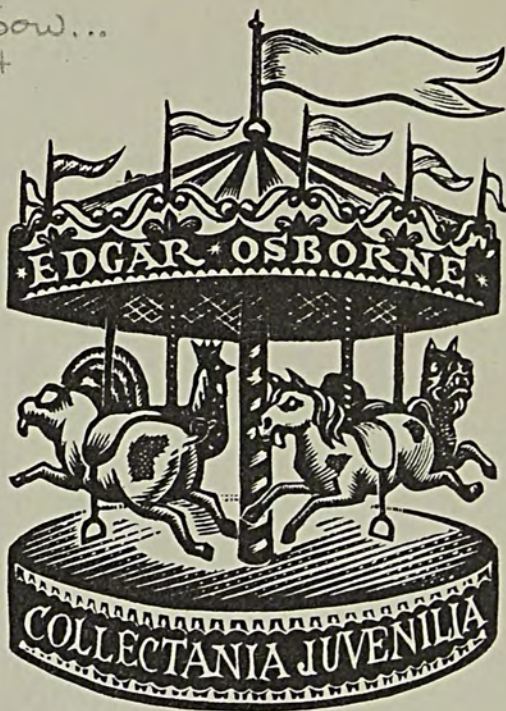
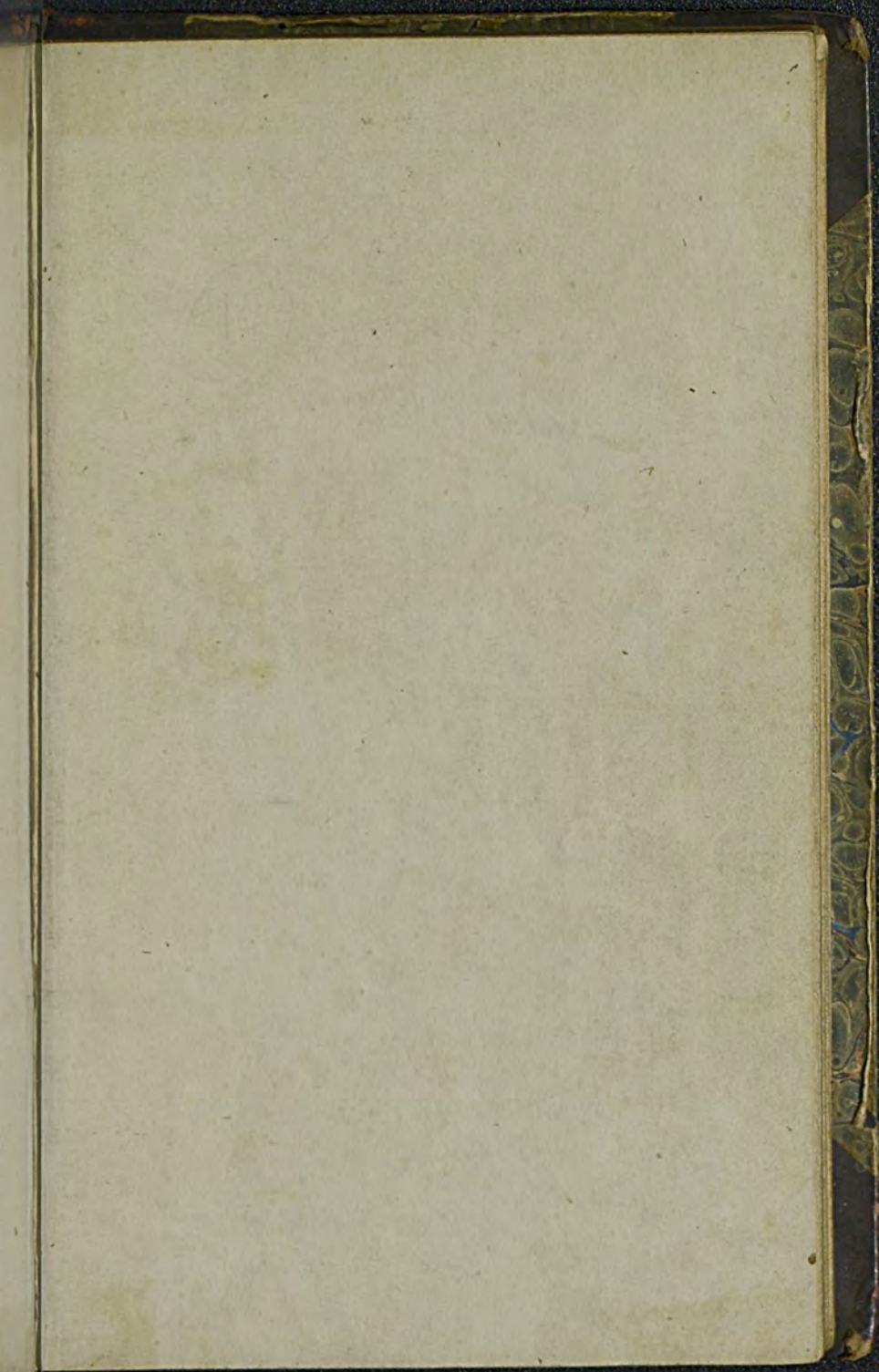


