waste them again."

Little Mary was still confined to the sofa, with her sprained ancle, which was a great privation to her during this fine spring weather, fond as she was of her garden, and her out-door amusements. She could see through the opened window, as she lay alone in the dressing-room, her little play-fellows frisking about in the garden, and enjoying the pleasant sun-shine and balmy breezes. She could see the trees acquiring every day a more decided tint of green, and she longed to be able to run about again, and ascertain how her flowers were going on, and if her mustard and cress were coming up. However,

she continued the same gentle, patient, happy, little girl, that she had been in health; she tried to be contented, and thankful for the many comforts she still possessed, and looked forward cheerfully to the time when the use of her foot should be restored. As she was very well able to attend to her lessons, Mrs. Wilmot usually spent some time every morning with her, and Mary always had either her books, or some trifling employment to beguile her hours of solitude. Still they were lonely hours, and her affectionate mind felt the separation from those she loved, more deeply than any of the pain and privation attendant on her accident. Miss Windermere went to see her dear little girl as often as she could; but her visits seldom lasted for more than five minutes at a time, as she could not leave the school-room longer.

Miss Wilmot, however, had more time at command, and was often able to devote half an hour to Mary. This she did, with her usual kindness, much to the annoyance of Ellen, who was vexed at any circumstance, which caused another to have more of Miss Wilmot's attention than herself. Of Mary, particularly, she had begun to feel rather jealous, for this

little girl had endeared herself to all the young ladies, by her sweet temper and obliging disposition ; and it might be said that, while Ellen in her best moments certainly had the art of pleasing, Mary, on all occasions, pleased without art, and indeed almost without knowing it. Ellen could not, herself, help feeling an affection for her pretty, simple-hearted, school-fellow, and she had indeed no objection to her being loved by the young ladies, nor even by Miss Wilmot, provided she might still be loved best herself. It was all very well, in her opinion, for Mary to be admired in her proper place ; but she could not bear, nor scarcely entertain the idea, that one so unpretending, and comparatively quiet, should be preferred to a lively, clever, and engaging little girl, such as she was accustomed to think herself.

But we will introduce our young readers to a scene in the school-room, characteristic of our little Ellen. It was the evening : a subject had been given to the young ladies, on which each was to write her thoughts ; and all, who had any prudence, were beginning it as early as they could, not knowing how long it might take them to finish. The sun was sinking, but still shed

its cheerful light over the room, at a table in the centre of which, many thoughtful countenances were bending over their slates.

While most of her companions were writing, and re-writing, and rubbing out, Ellen was going on quickly; now she was fixed in thought for a minute, and then her bright expression of countenance showed that some suitable idea had struck her mind, which was transferred to her slate, as fast as her little fingers could write. Her productions were of course childish; but still she had ideas, apt and original, upon all subjects within the reach of a comprehension far beyond her years. Mental employment was delightful to her, and she would, at any time, have disdained to say, "I don't know what to write," or to borrow from another. Quickly, however, as they were written, her juvenile essays, with the exception of a few verbal mistakes, generally passed from the correcting hand of her governess untouched, though they not unfrequently caused a smile.

Upon the present occasion, she had soon filled her slate, and, having put it away, returned to the table, where the rest were sitting. "What have you been writing there so quickly, you

little thing?" said Matilda, "I wish you would tell me what to say, for I cannot get on at all." "Ah! tell me some too," said Clara, who disliked above all things the application required to think for herself. The subject was a simple one, "On Good Temper." "Oh!" replied Ellen, "I wonder you cannot tell what to say on that; put 'the value of this quality is most eminently proved at school, as not a creature can be loved there without it, though she may be a pattern of perfection in other respects;' and then, you know, you can adorn it with some illustration, which, I dare say, you will be able to recollect." They laughed, and as the attention of one and another was drawn to them, Ellen continued to amuse them with "Write this," and "put so and so, then," mentioning sentences equally diverting, and unsuitable for the purpose. At last all agreed, that they must not laugh any longer. "You have thrown all my ideas into confusion, Ellen," said Matilda. "Now, do not blame me," said Ellen, "because you asked me to tell you what to write, and it is not my fault if you will not write what I say." However, she left off, as her ambition was to be

called not only an amusing, but an engaging little girl, and this title she was not likely to acquire by teasing. She next went to Sophia, who had continued unmoved during the late interruption; she was very anxious to show Miss Windermere that she was trying to improve her talents, and her mind was unusually engaged, while her bright, fixed eye, and flushed cheek, showed she was not thinking unsuccessfully. As soon as Ellen saw that the thoughts which had so deeply occupied Sophia's mind were safe on the slate, she began to talk, but found her impenetrable, and, therefore, sat still till the candles came in, when she took her work-box, and went to sit by Miss Wilmot, who was still writing. When she had finished, "Now, mamma," said Ellen, "you have nothing more to do, and may I read to you for half an hour?" "Why, my dear little girl," replied Miss Wilmot, "I should like it very much, and I am quite sorry to disappoint you, if you have been waiting here all this time for me; but I think it would be but kind to go and sit with poor Mary for a short time, because I have been prevented from going all day." Ellen looked as she felt, completely disappointed, and

could not help saying, "My dear mamma, I hardly see any thing of you now; you do go away so often to Mary."

Miss Wil. Yes, Ellen; but we must not be selfish. Mary is obliged to lie still, and scarcely see any one all day, and she is so pleased when any of us go and sit with her. Suppose you were in her place, and I wanted to come and see you, should you think it kind of any one to wish me not to go?

Ellen. No, indeed, I should not.

Miss Wil. Well, then, you must do as you would be done by.

Ellen. But I am your child, you know, and I shall get quite a naughty girl, if you do not look after me.

Miss Wilmot smiled, "Now I hope my child does not really mean that; if she loves me, she should show it, not by always wanting to be with me, but by doing as I wish her, and being good while I am away."

Miss Wilmot then left the room, unconscious of the extent of her little girl's mortification. Ellen sat silent—her gaiety was gone, and she almost wished that she, instead of Mary, had sprained her ankle, that she might become the

object of more exclusive attention. Mary, on the other hand, as she was never looking for notice, was grateful for any little mark of approbation which was bestowed upon her; and, though she did not meet with nearly so much attention as Ellen, she was happy in the unlooked-for kindness she did experience from her companions. A single smile, or a word of approval, gave Mary more pleasure than the warmest expressions of fond affection conveyed to Ellen, unless indeed they were bestowed on her alone.

Miss Wilmot found that little Mary had been alone all day, but her eyes sparkled with pleasure at the sight of one she loved so dearly. "How kind it is of you Miss Wilmot, to come to me! are you sure you have plenty of time, and that I am not hindering you?"

Miss Wil. I have been very much engaged to-day, love; but I thought I would come and see the poor little lonely girl if I could, and now I have half an hour to spare.

Mary. Oh, thank you! When I am all alone, I think very much about home, and I do so long to see my dear mamma once more; but when you come, I feel happy again.

A tear stood in the little girl's gentle eye, as she said this. "Come, come," said Miss Wilmot, as, with a smile, she wiped it away, "we must not allow any crying: the holidays are getting nearer every day; and, besides, I have met with a pretty story to-day, that I thought would just do to read to you, so I have brought it with me. And Miss Windermere sent her love to you, and said, she would come and bid you good-night, this evening."

The troubles of this early age are soon over; Mary brightened up at the hope of seeing Miss Windermere, and Miss Wilmot's sweet sprightly manners, which diffused cheerfulness wherever she went, soon restored the little girl's spirits.

At the close of the half-hour Miss Wilmot left the room, with a promise to come again the next day, and returned to the school-room, happy in having afforded real pleasure to another, by a trifling act of self-denial on her own part. She sat down, cheerfully, at the table by Miss Windermere, and told her how pleased Mary was at the thought of seeing her. "Dear, how is she, poor child?" said one. "I quite miss her little sweet-tempered face; I hope she will be able to come into the school-room again

soon," said another. Ellen heard these remarks, and though she did not appear to notice them, they increased her vexation. She was not in the happiest mood possible, and was sitting upon a stool in an obscure corner of the room, with her head leaning upon a form. Her companions thought she was asleep; but she, in reality, only resorted to this expedient, in order to avoid being sociable with Miss Wilmot, until she had induced her by her conduct, to enquire if any thing was the matter.

Meanwhile most of the lessons were learned, and the lively buzz of the young people, engaged in their various amusements, was heard on all sides, "Miss Windermere," said Sophia, "will you be so kind as to have one game with us at writing questions this evening?" "Oh! pray do, if you please, ma'am," said Mary Ann; "we shall have time, and besides so many of the clever ones have done their lessons, that I know we shall have a nice merry game." Miss Windermere looked at her watch, and said, "What, are you not tired of it yet? Well, if you all wish it, I will. But, be quick with your pencils and paper, for we shall have but half an hour."

Perhaps to many of our young readers this game is familiar, in which each one of the party composing it writes a question; when all are written, they are shuffled together, and each draws one, which she is to answer; they are again shuffled, and again distributed; this time every one who draws, is expected to write a remark on the question and answer taken; and, at the close, all are read aloud by one of the party. Of this game the young people were very fond, and many pleasant hours, during the winter evenings, had been devoted to it. Miss Windermere's good sense and natural vivacity, enabled her to make such an amusement as this extremely entertaining, and by no means uninstructional. Indeed, she was anxious to promote it, not only from the pleasure she felt in seeing her pupils happy, but because she often found that it roused their mental faculties, interested and engaged their minds, and frequently put a stop to nonsense, without, as a necessary consequence, introducing dulness in its stead.

This evening, directly Miss Windermere consented to play with them, all were on the alert. "Come, Ellen," said Mary Ann, as she was

anxiously searching her box for a pencil, in some trepidation, lest she should not be able to find it in time; "come and play; do not go to sleep." Ellen rose, and rubbed her eyes, for she could not resist the temptation of joining in an amusement in which she excelled, and in which, as her remarks generally caused much mirth, she would be likely to attract more notice, than in pretending to be tired or unwell. Matilda alone sat still; she was on the point of finishing her essay, and was writing the last sentence as fast as she could.

"Why, Matilda," said Sophia, "what a very long time you have been writing." Matilda was indeed vexed to have been so long, and impatiently said, "Well, it is no business of your's; I am sure I am most thoroughly tired of it." "Good temper," replied Sophia, "I have no doubt you have found a tiring subject; you seem glad to get rid of it as soon as you can, if I may judge from your manner of speaking." There was more of truth than kindness in this remark; but as there was no time for a reply, Sophia quickly forgot it, and the effect it produced on Matilda's mind, we shall presently discover.