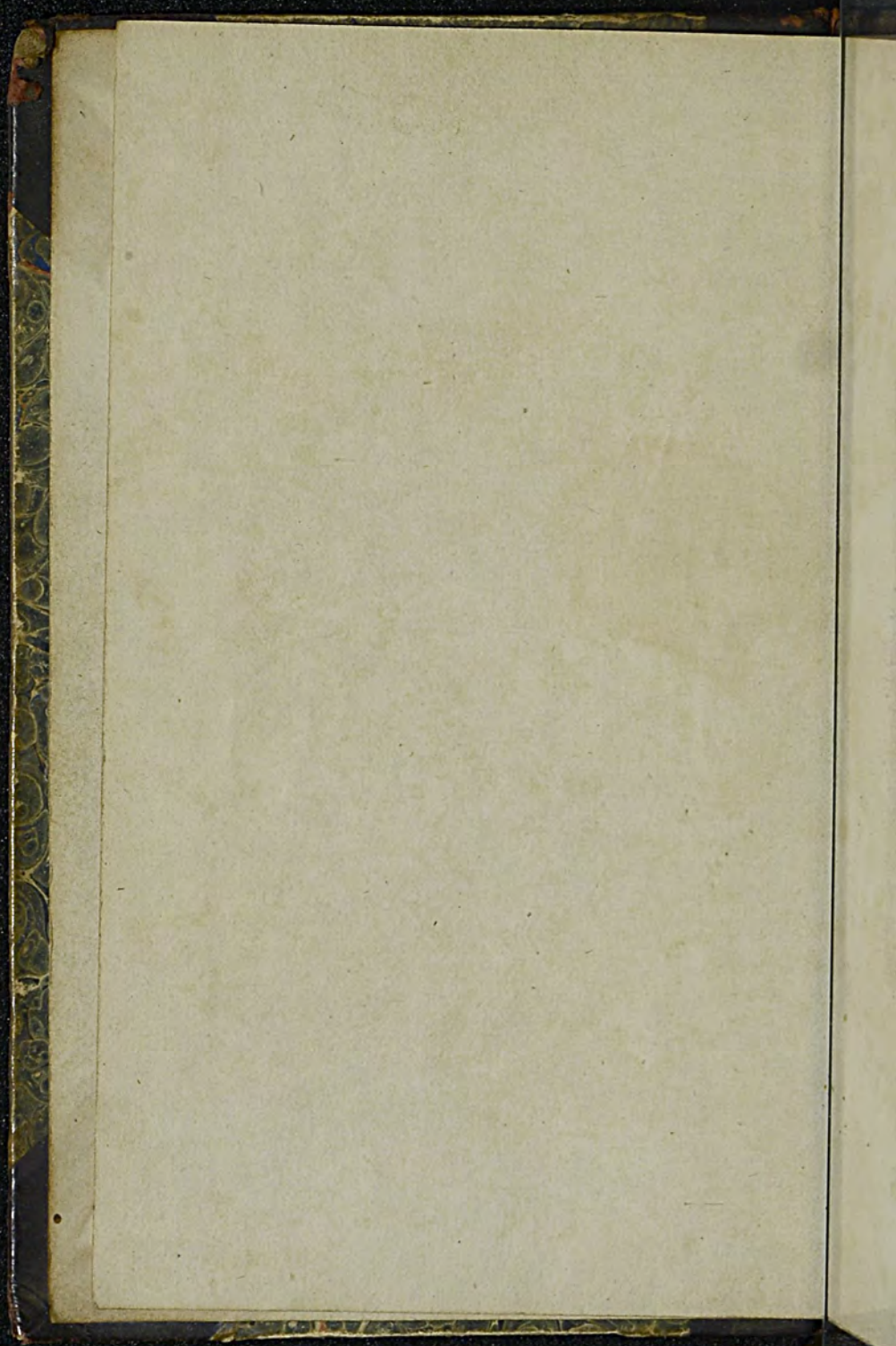
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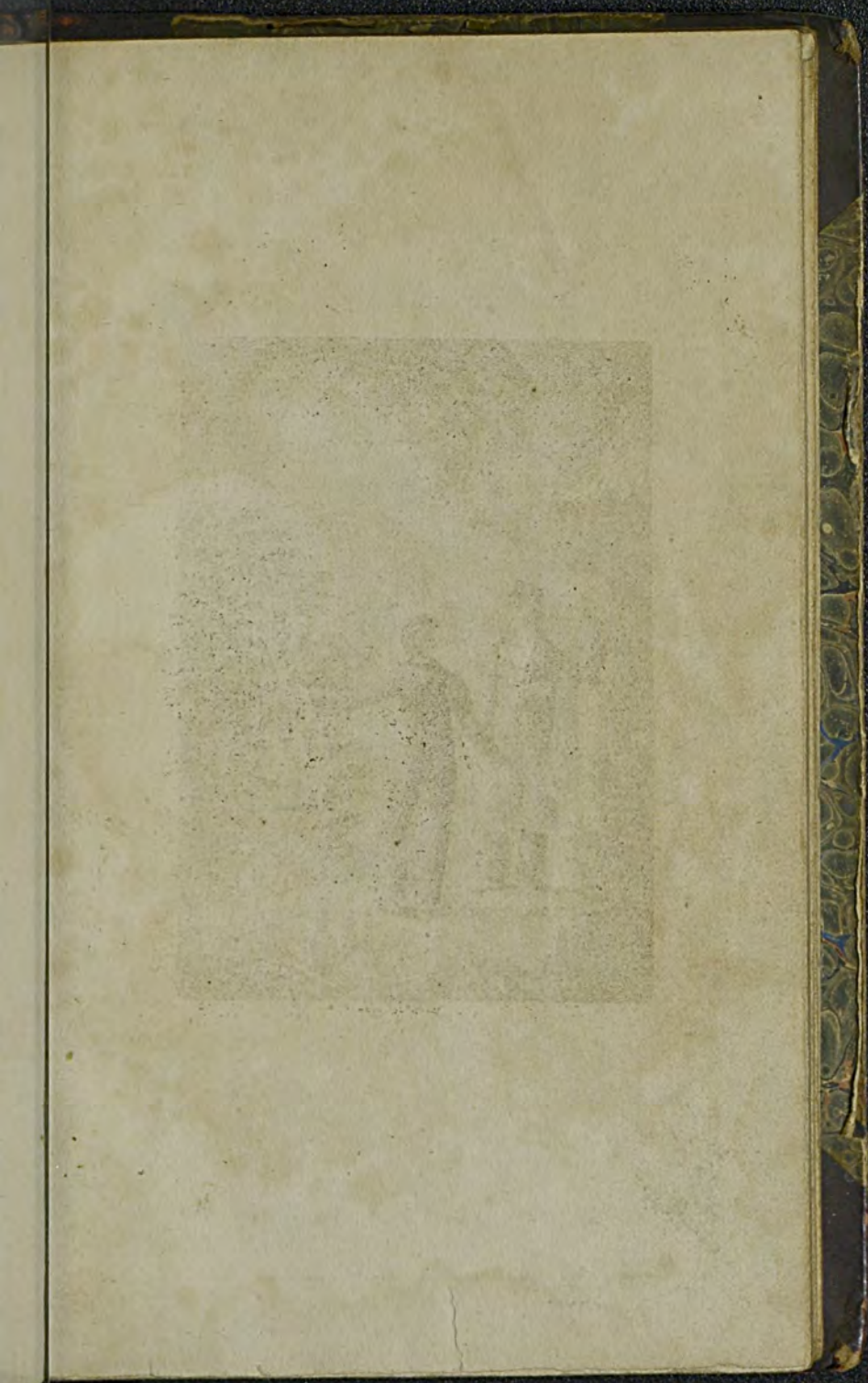


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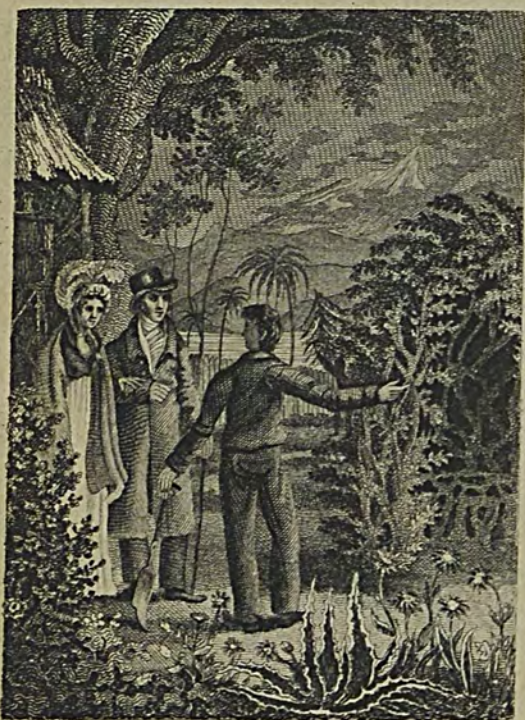
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A SON'S AFFECTION.



Engraved Steel by J. Swan Glasgow.

And here I wish to bring the good Lady when she comes,
Where she may sit in the evening sunshine, & tell us tales of old Scotland
Or knit her stockings thrifly, or read her pious book.

Page 59.

PUBLISHED BY CHALMERS & COLLINS GLASGOW, 1823.

PRINTED
WALTON
R. M.
P. W.

THE
WIDOW OF ROSENEATH;

A

LESSON OF PIETY:

AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED TO THE YOUNG.

SECOND EDITION.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED FOR CHALMERS & COLLINS;
WAUGH AND INNES, AND WM. OLIPHANT, EDINBURGH;
R. M. TIMS, DUBLIN; AND G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,
F. WESTLEY, AND J. NISBET, LONDON.

1824.

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GLASGOW:
PRINTED FOR CLARKE & COLLIER,

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Glasgow.

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PRELIMINARY ADDRESS.

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
Still murm'ring with the solemn truths I teach:—
I know the warning song is sung in vain;
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain;
But yet THE TRUTH, where'er my lot be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.
Content, if thus sequestered I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise;
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

COWPER.

“The more I think of it, the more I am convinced, that such a mode of conveying instruction, I mean through the medium of an engaging or affecting story, is by far the best that can be adopted, in order to gain the attention of the young and the ignorant.”

THERE are two classes of readers, into whose hands this little Tract may fall, with whom we should like to hold a little preliminary communing.

The first to which we allude, is the class of mere sentimental readers; those, who, seeking in these pages, perhaps, some touches of pity, will be all at once revolted

and sickened by the undisguised infusion of so much religious sentiment into the current of the story. Children of taste and gentleness! give me a candid hearing. I love the tale of pity and tenderness, as do you, and never, I hope, shall I banish from my bosom, any one of those melting sympathies which become a man. But, neither can I consent to abjure or obliterate any of those loftier sympathies of our spirits, which our Creator has implanted within us, and which belong both to you and to me, in our capacity of immortal beings. And why, in the name of gratitude and faith, must it be, that our sympathies and our sentiments should be all confined to those objects which lie within the narrow circle of this earth? Are there not things of a far nobler nature with which we have to do? Is there not a glorious life lost to us, which may well, when we think of it, draw forth some heart-felt tears? Is there not a life of high blessedness, we yet may gain, which may well awaken within us some touching and trembling hopes? Is it not very natural, in this world of banishment and evil, when we think

of that all-gracious Father, from whom we have been so essentially and unhappily estranged; when we think of those glorious and blessed habitations, where those are now rejoicing, who have never left their first estate; is it not natural, that we should breathe out a longing sigh; is it not natural to wish for the wings of the ascending dove, that thither we might flee away, and there might be at rest? Must we tune our voices sweetly to the songs of a *foreign* land; and must we be forbid to weep, when we think upon our Sion? Ah me! we thus do violence to our finest sensibilities: we turn away altogether from the deepest interests of our being, when we shut out the hopes and fears that link us to another world. The deep impassioned interests of earth, which so occupy and absorb almost our whole present being, what are they, in the eye of a just contemplation, but the fitful ecstasies of childhood, alternately distracted and delighted with the little sorrows and playthings of its nursery? Yes, "this world is far too much with us." If, indeed, as we are, within a few years, or it may be,

a few months, of our immortal state, why should the field of our immortality be ever shut out so sedulously from our view? Why must the fountains of merely earthly sentiment, be held up as the exclusively legitimate sources of interest; and all that has reference to the destinies of our futurity must be set aside by prejudication, as necessarily prosing, fanatical and dull? If you and I, now, my brother or my sister, shall really and certainly have a portion in Eternity, why then, I pray, in the name of the soundest reason, should not also the concerns of our Eternity really affect us? Unless you can prove to me, what all the ingenuities of scepticism have never, as yet been able to do, that there *is nothing* in those awful relations, in which it is declared we stand towards our God—outlaws from his government of goodness and peace—under the curse of every mortal ill, and in no small danger of a ruined immortality—with a sublime scheme of grace and moral renovation at length in these latter days fully unfolded to us—but most of us, from the dominion of our inherent depravity, and

the insidious power of an evil world over us, in danger of letting this opportunity go past us for ever, and of bringing down upon our heads, for the finale of our history, the tremendous award of a despised Mediator, and a slighted Gospel:—I say, if these relations are *not absolutely false*, then, in the name of all just thinking, and in the name of all genuine sensibility, there cannot be a falser taste, there cannot be a crueller wrong, than to strike out of our hearts, or to proscribe from our histories, those hopes and those interests which yet link the children of Adam to a higher world; and which shed down, as the light of the far-distant stars, the sympathies of happy heaven still upon this world's despair, and darkness, and desolation. If these relations exist indeed, then, in the eye of all just thinking, (however the presiding spirit of the world may smile perchance or sneer,) in the eye of all just thinking, those are even the most interesting of *all* points in our histories, on which the wonder-working grace of God hinges the destinies of our eternity. But spiritual Biography, or, indeed, any ap-

proach to it, O! how is it nauseated by the generality of readers! How few there be that will give such matters, (not to say a word of their proper place of esteem,) even the footing of a moment's toleration! Alas, where is the page which genius has duly devoted to this mighty theme! and it may scarce venture beyond the unobtrusive form of tracts and trifles such as these: and for want of our Scotts, and our Edgeworths, and our Irvings,* to apply such a pencil to it as might duly attract and charm, it has fallen too much into the hands of feeble artists, and all it has acquired from the brighter lights of the world, is rather the injurious tincture of their scorn.

Alas! we shrink from looking too narrowly into the full meaning and moral of this fact, the exclusion, to such an extent, of our spiritual interests from all that is most vaunted of by the busy tongue of the world, and all that most captivates the ephemeral crowd, who are hastening on so uncon-

* The American Addison—*non nostras, attamen noster.*

sciously, yet so surely, to the grave. We shrink from the painful sight of the mass of society, almost wholly sunk under the torpor of a spiritual sleep, and delighting themselves so exclusively with the gilded phantoms of their day-dream, which must soon give them over to such a terrible awakening. Surely, if for once the Oracles of the world could bend their worshipped pride to the candour of a just confession, the unsophisticated voice of their reason would declare, that indeed, in a just and enlarged contemplation of things, which shrunk and confined itself in no narrow prepossessions, but took boldly and freely in the whole of our being, those very points and incidents in the generality of narrations, upon which their whole pathos and most passionate interests are made to turn, fade almost into trifles, and the vapours of a vision, when compared with those which have immortal relations, and those upon which are founded the destinies of our eternity.

The second class we desire a word with, is a certain worthy class of scrupulous good people; those, who, though the sworn

friends of the religion of the New Testament, will yet not be at peace even with essential Christianity, unless they always find it presented after some one favourite style, and standard, and fashion.

Now I entreat such people *seriously* to consider, whether such scrupulous confinement of the mere mode of inculcation, may not go often unhappily to bar up many an avenue, through which, to many a heart, the truth of the gospel might have found successful way. Perhaps, for instance, they have been taught to consider it a merit to lift up their decision against the propriety of using any such instrument as that of fiction, as the medium of conveyance for solemn and religious instruction: a habit which, we will confess, has, superficially, the seeming of a very worthy caution, and proper reverence for the truth. But we do entreat that it be candidly considered, whether, in one word, all the eloquence, and powerful illustration devised by the imagination for the enforcement of truth, do not essentially partake, in many important points, of the very same character as this

which is so freely decried: and also to consider what powerful sway and memorable influence this mode of conveying truth has had in those instances, in which it has been judiciously applied; and that not only in human writings, but also in those writings adapted to our feelings and capacities, by the wisdom of Him who knew what was in man. With all deference then, we put it as a very serious question, whether a sense of divine and heavenly things may not reach to many a heart, especially of the young, through the medium of such conveyance, with a power and success of impression which the truth, traced out in a dry didactic form, might have held up its correctness for ever without producing? Why, take it but fairly and freely, and forget for a moment altogether whatever complacent dogmas a superficial prejudice has established among her pupils. Where really is the harm or danger to the truth that can be conceived to arise from any quarter out of this mode? A case is imagined for the development of a principle; or, as the insinuating channel for maxims

and sentiments which are deemed of desirable inculcation. No single truth is contravened by any one step of the supposition. No violence is done to actual fact by any one imaginary position. An engine of power, however, is thus formed out of a purely independent element. Common nature, general fact, and possibility, supply the conduits of the sentiment. The engine turns freely to the point on which you wish it to bear. You just use its happy flexibility to bring the mind you wish to affect, under the jet and power of the principle: and this being once done, the principle is given forth upon it without any *necessary* adulteration of its purity. Where then is the harm, especially if the apologue be avowed, and, while it innocently gratifies the imagination, it steer perfectly clear of all distortion of actual truth, and no real events or individuals have their character falsified in the useful creation?