Now, for a short time, both the gay and the grave forgot all minor affairs, in the endeavour to find something of which they could make a reasonable question. To some this was rather difficult, for mere silly observations were not allowed; lively ones, however, were always encouraged, and of these there was generally no dearth, particularly when, as was the case this evening, the elder girls had time to engage in the amusement. The supper-bell, however, soon interrupted them. "That provoking bell!" exclaimed Mary Ann: "I thought we should have time for the questions to go round once more." Miss Wilmot could not help looking at her with a smile. "Now, how can you smile," said Mary Ann, "when I am quite vexed at having to leave off so soon?" "Because you always seem to dislike being interrupted, however long we play," replied Miss Wilmot. "Well, I know I do," said Mary Ann, "I could play at it all night, and not be tired." "Could you?" said Miss Wilmot, looking archly at her. "Ah, well, you know what I mean; not all night exactly, but a great while longer than we ever play." "Come, my love," said Miss Windermere,

“do not regret it; we can play again another evening; and have you never found that your amusements please you more, when you know you can only enjoy them for a limited time.”

“Why, yes, ma’am,” said Mary Ann, “though I like a holiday very much, I have sometimes thought we enjoyed our play better when we had been fagging away at our lessons all the morning.” “You do not look as if you fagged much,” said Miss Windermere, as she patted Mary Ann’s rosy cheek, and led her to the table, where her companions were sitting.

Matilda had been exceedingly irritated by the remark which we have before mentioned, and when Sophia, who was sitting next her, and had forgotten the whole affair, asked her some trifling question, her reply was so short and constrained, as to give occasion for the inquiry, “If any thing was the matter with her.” “Nothing particular,” said Matilda, coldly, “if *you cannot remember*, it is of no consequence for me to tell you.” The truth now instantly flashed upon Sophia’s mind, and she quickly replied, “If you are thinking about what I said to you before we played at questions, I must say, I think you are excessively ridiculous, for I

really did not mean to offend you; only you answered me so very crossly; and I assure you I had forgotten all about it." "I think," said Matilda, "your remark was extremely rude and unkind, and you may be sure I shall not soon forget it." "Well," said Sophia, "I cannot help it; but it is a very great pity that you are so easily offended; one really can scarcely speak to you at all." "If you think so, you had better not speak to me at all," said Matilda haughtily. Sophia was fidgeted, for she was really above desiring to engage in a dispute which she considered very foolish; so she put a stop to it abruptly, by saying, "Oh, nonsense! I shall speak to you just in the same way that I always do:" and then added, after a short pause, "So come, think no more about it, my dear."

Here, for the present, the matter rested. Matilda's good sense told her, she should only make herself appear ridiculous by attempting to carry on a quarrel with one who was determined to let her have it all to herself; and Sophia, on her part, soon forgot it; though she was heard to say, with a look of some meaning, "she should be careful how she meddled with thorns again, as she found they were apt to be

troublesome, not only when they were touched, but for some time afterwards."

Matilda's disputes did not, however, always end so well as this; for though the more sensible part of her companions, who would have considered it beneath them to be offended with her, generally contrived to avoid entering into her quarrels, there were, as might naturally be expected, among the various dispositions composing a mixed community, many who ridiculed, and not a few who resented her captiousness. Hence her path was seldom smooth long together; but while she often managed to find some cause of complaint against all her school-fellows, she was most frequently at variance with Louisa, whose high spirit would never suffer her to palliate or apologize, and who could ill conceal her indignant contempt at being, as she expressed it, "reproached for nothing at all, by one younger than herself."

Hence instances had occurred, in which, for the most trifling causes, these young ladies had not spoken to one another for several days; not that mutual dislike was the occasion of this, for when no cause of strife arose, they could joke, and prepare their lessons together, as they

did with the rest of their school-fellows, in a tolerably amicable manner ; but when each thought, or pretended to think, her companion in fault, both were equally determined not to be the first to yield.

In a large school, a thing of this sort is not always immediately noticed, particularly where nothing of the kind is suspected, so that none of these disputes had yet reached Miss Windermere's knowledge. It happened, however, that one fine afternoon when she was walking with the young ladies, Matilda was her companion, while Louisa was walking with Mary Ann.

They went up a pretty lane, and were just entering the high-road, when a carriage drew near ; a lady looked out, and as soon as she saw them, told the coachman to stop. Almost immediately the delighted Mary Ann recognized her mamma, who was proceeding to Mrs. Wilmot's, and of course wished her little girl to return there with her. In another minute, therefore, Mary Ann was in the carriage ; they drove off, and the young ladies proceeded with their walk. As Louisa was left without a partner, she was obliged reluctantly to walk with Miss Windermere and Matilda. The company of the

former, indeed, she would have enjoyed, but she was not much disposed to relish that of the latter, as at this very time, owing to some slight difference which had occurred a day or two before, each was pursuing the unwise determination to take no notice of the other.

This they felt unfortunate at such a juncture, for as the conversation was lively, and on general topics, it seemed strange that they could only address themselves to Miss Windermere, and did not exchange a word with each other. Indeed, so unskilfully did they manage matters, that their observant companion soon noticed it, and in unsuspecting openness, playfully rallied them on the constrained manners which were so unnatural to both.

Neither, however, made any reply ; and now, for the first time, Miss Windermere began to imagine that all was not right. She was silent in her turn, not wishing to press a subject in the presence of both parties, which might be more usefully investigated with each alone.

Few circumstances attending her situation did she feel more trying, than the want of harmony, and the petty disputes she was frequently compelled to observe ; few things were more painful

to her, than the bitter sarcasms, the cutting retorts, the unkind remarks, she sometimes heard among her pupils. And as far as she could do so without seeming too much to interfere, she strenuously endeavoured to be a peace-maker. In this respect her example had much influence, for she daily felt and evinced the happiness of cultivating kindness of disposition, and evenness of temper. The young people could not but see that she endeavoured to practise herself, the lessons of love and forbearance which she inculcated upon them; that she found the advantage of so doing, and that it was simply from a desire for their happiness, that she tried so unweariedly to promote peace.

But to return to the present subject; the young ladies soon arrived at a retired spot, and were allowed liberty to wander up and down, and gather the flowers which bloomed amidst the luxuriant verdure covering the high banks on each side of the road. Louisa was glad to take this opportunity of leaving Miss Windermere; and when they were about to return home begged, as she said, for a very particular reason, that she might be allowed to walk with Sophia and Lucy.

Miss Windermere consented, though she

could not help feeling concerned at the cause from which she believed the wish to arise. She thought it would be right to mention the subject to Matilda, but was at a loss how to introduce it without seeming inquisitive. Her perplexity did not, however, continue long, for presently Matilda, whose naturally open disposition led her to dislike concealment from those she loved, said, "I know why Louisa did not like to come and walk with us. Did you not think, ma'am, that there was something odd about us both, just now?"

Miss W. Yes, my dear, I certainly could not help thinking your manners strange, and I hope nothing is wrong between you.

Matilda. Oh no, ma'am, nothing exactly wrong; but the other day Louisa contradicted me: it was about a mere trifle, but I was quite certain, and indeed am now, that I was right; and she would obstinately persevere in saying I was wrong. I believe she knew nothing at all about the matter, but said so just to vex me; however, I am determined to show her that I will not be contradicted, and we have not spoken to each other since.

Miss W. Indeed, my dear; but pray may I

be allowed to ask what you think is the use of doing this ?

Matilda. Why, it will prevent Louisa from trying to provoke me again, and let her see that I do not mind her ; and that I do not mean her to offend me without shewing it, though she is older than I.

Miss W. Well, really, if these are the ends you have in view, I think you are taking exactly the wrong means to attain them. You say, by appearing soon offended, you are letting Louisa see that you do not mind her ; but this is just the way, surely, of making her think that you do mind her, and that you are very easily provoked by what she says ; and such is human nature, that she may probably, when she sees this, be tempted to tease you more.

Matilda. Well, but that will be very wrong of her.

Miss W. Yes, my dear, but I hope she will not do so ; and I think also that it depends principally on yourself to prevent it.

Matilda. But what can I do, then, ma'am ? She certainly did vex me, and if I were to speak to her, and go on just as if nothing was the matter, she would not mind what she said to me.

Miss W. Do you think so? Now, supposing that she had really said something on purpose to provoke you, and you, instead of being offended for days together, had returned a good-humoured answer, and mentioned it no more. Would she not see, then, that you really did not mind what she said, and that you were above being hurt at trifles; and finding it so difficult a task to offend you, would she not be very likely to give up the attempt?

Matilda. Yes, that is true; but this time, as I was in the right, I think it would show very little spirit to yield. Indeed, I do not think it is my place. I would give up in a minute if she would make an apology.

Miss W. And you admire a spirited character, my love?

Matilda. Yes, and I always have; and, therefore, when people offend me, if they do not choose to speak to me, I wish to have nothing to say to them.

Miss W. Well, my dear, it is natural in the young, to admire what is termed a spirited disposition; quick to a sense of injury, and too proud to seek reconciliation. And many sad pages in history will disclose the terrible effects

which have followed, when others besides the young have admired it. You only wish to cherish the seeds of this dangerous temper; but when you read of others in whom its bitter fruits have arrived at maturity, you must remember that it is really the same disposition which reigns in both, only in different degrees.

Matilda. Yes; but one need not carry it to the furthest extent. I must confess I like a person to be rather high and independent.

Miss W. Independent, my love! What persons can be more *dependent* on outward circumstances, than those whom a word, a look, or a trifling contradiction, is sufficient to plunge into a quarrel of indefinite continuance? Such things will be continually occurring among the different dispositions we meet with in life; and those alone truly rise above them, who bear such little vexations with an unruffled temper, and unchanged kindness. And it is really surprising how an open, good-humoured manner, accompanied with an endeavour to give no just cause of offence to others, prevents the frequent recurrence of unkind remarks, by leading those who are disposed to make them to be almost ashamed of doing so.

Matilda. That is true; but it must be very difficult to do as you say.

Miss W. Yes, it is, my dear; and to some much more than to others. Indeed I think it is very seldom, if ever, attained without assistance from above. It is the meek and quiet spirit which is well-pleasing in the sight of God; and it is one of the many blessings which, as condemned and helpless sinners, we need, and which it is our duty and privilege to seek through the Saviour. And happy will it be, my dear Matilda, if in early life you attend to that solemn duty, that delightful privilege, which is by numbers so fatally neglected; that of coming to Jesus, and seeking through him the salvation of your immortal soul. Will you try and think of this, my dear?

Matilda. Yes, I hope I shall, ma'am, and I am quite willing to speak to Louisa; but what would you think the best way to begin?

Miss W. Speak to her as kindly as if nothing were the matter; and if she express any surprise, you can tell her, that though you still cannot help thinking she was mistaken the other day, you think it is not a thing of sufficient importance to be offended about; and you do not wish to do so any more. But remember, my dear,

that permanently to overcome any thing wrong in your disposition, will require constant effort and strength superior to your own. You know the only way to seek it aright.

Matilda. But, Miss Windermere, if I pray, do you think I shall really be helped to be always kind and good-tempered.

Miss W. Yes, if you pray aright, my dear. When you go to God, you must remember that you are a sinner, and need forgiveness; that your heart is evil, and needs to be changed. These are the blessings on which your eternal safety rests; and these are what you must seek first through the Saviour. If you neglect to do this, you will be sure to ask amiss, and then you cannot expect to be answered.

They had now reached the house, and Matilda soon followed Miss Windermere's advice with respect to Louisa, who was quite willing to be on friendly terms again; and who, after hearing all that had passed, could not help saying, "Well, I must confess, I think we have been rather ridiculous." Miss Windermere never found an opportunity of speaking on the subject to Louisa, so pointedly as she had done to Matilda; but she tried continually, both during the hours of

leisure, and those in which she was more particularly engaged in instruction, to correct false views in the minds of her young friends, and to give them clear notions of right and wrong, according to that unerring standard, the word of truth.

We must not forget to mention one circumstance, which will bring to the remembrance of our young readers a conversation recorded in an earlier part of this little work. After Mary Ann had taken leave of her mamma, she returned to the school-room; and Miss Windermere said, "Well, my dear, you have been spending the last hour very pleasantly."

Mary Ann. Yes, indeed, ma'am, I was so delighted to see mamma; but there was one thing I had to tell her that I was very sorry for.

Miss W. What could that be?

Mary Ann. About my poor little geranium. Mamma asked me how it was going on, and I was obliged to tell her that it was gone long ago, and not the least vestige of it remaining. Then mamma said she hoped it would be a lesson to me; so I told her all you said to me about carelessness, and how kind you always are, and how much I love you, and mamma was quite

pleased ; and, do you know, ma'am, she said I ought to improve very much under the care of such a nice young lady.

Miss Windermere could not help smiling, and replied, " Well, Mary Ann, we have both room for improvement."

Mary Ann. Ah ! I have.

Miss W. Well, you cannot suppose that I have not.

Mary Ann thought she could not remember any thing in Miss Windermere that required alteration ; but what reply she was about to make cannot now be ascertained, for just at this minute, Ellen entered the room with her portfolio under her arm, and begged that Miss Windermere would be so kind as to come with her into the music-room.

An act of injustice on the part of Lucy was the cause of this request. She was, as before stated, a girl of a tyrannical and overbearing disposition, which though restrained in the presence of those whom she wished to please, was exercised whenever she thought it could be done with impunity. Being very fond of music, instances of this frequently occurred at the piano, which she would sometimes usurp long

enough to hinder a little girl from practising at the proper time, and perhaps from doing so at all; for among so many it was necessary that each young lady should have a particular hour for music; and if that hour were neglected, it was very difficult for them to find another opportunity.

At the appointed time this afternoon, Ellen entered the music room, where she found Lucy, who said, "You must go somewhere else, Ellen, for I cannot let you come here."

"Indeed," said little Ellen, "all the pianos are engaged at this time, so I really must come here."

"*Must*, indeed," said Lucy, "but I don't intend to leave off practising for you, my little dear, I can tell you."

"Oh! Lucy," cried Ellen, "you know I shall not be able to practise at all, if I do not come now."

In vain did the little girl remonstrate, Lucy only laughed. "Nobody ever succeeded in turning me away from the instrument yet, when I did not choose it; so I do not think you will, Ellen."

She was, however, for once mistaken. Ellen's

temper was not such as to allow her quietly to bear imposition, when the means of redress were at hand; and when she found all her endeavours to persuade Lucy to leave the piano unavailing, she calmly took up her portfolio, and left the room to seek aid from the higher powers.

Lucy went on playing, but her heart now almost misgave her for the consequences. She was rather appalled when Ellen returned with Miss Windermere, but she determined not to appear so, and was beginning to make her defence, when Miss Windermere in a few decisive words settled the business, and appointed her a lesson to learn. Lucy answered only by a look of scorn, and a few words half muttered in an angry tone, which Miss Windermere for the present did not think it necessary to notice, but quietly brought her back to the school-room, and giving her the book out of which she wished her to learn a lesson, went on with her usual engagements. She was anxious not to leave Lucy and Ellen together, fearing lest the latter might be disposed to triumph; and thinking the former would not probably be sparing in angry reproaches.

Lucy continued sullen for some little time, and she was anxious that her manner should show what she felt; but finding she passed unobserved, she at last gave up the provoking attempt, and, taking her book, soon became engaged in another subject.

Miss Windermere was so generally beloved, that she seldom had to encounter disdainful looks, or impertinent replies, and when she did meet with them, though she appeared outwardly undisturbed, they often occasioned a painful conflict in her own mind. Possessing naturally tender feelings and warm affections, such things were deeply felt, especially when coming from those of whom she had hoped well. She knew the difficulty of managing self-willed and arrogant dispositions, and was fearful lest she should pursue a wrong method, or in trying to correct the faults of others, be tempted to indulge improper feelings herself. This very fear, however, was not without its use, as it led her, in these moments of perplexity, to cast an eye upward for direction and assistance, and thus, she was always enabled to preserve that calm and patient firmness by which her authority was far better established, than it could have been by indulging in angry feelings or severe reproaches.

And, perhaps, we may be allowed to remark, that it is not an authoritative tone, a haughty look, or a severe infliction of punishment, which alone will give a young person, in such circumstances, due influence over the minds of her pupils; but it is the dignity of self-possession, the superiority of an unruffled temper, and the firm determination to persevere in doing and requiring what is right. As Miss Windermere's desire was to benefit the offender, and not to show how much she was offended, the methods she pursued were generally successful; if in any instance, however, they failed, she felt it a duty to refer such a case to Mrs. Wilmot, and for the present to leave it entirely with her.

Lucy had now finished learning the required lesson, but she could not say it immediately, as Miss Windermere was engaged; she, therefore, sat still, thinking how haughty she would look, and how careless she would appear, while she was repeating it. She was proceeding to plan what scornful reply she should make, in case her conduct should meet with reproof, when her attention was arrested by the young lady on whom she was meditating this attack. She was hearing Maria read, and as she explained some

parts, in her usual kind and interesting manner, Lucy involuntarily listened. She remembered how pleasant her own studies had often been made by these explanations; she could not help recollecting how much kindness she had always received from Miss Windermere, and a particular instance of it, which just then crossed her mind, touched her to the heart. She relented, and soon after repeated the lesson, with a look and tone of voice which showed, sufficiently for the purpose, that she was sorry for her past conduct.

This was all Miss Windermere required, and, as she returned the book, she said, "Well, Lucy, your conduct has given me much pain this afternoon, for, I must confess, I never expected such behaviour from you. If you are sorry for it, however, I will say no more about it now, and I hope you will never give me occasion to mention it again. If you do, I shall consider you wish to show me that you are determined not to submit to my control, and shall be obliged to mention you to Mrs. Wilmot."

Lucy now felt very sorry, "Oh! ma'am, I hope you will never have occasion to do that; I hope I shall not behave so again."

Miss W. I hope not, my dear; but remember that it is not your conduct towards me that has principally grieved me: that might have been done in a temporary fit of vexation; and, besides, as it was done openly, it could more easily be remedied. But I am sorry indeed, to find that you are *in the habit* of tyrannizing over the little girls, when, as you are not generally observed, you think you will not be corrected. This proceeds from a thoroughly bad principle; you will do right as long as you are noticed, but you do wrong directly you have escaped the observation of those whom you wish to please. Now, very likely, if it had been little Mary's hour for music you had been trying to take away, instead of Ellen's, she would have yielded the point at once; and as she would have been too timid to explain why she had not practised, she would have met with reproof for her neglect, entirely through your injustice. You, in the mean time, after you had played as long as you thought proper, would have returned to the school-room, and would, no doubt, have been quite satisfied with yourself, if we had found no fault with you.

Lucy could not put a negative to this—she

knew such had actually been the case more than once; she coloured deeply, and Miss Windermere went on, "Your conduct, dear Lucy, I am afraid shows, that you think it of very little importance to displease God; but there is a day coming, in which all our secret actions shall be brought to light; and if, at that day, your sins are unforgiven, because unrepented of, what can the good opinion of your fellow-creatures do for you when you stand alone at the bar of God. Seek then, through Jesus, His forgiveness and assistance without delay."

Miss Windermere, after this day, never met with a word, or even a look, from Lucy that called for censure: haughty, self-confident, and domineering, as she naturally was, the affections still formed a vulnerable point in her character; and her temper, which mere blind opposition would have found unconquerable, was melted at once by kindness.

It is not meant to imply, that her conduct was afterwards always free from blame towards every one; but towards that disinterested friend, who she *felt* was constantly anxious only to do her good, she could never again find it in her heart to behave with unkindness or disrespect. She

was grateful for the interest that friend took in her welfare, and to please her became her principal motive, even in acting well towards others.

Miss Windermere perceived the influence she possessed over the mind of her pupil, and endeavoured to use it for her advantage. "I must judge of your affection for me, my dear," she once said, when Lucy had been warmly expressing her feelings on the subject, "by the manner in which you behave to others. I value your expressions of kindness, but one act of good-nature and forbearance to the youngest child in the house would give me more pleasure." This was a motive sufficiently strong to incite Lucy to exertion; and her conduct, in many respects, became so much changed as to be remarked by her companions. Miss Windermere observed it with pleasure, and was one day commending her, when Lucy replied with energy: "Oh, ma'am, if *you* are pleased with me, I am quite satisfied."

"Are you, my love?" replied Miss Windermere, "but I am not. How I wish you felt the same strong desire to please God!"

"But how can I, dear Miss Windermere?"

“Not of yourself, my dear; but you ought to ask, and it will be given: never think lightly of the sin of loving any one better than God; for, in his word, it is called idolatry.”

Which of our dear young readers has not fallen into this sin, so natural to the human heart? Do not their warm affections twine fondly round their earthly friends, and yet remain cold and unmoved towards that blessed God, who gave his Son to die for them. He looks down on them even now with compassion, and says, “Oh! return unto me, for why will ye die?” Oh, that even now, they would lift up their hearts to Him, and say, “Lord, I come unto thee; turn me, and I shall be turned.”

Miss Windermere's piety did not consist merely in now and then making a few religious remarks. She really knew, by sweet experience, what it was to love a heavenly Father, and a gracious Saviour, better than any thing in this world; her spirit had found its rest; and the calm hope in Christ of a glorious immortality enabled her to meet all events with cheerfulness. No wonder then, that in the possession of such happiness, she should, day after day, unweariedly endeavour to allure, invite, and admonish her dear

young friends, to seek that Pearl of great price which she had found, and in which she saw abundant reason to rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The impression most naturally produced by her conduct was, that religion was the most *pleasant*, as well as the most important thing in the world. The sprightliest could not imagine she was less happy than themselves, for though her hilarity was not so wild, her cheerfulness was even more constant than their own.