True, no doubt, an apologue may be fantastically and injudiciously conducted; and violence may be done in it, and grievous violence, to every principle of a just

representation of things, as it unquestionably may likewise be done to truth of sentiment and probability of incident. But what then? This may be done, no doubt, but it is not essential. It is but the irregularity of the particular artist's judgment, and an unhappy error in his conceptions of what is proper for the purposes of correct instruction, and an unhappy want of tact in the use of the instruments he has assumed, and consequently altogether a want of fidelity at once in his individual touches, and his whole portraiture. But is it not equally true, that the errors of an *injudicious* pencil, may, in like manner, mar the truth of a historical delineation: and almost equal violence may be done from the want of correct perceptions, here as in the fancy-piece, to truth, to nature, and to the spirit of a just representation of things; while more violence of course is here done to actual facts; and while, at the same time, what is worse, the gaping world is complacently deceived all the while by the illusion of a name. We most assuredly do not mean to deny that facts and true history are

especially valuable. On these it is that we must found all our experience, building up the fabric of general truth out of these cautiously received particulars of it; and consequently on these alone, and these well-authenticated, would any just reasoner think of resting the importance of an argumentative assertion? But is it not clear, that though these be the sole basis of our experience, they are not, on that account, the exclusive media of example, or sentiment, or illustration of principle? Authentic history, when properly set forth, is good assuredly for all these purposes, but its goodness just consists in its conveying a just representation of things, by being thus *properly* set forth. It is good just in so far as it is faithful to truth and nature; and equally with fictitious narrative, may it be abused and distorted by injudicious hands; and it is, we will venture to say it, as frequently abused. Taking things fairly then, there seems no essential danger in enticing (the young especially) to the reception of important truth, by the allurements of an interesting fiction; and it appears to us clear,

that the blindness of prejudice may be equally exhibited in receiving indiscriminately all that bears the name of authentic narration, however exaggerated and falsified, (though we trust it is never but unwittingly falsified) by the injudicious colourings of fancy; and to reject important truth, because it is wrapt up in an apologue, or important principle or sentiment, because they are interwoven in the web of an imaginary tale.

Do those who ever lift their scrupulous decision against all religious instruction, conveyed through the medium of fictitious narrative, or apologue, recollect, that the Author of inspiration himself hath, again and again, allowed of this mode, as the most apposite and effectual medium for bringing truth to bear upon the blind, and the careless, and the stubborn human heart? Do they recollect the old Prophet's parabolic accusation of the monarch, with its final lightning of conviction, "Thou art the man?" They surely will not arrogate a knowledge of human nature, or a power of application to its spiritual indispositions

superior to those which guided the unerring hand, and planned the well-chosen prescriptions, of the great Physician of souls. Do they then forget, how He “spake to the people in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them.” Do they forget his finely conceived story of the repentant prodigal, so fraught with the memorable and insinuating instruction, that we, who have sunk and ruined ourselves, like that unworthy son, should rise at length, like him, from the grovelling of our sins, and straight-way return to our tender-hearted Father? Do they forget the story of the judge and importunate widow, so inculcative of the necessity of an urgent and anxious seeking of God’s grace on our part; or the impressive parable of the wise and foolish virgins, which has taught so emphatically to all readers since that time, the necessity of an immediate preparation for the sudden summons of the Bridegroom; or the memorable story of the rich man and Lazarus, so awfully unveiling to human thought at once the sight of heaven and hell? Do they forget the parable of the merciless servant,

admonishing to forgiveness by such an appropriate and tremendous warning; or that of the vineyard, intrusted to rebellious husbandmen, by which our Lord put to shame the proud priesthood and elders, for their contempt and rejection of the prophets that had been sent unto them; or the strongly put case of the Pharisee and Publican, involving so bitter a rebuke to spiritual self-sufficiency, and so fine an approval to humility of spirit; or that other instance of powerful and delicate reproof, couched in the story of the tender-hearted Samaritan, whose charitable care of the poor man that had been stripped, and wounded, and left half-dead by thieves, is set off in such exquisite contrast to the cold hard-heartedness of the cautious Priest and Levite? But why should I number up the discourses of Jesus? Parable upon parable—parable upon parable—formed, it cannot be denied, his chosen means of conviction. And if it be still urged, that in human attempts, however, there is ever doubt and danger of error; on the same principle, we say, must every form of human instruction henceforth

withdraw its erring finger, and stop its mouth at once.

But supposing the medium of an adapted narrative, just in its sentiments, and important in its instructions, though in some of its incidents and details avowedly fictitious, to be allowed on these grounds, on which we have briefly vindicated it, by the class of persons to whom we allude; they may next find it a cause of complaint, (such unreasonable fault-finders we have sometimes met with,) if the narrative involves not a very extensive scope and development of divine truth, and overflows not with high and extraordinary infusions of Christian experience. Now we again make our appeal to candour and reason. Is it the aim of such little compositions as these, to satisfy the doctrinal appetite, and refined erudition of the strong men in Christ, and the fully instructed? Nay, but it is to feed the little ones of the flock, to entice the young by supplying a food convenient for *them*, whose souls yet cannot bear the strong meat fit for men. And will Christian wisdom deny the propriety of such an adaptation; and

will Christian charity allow of no place at the feast for the simple and uninstructed; and disdainfully proscribe from the table the children's bread, because it is not impregnated with the richness and high-seasoning which would adapt it to the relish of their stronger palates? What is the aim, again we put it, and evident purpose of compositions such as these? Surely it is not, surely it ought not to be, to satisfy, to please! the instructed and the experienced with a cautious and trite reiteration of what they know full well; but surely it is, surely it ought to be, to win and to provoke, (as there is so much need to do,) the careless, the undisciplined, the poor wanderers from the fold, to a first attention to these salutary matters. For the advanced Christian there are many caterers; but who takes tender thought for the poor lambs of the flock? Look to the example of the Prophets and Apostles. They ever adapted the forms of the heavenly word they delivered, to the state and necessities of the classes they addressed. To some they only sounded a note of first alarm, or called up

trembling hope by the obscurity of a promise. To others again, who were prepared for it, they unveiled a brighter day, and brought forth a higher message, and more glorious development of the truth. Some they fed with milk, and others with strong meat. We shrewdly apprehend *we* ought to do the same. Not certainly to oppress and dishearten the learner by an ostentatious erudition he cannot comprehend; but to lead him, by gentle steps, from what he is familiar with to what is higher, and of more difficult attainment, is the part and anxiety of the conscientious teacher. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;" but, for our part, we cannot avoid esteeming alike injudicious and dangerous, the zeal which would attempt to carry into the disciple's mind, the whole height and depth of Christianity by one hasty invasion. We rather fear, that this way of violent overdoing must generally fail to obtain a fixture for even one of its principles. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, the sublime and mysterious things of God, may, perhaps, all the while, be edifying himself;

but, as instructors of others, unless we give forth, (to whomsoever we address ourselves,) things adapted to their state and capacity, and words easy to be understood, how, as the Apostle says, "shall it be known what is spoken? Ye shall speak into the air." Therefore, though unquestionably all effectual divine teaching must come from the efficacious blessing of the Spirit of all grace upon the humble, and otherwise impotent means of those who attempt the work of instruction, guided by the unerring light of that very Divine Spirit, I am satisfied, it is better to speak *one word* of the truth to the easy understanding and the heart of my reader, than to lay a thousand words of it before him, very learnedly, but *in an unknown tongue*.

December, 1822.

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December, 1722.

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THE
WIDOW OF ROSENEATH.