She possessed, in a peculiar manner, the affections of her pupils. They were once remarking among themselves, how easy it was to obey her; and Charlotte said, "I am sure I do not know how it is, but I should never think of behaving to Miss Windermere, as I used to one teacher at the last school where I was; but she was so arbitrary, and so constantly thinking of herself and her own convenience, that I never could care much whether I pleased her or not. Now when persons are kind, one does not exactly like to say impertinent things to them."

We mention this remark, to show the real secret of a teacher's influence; but let not our young readers think, that we mean to imply, for

a moment, that they are excusable in improper conduct, because they are not satisfied with those under whose control they may be placed; they are not always very charitable in judging of the motives which influence those who are set over them, nor very careful to make due allowance for their peculiar temptations. At the same time, it must be admitted, that those who have the care of the young, must not, in general, hope to meet with much respect, unless they will exert themselves to become worthy of it.

Miss Lindsay was, in general, tolerably well liked among the young ladies, though they all agreed, that there was a striking difference between her and Miss Windermere. They were not mistaken; there was a great difference. Miss Lindsay was by no means an inferior young person, she well understood and regularly performed the duties of her situation; she enforced attention to the rules, and was not usually deficient in the sterling quality, so much valued by school-girls, good-nature. Where then was the striking difference? It was this: Miss Lindsay knew her own value, and had a good opinion of herself; she was ready, on the whole, to treat the young ladies with kindness, and a regard for

her own character in the school, led her to avoid partiality and injustice.

But Miss Windermere, while she aimed at exemplifying the Christian character, was daily conscious of her own defects, and hence true humility appeared in her words and actions ; she felt that she must not live to herself ; and her aim, therefore, was not to seek her own comfort or convenience, but the happiness and real good of those around her. In short, she was anxious to live alone to Him on whom her hopes were built. To all this Miss Lindsay was a stranger ; and very often did she wonder, what motives could influence her companion, in the little, silent, every-day acts of self-denying kindness which she could not but observe. For herself, she always found in her a kind and considerate friend, ready with her advice and assistance, on all occasions of difficulty or perplexity in which it was required. She could not, therefore, help feeling an affection for her, and was always willing to yield to her rank in the school that superiority, which, however, was never assumed.

Miss Windermere, on her part, constantly tried to preserve harmony by upholding Miss Lindsay's

authority; and, in a manner the most unobtrusive, sought, on suitable occasions, to be useful to her.

About this time, little Mary's foot being nearly well, she was allowed to leave the sofa, and was again able to join in the active amusements of her companions. They were all glad to see her once more among them: all, indeed, excepting Ellen, to whom the many congratulations and expressions of pleasure at seeing her again, which were, naturally enough, bestowed on Mary, were rather irksome. A spirit of jealousy daily gained ground in this little girl's mind, producing the most unhappy effects; and, at last, Ellen's enjoyments became of such a nature, that even a kind word, or a smile, bestowed by any one whose supreme affection she wished to possess, on another instead of herself, had power to destroy them.

Miss Wilmot, whose interest in Ellen was undiminished, became at the same time increasingly fond of little Mary; and Ellen, though something within whispered she was wrong, indulged the unfounded idea that this young lady was unjust, and that, as she herself was her peculiar charge, she *ought* to receive more of her exclusive at-

tention. Consequently, she began frequently to behave with coldness and reserve towards her friend, and sometimes endeavoured exactly to cross her purposes; for instance, she would, if possible, contrive to be engaged in some lesson with Miss Windermere, precisely at the time in which Miss Wilmot had arranged to hear her practise music; or, if Miss Wilmot requested her to hold a skein of silk for her, she would be sure to think of something else that must be done directly, or she would be just going to play in the garden, and ask, "If her mamma could not wait a little while." If, however, any other little girl happened good-naturedly to offer her services, Ellen's play, or important business, was immediately suspended, and she would say, "Oh! no, no; I will do it."

All this and much more passed. Miss Windermere had long marked Ellen's disposition, and had continually endeavoured to counteract it; and at last Miss Wilmot began to perceive an alteration in her little girl, though youthful inexperience prevented her from penetrating deeply into its cause. She wished to speak to her on the subject, and sometimes tried to hint that she seemed a different little girl from what

she once was ; but Ellen would then appear so like herself, and parry every attempt at reproof, direct or indirect, in a manner so skilful and amusing, that Miss Wilmot almost imagined she must have been mistaken herself, and thought it better for the present to wait, and watch Ellen's conduct more closely before she mentioned it again.

CHAPTER VIII.

The season was now rapidly advancing, and the bright verdure of spring was everywhere giving way to the more mature and sober green of summer, and the weather appearing delightfully calm and settled, a plan was formed for a day's excursion to the woods, which covered the distant hills. With such a day the young ladies were usually indulged, once or twice in the course of the summer; and directly they were informed of the proposal, they eagerly assented, and formed many schemes for exploring the region at present unknown to them. Many were their hopes and their confidences, and anxiously was the expectation of the day watched, so the wished-for day drew

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Many were their hopes and fears concerning the weather, and anxiously was the appearance of the sky watched, as the wished-for day drew

near; but when, on the last evening, the sun sank behind the hills without a cloud, the least sanguine began to feel confident, and all retired to rest in good spirits.

The next morning, Mary Ann awoke very early, and rubbing her eyes, looked at the window to see if the sun were shining; but no bright beams met her eye, and, full of apprehension, she eagerly arose, and drew aside the window-blind. The sky was clear grey, and a bright glow over the eastern horizon, gave warning of the sun's approach: she staid to watch its rising, and so lovely was the scene, that in the feelings of delight which it inspired, she, for a moment, almost forgot the object which at first caused her to hail its approach with so much joy.

It was not possible, however, for Mary Ann long to forget her anticipated enjoyments; and she soon turned from the window to the contemplation of pleasures to her so much more substantial. She could not go to sleep again, and soon after dressed herself, and ran down into the garden. There she passed some time in attending to her flowers; and then frisking along the shrubbery, she looked up at the clear blue sky,

and around upon the luxuriant verdure, covered with sparkling dew-drops, and thought of the pleasures of the coming day, till her young heart danced with joy, and she said to herself, "I am certain I am *quite* happy now." She ran on till she came to an arbour, where she was much surprised to find Emily, who, putting a little book which she appeared to have been reading, into her bag, rose and bid her good morning. "Come, Mary Ann, let us take a walk together," said she. "Yes, we will, and I shall be quite delighted;" said Mary Ann. "But how long have you been here?"

Emily. More than half an hour, I think.

Mary Ann. And pray, may I ask, what have been your meditations all this time? I dare say you have had some beautiful thoughts this lovely morning: how I wish you had written them down! But, perhaps you have. Now, have you not been writing some poetry?

Emily. My dear child how fast you talk. No, dear, I have been reading.

Mary Ann. Ah! but you have been thinking as well.

Emily. Why, you know when thoughts come into our minds we cannot help thinking.

Mary Ann. True, that's a very clever remark ; but do tell me just one of your thoughts.

Emily. Well, I thought what a beautiful world this is.

Mary Ann. Now, that idea is not so wonderful as I expected ; for I have just been thinking so myself.

Emily. Well, but that was not the only idea that came into my mind.

Mary Ann looked up with a smile. " Ah, Emily ! I know what you thought of next."

Emily. Was it something that you forgot ?

Mary Ann. Perhaps it was.

Emily. Why, my dear Mary Ann ; when I heard the birds singing, and saw the flowers, and every thing looking so lovely, how could I help recollecting who made them all ? And how much they show the kindness of our heavenly Father, who has made trees and flowers so beautiful on purpose to please us. When we are looking at them, and admiring them, and feeling so happy, we surely ought not to forget that God who has so mercifully given us all these blessings.

Mary Ann. No, Emily ; I think we ought not ; but somehow we do : at least I do. I think you do *not* forget.

Emily. We forget, because our hearts naturally dislike to think of God; and they must be changed before we can really love to think of God and of the Saviour. Pray to God to give you a new heart, dear Mary Ann, it will make you happier than any thing else can.

Mary Ann walked on in silence a little way; and then, stopping suddenly, she said, "Emily, we are always told religion will make us so much happier; but I am as happy now as I wish to be."

Emily looked with a smile at her blooming little companion, as she stood looking up, in all the glow of perfect health, and full of youthful spirits; and she made use of this opportunity to impress upon her mind the consideration that, since God had bestowed upon her so many blessings, this was only another reason why she should early seek him; and then she explained to her the superiority of religion, because it not only gives additional pleasure to the most happy periods of life, but is a powerful support in the midst of its afflictive scenes.

Thoughts familiar to those of mature years often strike a young mind as new; an objection to true religion which had been long floating

vaguely in Mary Ann's mind was now answered; she understood, and almost felt, how desirable it was. But just then her little garden appeared in sight; she ran forward, and, gathering the finest of her beautiful white roses, came back to Emily.

"See, Emily, here is that dear little rose-bud, as you called it, that I have been watching so long: if you think it worth having, let me put it in your hair."

Emily. Worth having, dear Mary Ann!—oh, it is beautiful! I only think, when it was blooming in your garden so nicely, it was a pity to gather it for me.

Mary Ann. Where could it bloom better than with you, my dearest Emily? The chief reason why I value my flowers is, that they are so useful to give away to those I love, just as I do you." Several of their schoolfellows now joined them, and hearty congratulations on the fineness of the weather were offered on all sides; indeed, when the pleasing theme would have been exhausted had it not been interrupted by the bell summoning them in-doors, we are unable to determine.

As soon as breakfast was over, every one hastened to prepare for going out; and Mary Ann,

observing Emily put up her pencils and a book, to take with her, asked, "Dear, what shall you do with those?"

"I am going to make a few sketches to-day," replied Emily; "and that little book I have long been wanting to find time to read, so this will be a good opportunity."

"Dear," rejoined her companion, "what a hard day's labour you are planning for yourself! I mean to run about all through the woods, and see every thing that is to be seen."

Emily laughed at Mary Ann, for thinking the amusements which she considered so pleasant would constitute a hard day's labour. "Why, you little butterfly," said she, "I mean to look about me too, I assure you; but I always enjoy a day's pleasure more when I take some little thing to do in the intervals."

"Ah! very likely; but I am not so old as you," remarked Mary Ann, and ran up stairs to get ready.

As the place of their destination was at too great a distance to render it practicable for the young ladies to walk all the way, it was settled that half of the party should set out first on foot, and the others should follow in the carriages. The

pedestrians were to be taken up at a romantic bridge which was generally reckoned half-way between their house and the woods, and their companions were then to walk the rest of the way.

The first thing that occurred to damp Ellen's pleasure was, that she was not to be of the same party with Miss Wilmot, who was among those who walked first, while she was left to follow afterwards. Miss Windermere, Mary Ann, little Mary, and two or three others, were in the carriage with her; they were not wanting in cheerfulness, and Mary Ann, particularly, was in one of her merriest moods—chatting with one, joking with another, every now and then pointing out another and another charming view to Miss Windermere, and laughing from gaiety of heart.