CHAPTER I.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

THE subject of this little Narrative is the piety and affection of a Christian mother, in her widowhood; and a few incidents in the life of her two sons, which tended, though by different ways, eventually to confirm to them the inheritance of her godliness. It is not my intention to record any thing of Mrs. Stewart's previous history. Suffice it here to tell, that she had seen better days, while yet the husband of her youth survived, to smooth with his sympathy her footsteps through the world, and

to sweeten her careful thoughts, both for this anxious life and that which is to come. Hers had been the happy and peaceful lot which equally escapes the giddy dangers of affluence, and the contractions which are but too apt to gather upon the heart depressed with penury. In a station of simple elegance and unostentatious refinement, she had passed the fair summer and autumn of her wedded days, a caressed wife and a happy mother. But, latterly, the breath of winter had begun to fall with its blight upon her house. Her fair family, one by one, had been snatched by death from her embraces; and all that now survived was her Joseph and her Benjamin—the last scions of the fruitful vine, the props, and expectation, and solace of her old age.—Her husband, the sheltering cedar of whose fortunes had, latterly, begun to be nipt of its honours, had not lived to bless her youngest boy; and now that she had only the memory of a husband's love to cherish, little Allan, the picture of his father, was doubly dear to her desolate heart.

It had fared but ill with her, when her

partner was taken away. The casualties of trade had at last run hard against Mr. Stewart, and, at his death, he was found to be insolvent. To the widow there was, therefore, no reversion; and but for the seasonable and kind assistance of a brother of her husband, who had not long before settled in America, it would have gone hard with the widow and her children. The prompt remittance of this affectionate gentleman, however, saved her from absolute penury; and at once to escape from the sources of too painful remembrance, and that she might indulge her native fondness for solitude and simple life, she had parted with the most of her now useless furniture, and retired with her sons to a small cottage in Roseneath: where, seeking a solace to her grief in the works of piety and affection, she devoted herself diligently to the care of their instruction, and set herself to improve the few days of this world that remained to her, in the attainment of an increasing personal godliness, and in bringing up the youthful charge, in whom now all her earthly cares were centred, in the ways of truth and

goodness, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What were this sad and evil life without the balm and the hopes of religion? We would sink into despair under its many ills, and its misfortunes: when its sun refused to shine upon us, we would stand helpless and forlorn, in the gloom of utter despondency; and when the shades of evening gathered round our lives, and the night of death rose with its blackness upon our path; there would then be no voice to send the cheering of hope into our bosoms, no star to lift up our trembling thoughts to heaven, and to invite us thitherward with its lovely light.

This was the staff and the stay by which kind heaven supported the mother of Gilbert and Allan. But for this, her feeble age had been a weariness and a desolation. But she had learned to believe, that the God who governs the world never chastens unkindly, nor does aught but what is right; that it, therefore, becomes not his people to repine, when he, in his wisdom, resumes the blessings he had lent us; that it should

draw his true child but the closer to himself, and fasten the foundations of its eternal confidence but the more firmly and surely on the Rock of Ages, when those intermediate means, by which he had been pleased to cherish and shelter the first openings of its affections, have been swept away by the descending rains, and the final coming of the inevitable floods. Her children had been taken from her, her husband, her substance; but these strokes did not loosen the hold of her Faith, nor impel her to throw herself, in desperation, from the ark, by which alone she, and her surviving little ones, might be carried in safety, beyond this world's troublous sea, to the shore of that happy land where the parted lambs of the flock all meet again—and are led by the good Shepherd to pastures of eternal verdure—and lie down beside the quiet waters, and beneath the healing tree of life.

She felt the weighty obligations of a mother's duties, in regard to those children which were yet graciously spared to her; and as she had preserved their infant life with the nurture of her bosom, it became

her now, she felt, as the eyes of their reason were opening, to feed their immortal spirits with the bread of life, and nurture them for heaven with the sincere milk of the word. To this work of pious affection she devoted her widowhood; and though the aspect of her life was now most sensibly changed, and her solitude had few comforters but God and his holy word, there were yet often experienced, in her lonely dwelling, sweet touches of delight, which the world might envy: and as she raised her nightly thoughts to heaven, and prayed that her children might be the servants of the Lord, a sacred peace descended into her heart, such as the world knoweth not—such as passeth all understanding. Her cottage, poor as it was, was a sanctuary of piety; and she was such a mother as the eye of heaven approveth. She read, in the law, this memorable address to parents, (and she did not think it became her to disregard its admonition—it was, indeed, the law of her house, and the rule of her daily conduct;) “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart

from it"—and—"These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." She trusted, that whether she lived to see it or not, the kind hand of Providence would yet find out a way in the world for her fatherless: but her highest ambition of all was this, that on the day in which the Lord should make up his jewels, she might be able to give in her account with joy, "Lord, here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me!"

O ye children! who enjoy the advantage of a Christian parent's tendance and instruction! prize as ye ought, and see that you improve this kindest blessing of benignant heaven. You might have been orphans at this hour, if the kindness of Providence had not ordained it otherwise—with no parent's heart to feel for you, and no parent's hand to provide your daily bread, and no parent's eye to keep watch over your wanderings,

and no parent's tongue to plead for you with heaven. You might have been destitute of a home, and a home's comfort. You might, like many a poor child, have had no Bible to read; and, for the want of teaching, no power to read it, if you had. You might have been shivering, unpitied, a ragged beggar on the highways, or seeking your bread by the deeds of dishonesty, and running on, heedless and unreclaimed, the fatal road to ruin. You might never have been made to know that there was,—and was for you,—a Redeemer from iniquity: you might have lived without Christian knowledge, and been met, at length, by the angel of death,—a helpless, hopeless infidel—in your sins. O then, be grateful that to you it was given to be born in a Christian land! that yours are Christian parents, and yours a Christian education! Learn ye with gratitude the lessons of piety and truth, when your father sets them forth to you, as you walk by the way: and despise not, O! despise not the law of your mother, when her tenderness would warn you away from the fatal paths of folly, and win

you to her Saviour, and to the ways of immortal peace! Trust me, though the children of perdition may sneer, and the syren of pleasure, with her delusive song, may seek to allure your footstep into her snares, there is nothing which the vain world delights in half so truly good: and when all its vaunted resources of happiness have been tried, and tried again, it will be found, that the precious pearl lieth not in these waters—it will escape you for ever, if you seek it not *in the love of God*.

The little family of whom I was beginning to tell, were not without their happiness, though their case, in the eyes of some, might look abundantly sad; for theirs was a share in that superior happiness, which fortune, when she leaveth us, cannot take away. There was something both gladdening and mournful to the heart, as you passed the neat and cleanly cottage, to hear, in the evening, the voice of its inmates, swelling and softening on the notes of God's praise—or earlier, before the sun had withdrawn his glorious smile from off the lake, to see the thrifty mother plying her needle

in the sunshine, while her little youths returned from the cheerful labours of the fishing-boat, laid down their successful spoils at her feet, and redeemed the hasty hour by conning, in her hearing, their morning's task, or listened, from her lips, some instruction of wisdom, or heard her tell, with ardent soul, what Jesus Christ hath done for us all. Again, if you passed that way in the morning, you might hear the accents of some early lesson read from the pages of the blessed word of God; you might see contentment and cheerfulness sitting down, with thanks, to heaven's kind provision, or some work of industry going deftly forward, or the hands of careful affection trimming the sprightly striplings for the school, or the day speeding lightly on in some frugal and busy task.

Such was the simple history of this family for many years, till, at length, the advancing age of the boys called them to go forth to some employment in the world, and to turn the education they had had in the parish school to some account, for themselves and for their parent. Mrs. Stewart

yielded to the suggestions of her friends, feeling it her duty to submit to the bereavement, though she could not avoid anticipating how painful it must be to her. Gilbert, her eldest son, a boy now about fifteen years of age, was to go out to a situation with his uncle, in America; and Allan, about fourteen, was to go, on the same day, to be apprenticed with a friend of her husband, a goldsmith in Greenock.