For some time Ellen was silent, and nearly two miles of the road had been traversed before she could at all feel reconciled to her disappointment; but every one seemed so happy, Miss Windermere was so kind, and Mary Ann so full of play, that at last she could not help laughing, and soon forgetting her trouble, she became as gay as the rest.

They saw the walking party looking out for

them as they came within sight of the bridge; they soon stopped; and, directly the steps were put down, Mary Ann sprang out of the carriage, exclaiming, "I am so glad I am to walk this half of the way, it is so much prettier than the other!" Ellen was about to follow when Mrs. Wilmot said, "Stop, my dear; I wish the little girls to ride all the way, or they will be too tired to run about in the forest. Caroline, my love," added she, turning to her niece, "perhaps you will be kind enough to take Miss Windermere's place." Ellen was delighted, "Oh! we shall have mamma with us," exclaimed she; "mind, I shall have one place next to her."

In the mean time Mary Ann had taken Charlotte's arm, and appeared very desirous of walking. Mrs. Wilmot looked at her with a smile:—"So you do not wish to be a little girl this morning, Mary Ann?"

"If you have no objection, ma'am, I think I shall be quite able to walk," replied she.

The matter therefore was settled; and those who were to ride, having seated themselves in the carriages, and adjusted all things to their satisfaction, drove off; while the rest proceeded leisurely on their route. They began to wind

among the hills, and now, turning out of the road, they came upon the wide heath which skirted the forest. Here, wild flowers were scattered in rich profusion, presenting a greater variety of beauty than the young people could meet with nearer home. Their course was now, therefore, often interrupted, as they stopped to gather, and to admire, first one new flower, and then another; some threw them away, or made garlands of them, but others wished to obtain all possible varieties for a different purpose. Miss Lindsay was well acquainted with botany, and she had communicated her interest in the subject to several of the elder girls, among whom were Emily and Charlotte. They were familiar with the flowers which were to be found in their usual walks; and were delighted at the idea of making many new discoveries in the wide field that now opened before them.

Miss Windermere, though naturally fond of flowers, had never before found an opportunity of entering into the study of them as she wished; but, being always desirous of acquiring useful knowledge, she cheerfully engaged with her young friends in this pursuit, playfully remarking, "that, as she was released for one day from

instructing *them*, perhaps they would be kind enough to employ it in teaching her." To this they readily and laughingly consented, "though you must not expect our mode of instruction will be as clever as your own, dear Miss Windermere," remarked Emily.

Mary Ann was not one of the botanical party; she thought flowers were too pretty to be pulled to pieces, and considered her own way of enjoying them the best.

They were now drawing near the entrance of the woods, and soon saw several of their school-fellows running down a green slope to meet them: they hastened forward, and joined them in a ramble among the winding paths, deep dells, and wild thickets, of this romantic and extensive forest. At last, being tired, they sat down on the side of a hill; below, above, around, were trees of varied shapes and hues, from the sturdy oak and noble chesnut, to the taper fir and quivering aspen; on one side only they opened, and a long avenue, reaching to the bottom of the hill, allowed at the end, a bird's-eye view of the road along which they were passing a short time before; one little stream alone came tumbling

from the heights, and murmured along its rocky bed, till it was lost in the valley.

Here, whilst they were resting, Miss Windermere and Emily produced their sketch-books.

Miss Windermere did not profess to understand drawing sufficiently to teach it, but her fondness for natural objects had induced her to cultivate that branch of the art which enabled her to delineate them, and in this she therefore excelled; her drawings from nature were rapid, but full of character; so much so, that even every kind of tree could be known by its particular foliage. Emily had never tried this kind of drawing before, and was glad, as she said, to begin under the direction of so experienced a guide. "Frances," said she "have you your pencil-knife with you; I quite forgot to bring mine, and my pencil wants cutting." "Yes, I have," replied Frances; "but I never lend it; it spoils quite soon enough in only using it myself." So saying, she turned away, to avoid saying more on the subject.

"How disobliging Frances always is," remarked Charlotte, who was standing behind Emily, and watching her proceedings. "If you see how un-

pleasant that fault is, learn to avoid it yourself, my dear Charlotte," said Miss Windermere, as with a smile she put her own knife in Emily's hand.

To return to our subject, Emily, by taking pains, soon produced so pretty a sketch that Charlotte was determined to try her skill. Some time ago she would have shrunk from the endeavour with, "Oh, I am sure I should not be able to do that at all;" meaning in other words, that she should not be able to do it better than Emily; but she was now really beginning to value her pursuits for their own sake, and though not less industrious than formerly, was no longer confining herself to the mere desire of excelling others.

After passing some time in this way, the young party began to think of returning to their companions; and Mary Ann, who understood the intricacies of the forest better than any of them, undertook to conduct them back by a new way which she had just found out while they were resting.

They found the remainder of the group in a beautiful little dell, preparing for their rural repast, which they all now began to feel quite acceptable, as the air and exercise had given

them an excellent appetite. When the meal was concluded, Mrs. Wilmot read to them during the heat of the day some extracts from a book which she had selected for the occasion, after which each was again left to play, ramble, read, or draw, as fancy or inclination directed.

Thus the time passed till the afternoon was drawing to a close, and Mrs. Wilmot reminded them that they must soon think of preparing for their return home.

"Oh!" said Mary Ann, "I wonder whether we shall have time to show Miss Windermere that large old oak; it would be such a pity for her to go away without seeing it!"

"It would, indeed," replied Sophia; and she requested Mrs. Wilmot to allow them to take her thither. Permission was readily granted by their governess. "Only do not be gone long, my dears," said she; "for those black clouds make me rather afraid that we shall have rain this evening."

Distant clouds seldom caused much concern to the sanguine Mary Ann, and she said, as they walked away, "Dear, I do not think it is at all likely to rain." Notwithstanding this speech, however, she could not but confess, when, they came to an opening in the woods, that the clouds looked

awfully dark, and seemed gathering fast over their heads ; the air was sultry, and not a leaf seemed stirring, so that Miss Windermere thought a storm was approaching, but she would not alarm her young friends ; but merely said, as she looked at the sky, " We must make as much haste as possible." Just as they came in sight of the old oak, however, a vivid flash of forked lightning, accompanied instantaneously with a tremendous peal of thunder, warned them to lose no time in seeking a place of shelter. They were now really in danger ; the bright flashes followed each other in quick succession, and they were at least half a mile from their companions.

Mary Ann was in an agony of terror ; and Sophia, scarcely less alarmed, cried, " Oh, let us run ; I know there is a cottage near here."

She led the way ; they were soon at the cottage-door, and knocked eagerly for admittance ; no one however answered. Another very vivid flash of lightning added to their alarm ; and now Mary Ann, almost in despair, rapped with all her might. Just then they heard a little voice from within, crying, " Oh ! mother, do come, here's such a knocking !" and almost directly the door was opened by a decent looking

poor woman. "Dear me, ladies," said she, "pray walk in; I'm sorry as I didn't hear you afore, but I'd got a few things hanging out in the garden there, and thinking it was a going to rain, I was just a taking of 'em in."

"Thank you, my good woman; we thought perhaps you would give us shelter for a little while, for there seems to be a heavy storm coming on," said Miss Windermere, as they gladly entered.

"Oh, dear, ma'am! you're heartily welcome, if you don't mind sitting down in our poor place; I'm glad as I've got a roof for you to come under, for there's a bad storm coming on I thinks; it wasn't what one might have expected neither, from the look of the morning. Sally," said she to one of the children, "set some chairs for the young ladies."

They now once more began to breathe, and to rejoice in the danger they had escaped, but the scene without became truly awful; rain and hail descended in impetuous torrents, the roar of the thunder was almost deafening, and the lightning flashed incessantly.

The poor children of the house began to cry, and clung to their mother; whilst the merry,

light-hearted Mary Ann sat pale, silent, and trembling, almost petrified with fear. Sophia was not often afraid of lightning, but now she kept close to Miss Windermere, and anxiously said, "Do you think we are in any danger?"

"I hope not, my love," said Miss Windermere calmly, "but we must remember we are in the hands of God, and no evil can befall us without his will."

"Ah, ma'am," said the poor woman of the house, "what you say is very true, to be sure; many and many's the time as I've been afeard the house would come down over our heads, of a stormy night; but, as the Scripture says, 'God is a refuge for us,' and he has preserved us from all evil hitherto."

"Yes, my good woman," said Miss Windermere; "and it is well to remember at such times that our sins against God have exposed us to greater dangers than these, and that the Saviour is our only refuge from the storm of his anger."

This poor woman was a sincere Christian, and, when she found that she was understood, she spoke of the support a hope in Jesus gave amidst the trials of life. Mary Ann listened, and she

could not help thinking it was a happy thing really to possess a confidence in God, which could keep any one so calm in the midst of danger.

The storm at last began to abate ; longer and longer intervals elapsed between the flashes of lightning and the succeeding peals of thunder ; till, at last, they entirely ceased ; the heavy clouds rolled away, and the sky was once more clear.

After thanking the good woman for the shelter she had afforded them, they set out to return to their companions, for whose safety they felt rather anxious.

“ Oh !” said Sophia, as soon as they came out of the cottage, “ how delightful to see the sky bright once more ! what a heavy storm it has been !”

“ Were you not very much frightened, Miss Windermere ?” said Mary Ann.

Miss W. I always think a thunder-storm awful, my love ; but I cannot say I was frightened, because I know all things are under the direction of a wise and gracious God.

Mary Ann. Well, I was terrified ; I cannot tell you, ma'am, how miserable I felt all the time.

Miss W. Why were you so much afraid, my dear ?

Mary Ann. Why, you know, ma'am, we often hear of persons being killed by the lightning; and I never can help being afraid in a thunder storm, that the lightning will strike me.

Miss W. But supposing it should, dear Mary Ann, what then?

Mary Ann. Oh! Miss Windermere; why then I should die; and how can I help fearing the thought of that?

Miss W. But it is our heavenly Father, my dear, who sends these fearful storms, and he can keep them from doing us any harm. Do you never think of that when you are afraid?

Mary Ann. Yes, ma'am; but it does not make me feel any safer; because, if God lets the lightning kill some people, it may be his will that I should die in that way too.

Miss W. Have you ever thought why the idea of sudden death is so terrible to you, my love?

Mary Ann. No, Miss Windermere: it seems natural; I cannot help it.

Sophia. Why, it seems so shocking to be taken away without having a minute to think.

Miss W. It is impossible, my dears, for persons who reflect at all, to think of death, and particularly sudden death, without deep so-

lemnity; but those who are firmly trusting in Jesus, think of it also with pleasure. To them it is like going to rest on the bosom of a tender father; it is like going home. It is, therefore, of little importance to them whether they are suddenly called to enter upon everlasting life, or whether they have a long warning beforehand.

Sophia. It must be very pleasant to view death so calmly; but, for my part, I always think there is something very gloomy and fearful in it.

Miss W. Do you not think, my dear, that the reason why you feel so much alarm in any sudden danger, is, that you cannot look to God as your friend? You know that you have sinned against him, that you do not love him; and, if you have never sought his forgiveness through the Saviour, the thought that perhaps in a few minutes you may be standing in his presence, is indeed overwhelming. Can you not recollect instances in which these have been your feelings? And, now that your heavenly Father has spared you once more, and is giving you a little more time to return to him, delay no longer to seek from him those blessings which are necessary in order to be prepared for death—a new heart, and an interest in Jesus.

Who is there that has not at some time or other experienced such feelings as Mary Ann describes ? Perhaps, as in her case, during a thunder-storm ; or in the silence of midnight, when a sudden pain has drawn our breath, and a momentary fear has darted across our minds that it was about to stop for ever. When we thus thought we heard the voice of God calling us away, like Adam we were afraid, and would have hid ourselves. Conscience was heard then, and told us that we deserved God's anger, while, perhaps in a few minutes we should be standing at His bar ; and *how* should we meet his eye ? Oh, it was a fearful uncertainty ! Thus, my dear young readers, you have possibly on some occasion felt ; but you would not wish to feel so when death is really at hand. Remember, then, that you can tell neither the day nor the hour of its approach ; and listen to the voice of God, " Stay not to look behind you ; escape for your life, flee from the wrath to come."

The ground was wet ; Miss Windermere and her young friends hastened forward, and soon arrived at the spot where they parted from their companions. Here they met Miss Lindsay, who had been sent to meet them by Mrs.

Wilmot, as she was, of course, uneasy on their account.

She told them, that, as the sky looked so threatening, all their party had taken refuge before the storm began, in the neighbouring village, where the carriages were waiting for them. They accordingly made the best of their way to the spot, and were all soon on the road home, recounting the various events of the day.

To most of them it had been a very pleasant one, though not equally so to all; for happiness depends so much less upon our outward circumstances than on the disposition with which we meet them, that the good-humoured, the self-denying and the industrious, will often find more enjoyment in a day of business and care, than the selfish and discontented will experience in the best-arranged day of amusement.

CHAPTER IX.

ONE lovely day, soon after the forest excursion the young ladies were all sent into the garden, as usual, during the hour that elapsed between breakfast and their morning studies. Miss Windermere had been up stairs to fetch her bonnet, and was surprised, on re-entering the school-room, to see Miss Wilmot sitting alone at the table, with her head leaning upon her hand.

“Caroline, my love,” said she, “is any thing the matter?”

Miss Wilmot looked up. “I have not felt very well for two or three days, ma’am,” replied she; “I hoped it would go off; but this morning I have a sad head-ache and pain in my side.”

“My dear,” said Miss Windermere, almost in a tone of gentle reproach, “you should have mentioned this before.”

“I would have done so, ma’am, indeed; but I thought my uncomfortable feelings only arose from the heat of the weather.”

Miss Windermere regarded her young friend’s symptoms with some slight feeling of anxiety, and she lost no time in informing Mrs. Wilmot of her indisposition. Mrs. Wilmot, who possessed too much experience not to be easily alive to any appearance of illness, and who was tenderly attached to her niece, immediately sent for their medical attendant, and made her lie on the sofa till he arrived. He soon came, prescribed some trifling remedies, and ordered her to be kept quiet; and, as he gave every encouragement to hope she would soon be better, the business of the day proceeded as usual.

Contrary to expectation, however, Miss Wilmot’s indisposition continued to increase, but there appeared no reason for apprehension till the afternoon of the next day, when she was suddenly taken so much worse, that Mrs. Wilmot was again obliged to call in medical aid.

Her complaint proved to be of a violent inflammatory nature, and though, after causing some hours of suffering, it appeared to be yielding to the severe remedies which had been tried

for its removal, it left the invalid in a state of dangerous exhaustion. The doctor continued at the bed-side of his patient till between eight and nine in the evening, when, as she appeared easier, he took his leave, promising to call again in a couple of hours. Mrs. Wilmot went down with him to the parlour, and anxiously inquired if there were any danger in the case.

“My dear madam,” he replied, “I must not deceive you; the young lady is now suffering under the greatest weakness, and the most trifling circumstance may turn the scale. Her situation does not entirely preclude hope, but it is certainly one of great danger, and should another attack come on, it will in all probability, be fatal.”

Mrs. Wilmot could scarcely reply to this overwhelming statement; and the medical gentleman, after a few kind expressions of sympathy, and a promise to do all in his power for the young lady, again took his leave.

When he was gone, Mrs. Wilmot returned to her niece, whom she found lying in a kind of uneasy doze, but, as she saw that her presence could be dispensed with, she soon retired to her dressing-room, to perform the painful task of acquainting her brother and sister with the

alarming illness of their beloved child. Before writing, however, she sent for Miss Windermere, who was sitting in the school-room, not at all aware of her young friend's situation, for it had been judged best not to alarm the young ladies that evening. They had now, however, retired to rest, and Miss Windermere heard, with surprise and deep concern, all that had passed during the last few hours. She immediately went to the dressing-room, where, having knocked gently for admittance, the door was opened by Mrs. Wilmot, who had evidently been weeping: she took Miss Windermere's hand, and said, "My dear, I sent for you to request you would sit with my dear Caroline for an hour—I am obliged to leave her, as I must write to her parents."

"Certainly, ma'am," replied Miss Windermere, in a tone of sympathy; "I should be glad to do any thing in my power to assist you."

She rose to leave the room, but Mrs. Wilmot said, "Stay, my dear; there is one more circumstance I wanted to mention to you." And after a short pause, in which she seemed struggling for composure, she added, "I believe you know that dear Caroline's recovery is con-

sidered doubtful ; and it is very remarkable, that only a few weeks ago, when conversing with me, she begged me to promise, that, if she ever became dangerously ill, I would not allow her to remain in ignorance of her situation ; this promise I willingly gave, little thinking indeed, how soon I should be required to fulfil it. If she should ask you then, my dear, anything relative to this subject, you must tell her the truth, for I fear I cannot ; I know your affection for her, and feel quite sure you will do this in the best possible way."

Miss Windermere felt deeply affected, but restrained her feelings, and having promised to do as Mrs. Wilmot had requested, left the room.

Once more alone, Mrs. Wilmot sat down, and began to consider how she should break the sad intelligence to her friends. She was grieved as she thought of the distress and alarm, which the tidings of Caroline's illness would cause, in the large and affectionate family of whom she was the eldest, and who were, at this time, anticipating with delight her speedy return to their circle. She knew also, the pleasure with which her fond mamma was now looking forward to the uninterrupted enjoyment of her daughter's society, as her last half-year at school was nearly

come to a close. The whole family were, at this time, residing in Wales. "And what may have happened before this letter reaches them, I cannot tell," thought Mrs. Wilmot, with a sigh. It seemed a stroke as overwhelming and mysterious as it was unexpected, and all the consolations of religion were needed to sustain her mind in an hour so trying.

In the mean time Miss Windermere, with a heavy heart, turned from the dressing-room, and bent her steps towards the chamber, where the vigour and loveliness of youth appeared to be fast sinking in the unequal contest with overpowering disease. Miss Windermere, on entering the room, dismissed the attendant who had been sitting there, and went to Caroline's bedside. She lay in a kind of slumber, her countenance still retaining its sweet expression, though suffering had rapidly faded its bloom, and languor had destroyed its animation. In a few minutes she opened her eyes, and, with an expression of pleasure, stretched out her hand, saying, "My dear kind friend, I am so glad to see you!"

"How do you feel now, my love?" said Miss Windermere.

"I do not feel so much pain," said Caroline; "but," added she with some hesitation, "I do not think I am better;" and then, pausing a moment, she looked up at Miss Windermere, and said earnestly, "I feel as if I were sinking: tell me, dear Miss Windermere, is not my case considered dangerous?"

Her friend remembered the request of Mrs. Wilmot, and now, painful as was the task, she felt it her duty, in the most gentle manner possible, to acquaint the dear girl with her real circumstances.

Caroline heard it calmly, but made no reply, and remained some time with her eyes closed, while Miss Windermere stood beside her, dreading the effect which this intelligence might produce on her mind. These were to her solemn moments—no sound broke the silence of the sick chamber, while before her lay the fair form, which, but a few days ago, had seemed all health and vigour, now suddenly laid low by a resistless hand. It appeared as if the soul were just about to take its flight to an eternal world, and anxiously did Miss Windermere long to know what were the feelings with which that spirit contemplated its mysterious journey.

She waited till the dear object of her solicitude once more opened her eyes, and then sitting down close to the bed-side, she took her hand affectionately, and ventured to say, "Does the idea of danger distress you, my love?"

"Oh! my dear Miss Windermere," replied Caroline with much solemnity, "this is an hour which I have often anticipated, sometimes with fear, and sometimes with hope; but now that it is come, I *can* rest my hope in the blood of Jesus, and I do feel it is a firm rock."

"That is a firm rock, indeed, my dearest Caroline; for 'not one of those that trust in him, shall ever be confounded;' and, unworthy as we are, we must ever feel, that we have no merits of our own on which to trust."

"Oh! no, indeed, ma'am; I hope I have loved the Saviour, and He has enabled me to try and serve him; but all that I have ever done, appears to me now so mixed with sin, that I should tremble at the thought of appearing before a holy God in any thing short of the merits of a dear Redeemer—there I can rest and find peace; and, whether I live or die, I would commit my spirit into his hands, who will in nowise cast out those who come to him."

Then pausing, she added, " Miss Windermere, there is one thing more I wanted to ask you: do papa and mamma know that I am ill?" When she heard that her aunt was then writing to request them to come to her, her eyes, for the first time, filled with tears as she said, " Oh! I know how much dear mamma will feel it, and perhaps all will be over before they arrive; but I ought not to fear—it will be for the best, even then; will it not, dear Miss Windermere?"

Miss Windermere could scarcely restrain the feelings which would have led her to weep with her beloved pupil, but she felt that for her sake, composure was necessary, and, with some difficulty, she replied, " Yes, my dear love, you may safely leave all to your heavenly Father, who has said, ' When thou goest through the waters, I will be with thee.' Besides, we are not without hope of your recovery; and even if it should not be so, remember God can sustain your dear parents under the trial, as he is now sustaining you."

" Oh! yes, I believe He will; and, as to all the rest, I am more than satisfied; it will be infinitely better to rest in the presence of Jesus, where there is fulness of joy, than to remain

in this world of sin and danger. But, if I should still be restored, I hope I shall be enabled to serve the Saviour better than I have ever done before : I have so often feared lest I should be an unfaithful servant."

Miss Windermere had frequently noticed with silent admiration the simple disinterestedness, and constant desire of being useful to others, which were so peculiarly characteristic of her young friend when in health. This last observation recalled to her mind a remark of which she had frequently observed the truth, that those who are most devoted to the service of Christ, generally feel most their own deficiencies; and she replied, " Is it not a sweet thought to you, my dear, that our kind Saviour will not disdain our imperfect attempts to serve Him; but will, if we ask in his name, graciously renew our strength to walk in his ways?"