It was one of those calm and beautiful evenings in September, when the day-light lingers so sweetly and lovingly upon the landscape, as if it were reluctant to leave it to darkness. The glorious Bridegroom of the morning had just withdrawn his parting smile. Nature seemed listening to the voice that called her lovingly to her repose. Another day was about to number itself with the ages that are past. The moon's pale crescent in the east was leading on the hour sacred to contemplation; and the stars, one by one, appearing around her throne, were looking, as it were, thoughtfully down upon our world, and singing their vesper hymn. Still its glory had not departed from the

bright western sky. Rose tints and purple yet glowed along the uplands, while a shade of softer and sadder hue was settling upon the woodlands, and stealing along the waters. A belt of golden light, shading into silver, stretched over those bold and shaggy-crested mountains that skirt, with their magnificent contour, the western horizon of the Gare-loch. The sky that canopied the whole stilly scene, was clear, and blue, and "purely beautiful," save a few light vapours that rested moveless in the north, and the blushing beauty of those clouds that overhung the descending sun; and as they looked brightly down upon the darkling world they floated over, might seem, in the eye of captivated fancy, a vision of holy angels, sent down at even-tide, with words of peace and comfort to the poor pilgrims of this earth.

It was indeed an eve of beauty; and it was Sabbath eve. No sound of human toil interrupted the rapture of listening contemplation. The skiffs that wont, on other days, to be skimming like sea-birds along the bosom of the lake, were now only

seen lying peaceful at their moorings. The fisher's, or the reaper's song broke not upon the sacred stillness of the time. The plough-boy's whistle, and the villager's laugh, were mute this night: all was silent and peaceful, as became the Sabbath eve. As you looked to the darkening azure of heaven's vault—or listened to the distant whisper of the wave along the shore—or caught the trembling moonbeam, as you wandered through the woodland, or gazed on the majestic mountains, raising their eternal homage to the sky—you might have thought yourself, for a moment, in the visible temple of God, and expected to descry the approaching footsteps of his presence. The peaceful peasantry, having returned from the church, communed together of the blessed things of God, or meditated apart on the lessons that had been delivered to them. The children, too, by this time dismissed from the instructions of the Sabbath-school, went home, many of them, with their little hearts fraught with the things of heaven; and proving that there are nobler enjoyments for every human bo-

som, than those it is taught and accustomed too often to grovel in.

Our widow had returned to her little cottage on the banks of this lovely lake. She pondered the holy things she had heard, till her children should join her meditations. Then affectionately and warmly she recalled again to them their kind pastor's instructions, inquired respecting the truths that had engaged them in the school, and opened these and pressed them as she could, upon their hearts and docile understandings.

And now as the light of the day had departed, and the shades of the night had descended around their dwelling, the taper lifts its little beam upon the opened Word of Truth, and the work of reading and heavenly instruction redeems the fleeting time and marks it down for wisdom. At length the voice of well-accorded praise awakes, and sweetly swells from the solitary mansion, and the song, long ago tuned to king David's lyre, ascends yet into the ear of David's God, well-accepted from the fervour of their simple hearts.

Such pity as a father hath
 Unto his children dear;
 Like pity shows the Lord to such
 As worship him in fear.

O! that ever thus the Sabbath evenings of all were tuned and devoted, as they ought to be, to God. Think you not the eye of heaven looks down with more true affection upon such a scene as this, than upon the proudest pomp of life, and the most vaunted of those glories that fill the idle voice of fame? Aye! is it not better so to lift up the humble heart before the throne of our Creator, than to immolate your precious soul on the thankless altar of this world's ambition, or to sacrifice your time, not to say your eternity, to the poor blind idol, perhaps, of ephemeral fashion, or at the worthless shrines of Belial or of Mammon?

Since better is thy love than life,
 My lips thee praise shall give.
 I in thy name will lift my hands,
 And bless thee while I live.

The cottage resounded with the voice of their singing; but alas! this is the last night in which this little family will so join

in the praises of God together. The next morning is to separate them, and to carry the youths forth into the world; and the next Sabbath eve will find the poor widow singing the praises of God alone, and weeping the absence of her poor dear boys. The thought of all this mingles with the sacredness of their present services, and makes their hearts vibrate with an unwonted emotion, tender almost to anguish; while the head of each depending, and the voice often faltering and broken with a sob, and the big tear dropping unconsciously from the eye upon the page, no longer attempt to conceal the well-understood feeling that predominates in every bosom.

At length the Psalm has ceased, and the widow, as she was wont, lifts up her voice to the Father of the fatherless, and with the anxiety of a mother, and the faith of a Christian, prays to the Hearer and the Answerer of prayer.

It is sublime to hear a true Christian pray. Creation seems to still itself before the awful communion. The veil for a moment appears to be withdrawn which

ordinarily shrouds the omnipresence of the Deity. A child of earth holding spiritual converse with its ever-listening but invisible Parent! You feel, at such a season, whether you will or no, that verily there is a God in the earth, that verily there is a glory in this much-despised faith. And, O! hard did this poor handmaid this night wrestle with her Maker! Her boys were to be taken from the guardianship of her maternal eye:—would they continue in the fear of the Lord; would they not fall in the temptations of an evil world? Ah! would the snares of the devil entrap them; would they fall away from the service and the knowledge of Christ; would they not attain to the inheritance of Israel? “O Thou, who takest up the lambs of the flock in thine arms, hear the widow’s prayer, support her in her sorrows, and be the gracious guardian of her children. Though they wander now away from this poor home of mine, let them not wander from the fold of God. Be their staff and their stay when my head shall be laid in the dust; and conduct them through the dangerous

pilgrimage of this life onward to thy kingdom of blessedness at last. Sprinkle them with the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel. O! bring them up in thy love, to be men after thine own heart. May thy handmaid be a mother of children that serve the Lord; and at the judgment, may she meet them in glory at thy right hand."

So spake the widow's heart, and so spake her fast-falling tears. Nature responded in the breasts of her children; but the hour of God's grace was not yet fully come.

"And this is, then, the last night, my boys, we shall be all together. You go into the busy world, and I remain here to pray for you, and to weep. You will remember us, Gilbert, when far away in other lands, and our little cottage on the banks of the Gare-loch. And we will think of you, my poor boy, when you are upon the waters, and will cry to that Power to be your conductor and your guardian, to whom belongs the sway of all nature's elements, who walks abroad unseen upon the face of

the mighty deep, and holds the dangerous winds in the hollow of his hand. You, too, go from me, Allan; but it is not so far. You will sail over often, when your business will let you away, and come to cheer my fire-side many a winter night, as I am sitting sad, and thoughtful, and all alone. But Gilbert, alas! when will Gilbert be here again? I fear, before that my bones will be rotting in the church-yard. Then who will care for you as I have done! O God of compassion! protect my helpless orphans.

“O! take it not so sadly, mother!” interposed the eldest boy. “Keep up better thoughts. God will yet be, as he has ever been, the orphan’s help, and the widow’s stay.”