" Yes, it is," replied Caroline, " Jesus is indeed a tender Saviour;" and, with something of her usual animation she added, " Oh! Miss Windermere, I cannot tell you what an unspeakable mercy I feel it, that I have not to seek Jesus for the first time now, when I feel just on the borders of another world. Do tell

my dear schoolfellows to prepare for death while in health, they cannot tell how soon they may be just in my situation."

"I will indeed, my love," said Miss Windermere, "but it will be too much for you to talk any longer now, you must try and get some sleep." So saying, she smoothed the pillow, and affectionately kissed her young friend, who said, "I think I *shall* sleep now; it has been such a relief to me to talk to you, and I was afraid of speaking to my aunt, lest I should distress her."

She soon became tranquil, and Miss Windermere sat beside her, indulging mingled feelings of sorrow and delight. As she looked at Caroline, and thought how soon her cheerful voice might be hushed for ever, and her sprightly countenance be fixed in death,—when she considered that a blossom of so much promise was about to be swept away, and thought of the grief which would be felt by a numerous circle, at the sudden departure of their young and interesting relative, she wept for some time in silent sadness. But then the happy spirit—she knew that was safe in the hands of the Redeemer; and as she thought of the glory on which it was, perhaps, about to enter, her mind

was cheered, and she said to herself, "Well, if our worst fears should be realized, it will be but a few years, and then, I trust, we shall meet again in a world where these bitter separations will be known no more." Thus two hours passed away, at the end of which Mrs. Wilmot returned, and insisted on Miss Windermere's retiring to rest. "I shall stay with Caroline all night, my dear; but it would not be right to deprive you of your rest, because of your duties in the school."

With this advice Miss Windermere complied more readily, as she was anxious to reserve her strength in case her services might be needful on any succeeding occasions; she, therefore, left the chamber in which she had passed a period never to be forgotten, and was going towards her own apartment; when, passing one of the bed-rooms, she heard a sound of some one sobbing: she listened for a minute, and then entered the room, where, to her great surprise, she saw Ellen, who was sitting up in bed, crying. "Why, my dear little girl," said she, "what can be the matter?"

The fact was simply this:—None of the young ladies had received the slightest intimation of Miss Wilmot's danger, and Ellen had retired to

rest in her usual spirits; after she was in bed, however, she accidentally overheard two of the servants, who were talking in an adjoining room, say, "that Miss Wilmot was very bad indeed, and the doctor did not expect her to live till the morning." She heard no more, but this was sufficient; for the natural tendency of her mind led her to seize impressions hastily and feel them strongly, while her emotions, whether of joy or sorrow, were unbounded and excessive. On the present occasion, she in a moment thought she should never see her almost idolized friend again; the remembrance of her own silly jealousies and little unkindnesses darted into her mind, and she became so completely miserable, that, unable to sleep, she continued crying bitterly for more than two hours; and such was her peculiar disposition, that she would probably have continued to do so till she became really ill, had no interruption occurred.

Upon learning the cause of Ellen's distress, Miss Windermere endeavoured to soothe her, assuring her, that she had just left Miss Wilmot asleep, and that hopes of her recovery were entertained; and, as the little girl now became tranquil, and promised to go to sleep, Miss Windermere left her.

That night passed quietly to all parties ; and, on the following morning, all were glad to hear that the doctor considered his young patient's symptoms favourable, though anxiety on her account was far from being suspended. Only two more days and nights, however, of alternate hope and fear elapsed, before she was pronounced out of danger ; and her papa and mamma, who arrived in the course of the week, were much relieved, after a distressing and anxious journey, at finding their dear girl recovering. She soon, indeed, began to improve rapidly, and looked forward with much pleasure to returning home with her mamma, who intended continuing at Mrs. Wilmot's till her daughter should be considered well enough to undertake the journey into Wales.

It will be imagined, that this event caused a considerable sensation among the young people ; many tears were shed, and many serious thoughts excited, when their sprightly and affectionate companion, whose health, till then, had appeared as firm as their own, was suddenly called away from their circle, and brought down to the borders of the grave. No one thought she was too religious then ; and as Miss Windermere told them of the message, which, in her appa-

rently dying moments, she had sent them, and endeavoured to convince them of its important signification, there were many who wished they too could be prepared for death.

Yes, my dear young readers, however dull and tedious you may think religion now, you know that it is all-important on a dying-bed. You, perhaps, imagine you can *live* happily enough without the presence of the Saviour, but you could not bear the thought of passing out of the world comfortless and alone, without his gracious arm to sustain your fainting head, without his gentle hand to open for you the door of heaven, without his cheering voice, saying unto you, "Fear not." But death may come suddenly, and what hurry, what confusion, what distress will its approach cause you, if your soul be not already in the hands of the Good Shepherd: yet there it will not be, if you neglect now to come to him that you may have life.

CHAPTER X.

THE vacation was now drawing near, and the day of its commencement was anticipated by the young people with feelings of delight and eagerness, into which none perhaps can fully enter who have never been placed in a similar situation. The last three days were full of bustle ; packing books, and finishing drawings, with sundry et-ceteras, so completely filled every body's time, that none but the little girls thought of play. No one, however, seemed to regret her increased exertion, as all considered it to be the necessary prelude to the holidays, in looking forward to which, they were easily reconciled to the performance of things which at other times they would have considered troublesome and disagreeable.

Mary Ann, as usual, was now the gayest of the gay ; and, much as she disliked confine-

ment, she submitted to the increased restraint with cheerfulness, because she was "going home." She had one day just finished some work, which had been long in hand, and which she had the week before assured Miss Lindsay it would be impossible for her to complete; as soon as she had heard pronounced the delightful words, "It will do," she sprang from her seat, and amused herself with rolling it into a ball, and trying to make it touch the ceiling.

"Mary Ann," said Sophia, "you had better run up stairs, and put away that work, for you have plenty more to do, I think."

"One throw more," said Mary Ann; and this throw lodged it on a high shelf which was over one of the closets.

"Dear, Mary Ann, what will you do now?"

Mary Ann did not know; but, after thinking a minute, she fetched her parasol, by the help of which, while standing on a high chair, she soon recovered her work, only as she came down, getting the key of the closet-door entangled in her frock, she tore a rent in it of no inconsiderable size.

"Dear me," said she, "how vexatious!—now I shall have another long job, I suppose, to mend

this. Ah ! well ; tiresome things will happen ; and I don't so much mind, for I shall soon be at home."

" I think, though, Mary Ann, you must allow that this tiresome thing would not have happened but for your own carelessness," remarked Miss Windermere.

" Yes, ma'am," replied Mary Ann, " but I am so delighted that we are going home the day after to-morrow that I can hardly help doing a few odd things ; and I always expect some accidents in the last two or three days."

" Well, my dear, I have no doubt you are pleased, as we all are, at the idea of seeing your friends again ; but, are tearing your frock, and doing odd things, the ways in which you think it necessary to show your delight ?"

" Oh no ! Miss Windermere," said Mary Ann, laughing ; " but I did not do it on purpose : I only mention my joy as a sort of excuse."

" Well, Mary Ann," said Miss Windermere, smiling, " you must moderate your feelings ; in this changing world you must learn not to anticipate future pleasures too confidently."

Mary Ann. Dear ! Miss Windermere ; then ought I to make myself unhappy by thinking

that something will happen to prevent me from going home.

Miss W. Certainly not, my love ; but it is well to remember that our enjoyments here are uncertain, because, then, if any disappointment should arise, we are more prepared to encounter it.

Mary Ann. But you do hope we may not have any disappointment, do you not ma'am ? I cannot bear the very idea of it.

Miss W. Yes, I do indeed, my dear ; and I am glad we have no reason to expect any. But, come, you must make haste and mend your frock.

Mary Ann ran up stairs with her work, and in a few minutes returned and took her seat at the table by Miss Windermere. " Well," said she, " I am not so very sorry that I have torn my frock either, for the days now do seem so long and tedious, and this makes a kind of adventure to enliven them."

" Delightfully enlivening work, indeed !" observed Sophia, who was sitting near.

Miss Windermere smiled, but made no remark, thinking her thoughtless little pupil would soon feel this adventure rather an uninteresting affair ;

and so it proved, for when, after an hour's work, the task was still incomplete, Mary Ann began to sigh, and was thankful to accept Miss Windermere's offer to finish it for her, upon condition that she would continue to be very industrious about her other work.

That day passed away—and the next—and now the last evening previous to the joyful day of returning home was arrived; the necessary arrangements were chiefly completed; and Emily begged Miss Windermere to take just one walk round the garden with her.

“Well,” replied she, “I am rather busy; but you offer so great a temptation that I think I must spare a quarter of an hour.”

It was a delightful evening, the sky was beautifully blue, and only a few light clouds, tinged with the rays of the setting sun, were moving slowly over its clear expanse. The lawn was enlivened by a party of little girls at play; but every other part of the grounds wore an air of stillness which the sound of their happy voices scarcely interrupted.

As Emily looked round upon the scenes she was so soon to leave, and among which she had passed so many happy hours, she said, “Well, I

enjoy the thought of going home, very much ; but, as long as I have been at school, even when quite a little girl, I have always felt rather melancholy when it came to the last evening before going home ; it was not exactly melancholy, but a strange inexpressible kind of feeling. I can remember walking round the garden on just such an evening as this, looking at the different places where I had played with my companions, and then thinking, perhaps I might never see them again, and I felt sorry that those pleasant hours had passed away for ever."

Miss W. I have often had something of the same feeling, my dear ; and where it is not allowed to mar our enjoyment of present mercies, or interrupt our thankfulness for them, it cannot, I think, be wrong ; but we must not indulge the habit of constantly and fondly clinging to the remembrance of by-gone pleasures, whilst undervaluing the blessings that still surround us. We may remember past scenes with pleasure, but we should view the present with cheerfulness, and we may look forward to the future without great anxiety, if we recollect, with the Psalmist, that our times are in the hand of a heavenly Father.

Emily. "Yes, we may; and I am sure I have very many mercies to be thankful for:" then, pausing, she added, "Miss Windermere, do you think you will come back next half-year?"

Miss W. I do not, at present, know of any reason to prevent it, my dear.

Emily. I hope you will; I do feel so sorry to part with you, for I am sure I have reason to love you dearly. I should feel quite unhappy to think of never seeing you again.

Miss Windermere was well aware of the strength and ardour of all Emily's attachments; and while she loved her interesting, warm-hearted disposition, she remembered that it was not without its dangers. She smiled affectionately as her young friend, with some expression of anxiety in her countenance, looked up expecting her reply; and said, "Look on the bright side, my love; never distress yourself with what *may* happen, but be satisfied with enduring well the troubles which actually do occur. Amidst all the uncertainties to which earthly friendships are exposed, it is still more than probable that we shall soon meet again; but, whatever unforeseen circumstances may separate us now, we, my love,

are privileged with a hope of re-union in the mansions which Jesus is preparing for those who believe in him."

Emily. It is delightful to think of meeting there. I sometimes think, if we may but once attain that rest, earthly troubles are of little importance.

Miss W. Yes, *comparatively*, of little importance, my love; but I hope you do not reckon this short separation a trouble, when you are returning, in so much peace and happiness, to your friends at home.

Emily. No, I will not; I know my dear mamma would say it was wrong. Do you know, ma'am, I do so long to introduce you to her, for I am sure you would like one another. But, at any rate, you will not forget me?

Miss W. No, my dearest Emily, that I never can do; you, and dear Caroline Wilmot, have added to my happiness since I have been here more than I can tell you.

Emily pressed her friend's hand with delight. "Ah!" remarked she, "we shall lose Caroline next half-year; but I hope she will come and see her aunt sometimes."

Thus they conversed, till, as Miss Windermere

turned up the walk that led to the house, Emily exclaimed, "We surely have not been out more than ten minutes!" "Nearly twenty," replied Miss Windermere, pointing to the clock of an old church, the tower of which, gilded by the last rays of the sun, appeared above the trees.

This was undeniable evidence, and they entered the hall, where a servant met them, who came with a message from Miss Wilmot, requesting the favour of Emily's company for half an hour. She gladly obeyed the summons; and, as it is probable that the young friends wished this to be a private interview, we will not intrude upon them, but accompany Miss Windermere to the school-room. Here the young people were sitting in cheerful groups, conversing with untired interest on the joys that awaited them when to-morrow morning's sun should rouse them from their slumbers. Clara was packing up her books. "Come, Maria," said she to her sister, "bring me the grammar, child. Cannot you find it?—you are a tiresome little thing then. Well, I suppose I must come and look. Why, here it is; if you had but opened your eyes. Well," continued she, "I am glad I have done with this stupid stuff, however; one thing I do hope, that

in two years more I shall have done with it altogether." "Well, Clara," said Miss Windermere; "one thing more you must allow me to hope, that in two years you will think differently on many subjects; an alteration would be for the better."

Clara made no reply, but an expression of ridicule was on her countenance; and, when Miss Windermere turned to speak to little Mary, she whispered to a companion, "All very clever; but I shall never like lessons, I know."

Of this young lady's character we have yet said little; in fact, she possessed little decided character of any kind, and was easily influenced by her school-fellows. Study she disliked, while trifling was the habit of her mind, and she was fond of joking on every subject. It was not, however, the buoyant sprightliness of Mary Ann, or the childish wit of little Ellen, but the occupation of a vacant mind. As she could seldom be led to think, and ridiculed every attempt at reasoning with her, or *moralizing*, as she termed it, the difficulties attending her improvement may be imagined. While she was so careless about those studies which were intended only for her benefit during time, it cannot be supposed

that she thought much of preparation for eternity. Disappointment and regret she often caused to her anxious instructress; but we must still hope better things, trusting that she may, in future years, under skilful management, be roused to exertion, and become a pious and useful character.

“ Well this has been a happy half-year, Mary Ann, has it not?” said Charlotte, as they were retiring to rest.

Mary Ann. Yes, it has, somehow or other. I think Miss Windermere has made it pleasanter than usual; do you remember, Charlotte, when we were all talking about her before she came, and wondering what she would be like?

Charlotte. Yes, very well. I suppose you are satisfied now, Mary Ann; you like her, do you not?

Mary Ann. Like her!—how can you ask such a question? I love her dearly.

Yes, let but the trial be made, and it will be found that a pious, active, intelligent teacher may do much, not only for the improvement, but the happiness of her pupils; and, should any find it difficult, as assuredly they will, let them seek the wisdom that cometh from above, and they

will be taught; let them ask for strength at that throne of grace before which Jesus ever lives to intercede, and they will be assisted.

At last the happy morning dawned; the hours soon passed, breakfast was concluded, and the children eagerly counted the minutes, and watched at the windows till the vehicles which were to convey them to their respective homes, should arrive. One after another they departed, and at last little Ellen was fetched; before she went away, however, she ran up stairs to take leave of Miss Wilmot, who, not having yet lost all the weakness attendant on indisposition, was only just up; she smiled as Ellen came into the room. "Oh! mamma," said the little girl, "I am just going, and Mrs. Wilmot told me I might bid you good bye." Tears mingled with her smiles, as she kissed her friend, and said in unaffected sorrow, "Oh! when *shall* I see you again?" Miss Wilmot was almost as sorry as Ellen to part; she kissed her for a minute without speaking, and then said, "Come, do not cry, my love; I hope you will come and see me in Wales, if your mamma can spare you so far." Just as she said this, her mamma entered the room, "Well, my dear Caroline, how are you

this morning?" "I am much better, thank you, mamma; I was just coming to you, but I staid to bid my little Ellen good-bye."

"Caroline has often talked to me about you, my dear," said Mrs. G. Wilmot to her daughter's young favourite, "and I shall not forget to write to your mamma to request that we may have your company at Llangollen, at some future time."

As Ellen was so young, the prospect of so long a journey was rather distant; nevertheless, the very thought of it made her dry up her tears, and with eyes once more sparkling she said, "Thank you, ma'am, I shall like it very much indeed, if mamma will let me come;" then, with one more farewell she left the room, and five minutes after was on her way home.

"That is an interesting little creature," said Mrs. G. Wilmot to her daughter, as Ellen quitted them. "Yes, mamma," answered Caroline with a sigh; "I really cannot help feeling sad at parting: how many last farewells I shall have to say this morning!"

Her affectionate mother well understood these feelings, and said, "My dear Caroline; they shall not be last farewells to those whom you value most, if we can persuade them to come and

see you." It was, however, still, a painful day to Caroline Wilmot. Six years had passed since she first became a pupil of her aunt's, and endeared recollections were associated with every thing around: it was here that permanent religious impressions had first taken deep root in her heart; here that her intellectual faculties had been aroused and cultivated; it was this spot which had been the scene of many youthful friendships, and though, owing to her state of health, she was not about immediately to leave it, still the departure of her companions, for all of whom she felt some regard, and many of whom she fondly loved, made her feel sad. It was true she hoped, at some future period, to re-visit this endeared spot, but never again in the same capacity as before; she was no longer to join with her companions in the pleasant studies and various interesting pursuits, which, more particularly for the last two years, she had so much enjoyed. All this was over, and, when she returned, it would be no longer as a school-fellow and a pupil, but as a visiter.

She was never accustomed to conceal her feelings from her parents, and now it was a relief to her to communicate them freely. "Well, Caro-

line, my love," replied her mamma, "your regret is very natural; and, after all the care and attention you have received from your excellent aunt, I should wish you to cherish grateful and affectionate remembrances of the happiness you have enjoyed here. But we cannot expect always to remain in one situation, and to engage only in one sphere of duties. Your school life has been happy, but now that you are about to enter upon home engagements, you will not find them, I trust, less pleasant. Wherever you go, my dear girl, you will have the same Saviour to follow and to glorify, and these duties you will never have occasion to give up. Look forward, then, and be cheerful. Remember, too, how much your papa, and brothers, and sisters, long to have you with them again."

"Oh! yes, dear mamma," said Caroline; "and I long to see them. I hope you did not think me unkind, or imagine I could undervalue my beloved home for a moment."

"I did not think so for a moment, my dear child," said her mamma, with an affectionate smile.

"Oh! mamma; I love to tell you my little troubles, for you always comfort me," said Caroline.

This excellent mother was indeed the confidential friend, the beloved companion, the guide, and the solace, of her children ; and Caroline, to use her own expression, “clung to her as the ivy twines round the oak.”

But we must hasten to a conclusion ; not forgetting, however, to mention that, as Mary Ann took leave of Miss Windermere, she said, “So you see, ma’am, nothing unfortunate has happened to prevent me from going home, after all.”

“I am glad of it, my dear ; but you must be thankful, and not exult too much, because disappointments *do* come sometimes. Now, good bye, my dear, and I wish you pleasant holidays.”

“Good bye, ma’am,” said Mary Ann, “I hope I shall see you again next half-year.” She went quickly out of the room, and, in another minute, was in the carriage which waited for her at the hall-door.

Mary Ann was nearly the last ; before three o’clock they were all gone ; and Miss Windermere, after watching the last chaise roll away from the door, returned to the school-room which the day before had resounded with cheerful voices ; it was now silent, and almost forsaken, except that Miss Lindsay sat there with her work.

“ Well, poor children, they are all gone,” said Miss Windermere : “ how still this room seems without them !”

“ Poor children, indeed !” said Miss Lindsay, with a smile of surprise, “ why they are all happy enough.”

“ True ; well, I hope we shall see them again next half-year,” said Miss Windermere ; for, in fact, she was half sorry to bid them all farewell, and thought the house began to look dull now that its merry inmates were departed ; but one thought of her dear friends at home just then crossed her mind, chasing away reflections of a more sombre cast, and she ran lightly up stairs to make the necessary preparations for a long journey on the morrow.

There, as she was busily engaged in her own quiet room, her heart often travelled to the dear home she was so soon to revisit, though recollections of the past still mingled with her pleasant anticipations of the future. She thought of the young people, of whom she had just taken leave : there were a few whose opening characters she had watched with delight ; there were many who she hoped, on the whole, were improving, and trying to correct their faults ; and there were

also others, of whom these hopes could not be entertained, some whose minds, after all her efforts, appeared as vain and trifling, almost as really uncultivated, as when she first undertook the care of them. There were, out of this numerous circle, one or two, and only one or two, who she believed were really remembering their Creator in the days of their youth, and beginning life as it ought to be begun, with preparation for eternity. And is not this generally the case? How few are there who think it necessary to enter the pleasant paths of religion in the early spring of life! how many who delay it for a little longer, and a little longer, till death puts a final stop to all their good intentions!

And, now, my gay and youthful readers, in bidding you farewell, let me affectionately request you to consider whether *you* have really come to the Saviour, whether you desire to serve and follow him on earth, and dwell with him for ever in heaven. Remember, that, unless you do thus come to him, your immortal souls must perish; but the way to Jesus is open. Seek him by prayer: pray to be made willing to part with that sinful heart which now leads you to forget

God ; ask to be enabled to trust simply in Jesus, and to love him better than any thing in the world beside. This, only, is real religion, and it is freely offered by God for your acceptance ; if you reject it there is no other hope for you, but, if you humbly and sincerely seek it in the name of the Redeemer, you will certainly obtain it ; yes, you will find more than you can now imagine, *real* happiness on earth, and glory through eternity. Angels will rejoice over you, the blessed God will hear you, and Jesus will be your friend, your guide, and your protector, during life ; and at death he will “ gather you with his arm, and carry you in his bosom,” and there let you repose for ever.

THE END.