“Yes, yes,” said she, wiping her eyes, “it is wrong in me to repine; we should learn always to be content, and to trust in Him, and laying hold of his rich grace, humbly to hope, that whether we meet or not in this vale of tears and sorrow, we may meet at last in the land where sorrow and sighing shall be unknown, and God shall

be all in all—eternally our friend, and eternally our delight. I hope neither of you will ever forget what you have learned of the ways of truth. When my Allan is joined with those who care for nothing but this world, will he remember then the instructions of his childhood; and when my Gilbert has his foot on a far foreign soil, will he continue to walk in the piety of his native land? Take the parting advice of one who loves you well. Look daily to God, and he will direct your steps. Make his holy word the frequent companion of your hours. Ask in your youth to be taught of him, and to be daily confirmed more and more in the faith of his Son, which, trust me, will both sustain and purify your hearts, and will overcome all the evil of this world. The fear that lies heaviest on my spirit at parting with you, is, that, young as you are, you may be tempted and led astray, and learning, like too many, to seek for nothing farther than the favour of the world, you may forget to seek the favour of your Maker, which alone is truly valuable, yea is better than life. The world

into which you are going is so deeply and universally godless : you will meet with but few who pay any regard to divine and heavenly things. The greater number you will find rather inclined to sneer and make a mock of your godliness. There is scarcely one who walks in fear, as seeing Him who is invisible. God is not in all their thoughts. They live as if there was no God. It is only the fear and the favour of man which they regard, their present advantages, and their present pleasures. But then, what a look out have these people for eternity ! what confusion of spirit, when Death cometh upon them, suddenly, like an armed man ! Ah ! they never thought on this dread change as a reality ! The world, and the flesh, and the devil have deceived them. They die without hope. They open their eyes upon a cheerless Eternity ; and the second, the longest, the best part of their existence—(alas ! you cannot call it *the best* to them !)—turns out to be a fathomless abyss of ruin. O, my sons ! avoid their crooked ways. Bring not shame upon me, and destruction upon yourselves.

To hear that you are living respectably and religiously, will make my candle burn bright, though it is near its going out; but to hear any thing else, to hear that you are departing from the good but narrow way, O! that will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

And now, the volumes of sacred instruction laid aside, they sat down to their frugal supper. The faggots on the hearth burned bright and cheery. There was an endearing sympathy of affection in the hour, though dashed again and again with touching thoughts of sorrow. They seldom ventured to meet one another's looks; but when they did, those were tender and deeply thoughtful ones that went through the very soul.

Supper being ended, the brothers took their leave, and went to their place of rest. "Good night, my children," said the widow, "call each of you upon your God for his protection and grace, and then sleep soundly, to be ready for to-morrow's journey. And I will yet pray too," she said, as she turned from the door of their apart-

ment, "I will look up in faith above you heaven to Him who never slumbereth, but ever watches over us all for our good." And she did pray in faith, that tender-hearted mother, and her prayer of faith ascended into the ear of the God of Jacob. O! that was a night of strong intercession and tears. Her pillow was unconscious of its wonted composure and serenity. Sleep was long repelled by the yearning anxiety of her thoughts; and the gray morning was beginning to lift its eyelids upon the retiring footsteps of night, before her overlaboured spirit was visited with a little repose.

Gilbert was up with the early dawn, his enterprising spirit big with the prospects and events that were before him: nor was it long till his brother was by his side, and the noise of their bustling preparations broke like a knell upon the short and feverish slumbers of poor widowed Isabella. Instantly she started up, and having hastily arrayed herself, met her two boys, as they were coming, half joyful, half sad, to receive her blessing this morning. At first

they looked up into their mother's face with the sprightly smile of bounding expectation, but when they met her anxious and mournful look, the thought of their parting so soon brought tears into their eyes, and they turned their faces away, and hurried out of the cottage. The packet which was to convey them to Greenock, was just coming in sight, in a distant part of the loch. They hastened their breakfast, and were down upon the shore before it drew near. The youths were in high spirits, striding the beach with impatient enthusiasm. Yet were there some stolen and wistful glances towards the barred cottage, and the wreath of its blue smoke that was mounting quietly from amidst the green foliage of the surrounding trees, dew-dropped and sparkling in the lustre of the morning: and a tear stood in Gilbert's eye as it passed along the loch, where he was not likely soon to note the springing trout, or to listen again the nightly song of the fisherman. The widow was wrapped in her best array. There was still in her attire, a relic of her better fortune and elegance of mind. Allan and

Gilbert had each his bundle under his arm, and were each equipped with hazel-sticks, which they had carefully prepared for this eventful morning.

They embarked. Few words passed between them as they sailed along. The presence of strangers constrained them to keep their swelling hearts within their breasts: only Gilbert whispered, "and what shall I send you home, mother, when I go to America?" They landed. They were just in time to get the little passenger on board. The ship was just in the act of getting under weigh. There was no time for leave-taking. The captain's voice was impatient. Gilbert was hurried on deck. A sudden grasp of the hand, and a sort of convulsive farewell was all that was allowed the parting friends. The bird of the ocean unfurls her mighty wings. She leaves the port behind, and goes gaily along before a favourable breeze. Her form diminishes as she gets into the distance. The beloved objects she bears away are now but dimly seen by the straining eye of affection. Our little voyager is too small an object to be

descried any longer, as he stood hanging on the gunnel, with his look intently fixed upon one dear groupe among the many. The desolate mother and brother still linger upon the quay, helpless creatures! looking after his course. The bustle of the quay gives no heed to their sorrow. There is no friend near to comfort, or speak to them, or cheer up their sinking hearts. At length they aroused them from their dream of sorrow, and turning their backs upon the ocean, and upon Gilbert, they moved slowly into the town, often wiping their eyes, to seek the house of the goldsmith, where Allan was to be apprenticed.

Mr. Ritchie received them very civilly. He had known the father of the lad, as he said, well; and had often experienced the hospitality of Mrs. Stewart, before the evil day had come upon her house. The widow was prevailed upon to stay a few days; and Mr. Ritchie and his family tried every merriment to comfort her for the present loss of her sons. "It was for their good," they said; "they might both yet be men of fortune. She might yet ride in their carriages, and dance at their weddings."

The widow wished it might be for their good. Her pious spirit had other cares for them than those which solely concern the unthinking world. There was kindness, indeed, in the good Providence which had thus filled their hands with early employment. But still there was an anxiety behind. She had given birth to immortals. Would they be gathered at last into the blessed fold of God? Now they were parted from her maternal tutelage; and her youngest and dearest was to be left under a roof, where she had reason to suspect that the fear of the Lord presided not; and it gave much thought to her sleepless pillow, how, without example and encouragement, the young boy would preserve the pious habits she had taught him; and how, in the midst of a careless worldliness, he should be saved from falling a prey to the dangerous contagion. "O merciful Father! be thy grace sufficient for him, and perfect thy strength in his weakness. Out of the mouth of babes do thou ordain strength, and disarm the machinations of the enemy and the avenger." Mysterious are the

ways of the Lord. It is his, both to pity the wanderings of his children, and to put forth his hand in the hour of extremity, to rescue the spirit from ruin, and to pluck it regenerated, like a falling brand from the burning.

In a few days the widow returned grateful, though in tears, to her lonely cottage, where night after night, her solitary Psalm was heard, and her prayer of faith arose to heaven for herself and for her children. Her pious and exemplary demeanour had endeared her to her neighbours, who did not fail now, by many a kind attention, to alleviate, as they might, the first painfulness of her solitude. On the next Sabbath that ensued, as she passed to her seat in church, many an eye followed her now unaccompanied footsteps with pity; and the simple expression, "A young man at sea," pronounced by the precentor as asking an interest in the prayers of the congregation, while it thrilled upon *one* heart with a peculiar emotion, touched many others with thoughts of sympathy; and it was not a few whose genuine feelings responded to the

fervent supplication put up by the pastor—
 for him who had left his native land of piety,
 and was now a witness of the wonders of
 the Eternal upon the dread solitude of the
 mighty ocean.

Soon as the Osprey, leaving the busy
 port, had got fairly out into the open
 and the various points of view familiar to
 his eye were beginning to give place to the
 new scenes that rose between; and the
 pangs of a first parting by their very in-
 tensity had in some measure softened
 and subsided in expansion; our young
 voyager's mind began to open itself to a
 confused consciousness of his great situa-
 tion. Suddenly parted from almost the only
 friends he had in the world, now among
 strangers who knew not his trials and

CHAPTER II.

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Oh! what art Thou to whom my spirit flies  
 Tremblingly upward, in adoring thought,  
 As to a Father? though the vaulted skies  
 Spread their blue veil between—and of thee nought  
 Is seen along the track of air, or brought  
 In voices from the cloud—yet I do feel  
 Thy spiritual presence, and am taught  
 A dread communion with the Invisible—  
 Oh! may a child of earth here strike his breast and  
 kneel.

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SOON as the Ospray, leaving the busy port, had got fairly out into the open Frith, and the various points of view, familiar to his eye, were beginning to give place to the new scenes that rose between; and the pangs of a first parting, by their very intensity, had, in some measure, softened and subsided in exhaustion; our young voyager's mind began to open itself to a confused consciousness of his actual situation. Suddenly parted from almost the only friends he had in the world; now among strangers who knew not his griefs, and were

all taken up, each with his own concerns—the vessel hurrying them swiftly on into the dangers of the wide ocean—his heart began to beat with a throbbing of doubt and fear. This voyage to America began to appear to his mind, in a very different light from that in which it had at first presented itself to the eager eye of anticipation. Tomorrow he should be friendless, and next day—and next—no mother's voice to comfort him, and no brother's accompanying footstep to beat merry time to his—his spirit began to fail, and to sink within him, and he almost wished that it had never been deemed his duty to take this serious step. His eye was gazing upwards, unconsciously, upon the sky—his heart busy, busy with the happy scenes of home: when, at length, the sudden thought came warmly down upon him—"Have I not a friend above, whose ear is ever open to the cry of those who trust in him. I have parted from my friends, but I cannot part from God. He is ever near me, round about me, though I see not his holy presence. Yes! surely he is here, as well as he was in our home.

From his high throne in yonder heaven, his eye, perhaps, even now, looks down upon me. Thanks to my mother's teaching, and thanks to the Sabbath School, and thanks to the kindness of God, that has permitted me to know this much. 'Whither can we go from his Spirit, or whither can we flee from his presence? If we should ascend into heaven, he is there: if we should make our bed in hell, behold, he is there! Should we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there should his hand lead us, and his right hand should hold us up.' 'Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord.' Well, I will seek to him, and to him 'commit my way;'—'he is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.' And dost thou listen to *me*, my Father in the heavens? Wilt thou be my God, to support and counsel me in all the way in which I am to go? O! yes. I feel thou art a God not afar off. I feel the answer of thy love drop burning upon my heart. Now am I not all alone, since the voice of thy Spirit comforts me; I cannot be friendless

now, let thy providence lead me where it will.”

And now the ship was bounding rapidly over the bosom of the waters—the distant view of the ocean opening beyond the islands of Bute and the Cumbraes. The majestic hills of Arran swam in the glorious sunshine. The rocky pyramid of Ailsa rose dimly above the glassy surface of the deep. Then Ireland at length unveiled, in the distance, her misty form; while fast retiring, the blue mountains of Argyle gradually wrapt their proud summits in the clouds that floated over them. These all successively fixed, in wondering contemplation, the thoughts of our young and unexperienced traveller. Above all, the mighty expanse of the Atlantic, stretching its interminable waters before the view, poured upon him an overwhelming emotion of sublimity, such as he had never experienced before. “O! what a being must the God we worship be! Was it not his hand that framed all these wonders? Yes, it was he that said of old—‘Let there be light, and the light was.’ It was he that placed yon

glorious sun in the sky, and ‘spread out yon heavens as a tent,’ for his happy creatures to dwell in. It was he who bade yon mountains rise above the waters: ‘who set them fast by his strength;’ who made the dry land appear; and ‘who taketh up the isles as a very little thing.’ ‘He maketh the clouds his chariot—he walketh upon the wings of the wind.’ He established the strong foundations of the earth, and covered it thus ‘with the deep, as with a garment.’ ‘O Lord my God! thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.’ Therefore ‘will I sing unto thee, as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God, while I have my being.’”

Blessed is the hand that soweth knowledge in the infant mind; and blessed the pious care, that teacheth the lips of childhood the simple words of inspiration. Think not your labour lost, ye! who so water the budding promise of God’s vineyard. The hour may come about, that shall seasonably draw forth the fragrance and the power of the heavenly wisdom ye have planted: and the words your anxious care has infused

into many a heart, may, by the blessing of God's Spirit, become, in due time, a fountain of salvation there—a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

It was not long, before the favourable breeze had carried them altogether out of sight of land. No object broke the solemn uniformity of the scene, save, perchance, now and then, a sail appearing whitely in the distance, and the clouds ever varying their fantastic forms in the sky. The sun rose upon them, in the morning, out of the waters, and set, at even-tide, in the waters again. Sometimes the moon, coming forth, would alleviate the darkness of the night; and, reposing her silvery beams upon the glassy stillness which surrounded them, seemed, like a good spirit, sent to watch over their course: while the little stars, ever friendly to the mariner, spangled the azure arch that hung in glory over them. Still, day after day, there was nought but sea and sky. On—on—they still were holding, as if to reach the very verge of the world—yet, it was waters—still waters that filled their whole horizon. The heart

grew sick and weary with the interminable prospect. It might remind one of the time, when the visible hand of the Almighty had snatched the faithful patriarch from a world that was sunk in wickedness; and the ark, preserving in its bosom the trembling relics of a world, rocked on the weltering waters, that sadly covered the whole face of the ground. Or, it might remind one of that earlier time, ere yet the Spirit of God had moved upon the deep, or the green Earth had raised its head, budding with its first vegetation, and cheerful with animal life. Alas! what is man on the surface of this mighty deep! And yet, how seldom he thinks of Him, the unseen hand of whose energy alone sustains him there! and how, while the winds urge him gaily on to the far distant shore, he will thank his own good fortune, or bless the unconscious stars, as if there were no presiding and ever active Spirit, to whom, and to whom alone, he owed it all! O God of forbearance! "what is man that thou art mindful of him; or what the son of man, that thou still continuest with thy mercy to visit him!"

The weather, which had hitherto been fair and favourable, at length, unexpectedly, began to assume a threatening aspect. The south-west, to which point the wind had suddenly veered about, looked dusky and lowering:—and then, while helpless nature seemed to look on with a pause of boding stillness, the tempest almost visibly came forth on the wings of the howling blast. The sound of rolling thunders muttered in the distance; and mighty Ocean, as if roused by the war of the elements above him, rose in his grim strength, and lashed himself into the foam of his terrible fury. The heavy surges heave beneath the reeling ship; and the rushing blackness overhead, pours down its torrents, and envelops in darkness her bewildered course. What is all the bravery of her equipment now—before the sovereignty of armed Omnipotence! So thought our little voyager, as he surveyed the frightful scene. The imprecations of the seamen added to his dismay, as, running to and fro, they breathed their agitation in bandied curses upon one another. “O! will not the

thunder break over your heads! will not the red bolt descend upon the blasphemer! Is the Almighty listening, and does he yet forbear! Hear them not, hear them not, they think not what they say." They called down damnation, again and again, upon themselves and one another.—“O fearful! do they think what this damnation means? Would even one of them, the cruellest of them all, have his fellow-creature consigned to an eternity of perdition!”

The fury of the storm increased with the night. The wind howled through the rigging as if it had been the very warning voice of death. The blackness, overhead, grew yet more dismal and terrific, save when it was suddenly interrupted by the flash of the lightning, that revealed the curling terror of some mountain-billow, ready to hurl its impending wrath upon them. The creaking of the masts; the sudden burst of the thunder, reverberated among the tumbling surges, or lost in their louder roar; the plunging of the ship among these caverns of death; all these, commingling with the shrieks of the despairing passen-

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gers, and the deep imprecations of the sailors, seemed, in Gilbert's ear, like the immediate summons of eternity; sometimes almost like the audible voice of hell. "O my poor mother! shall I never see you more! what will be your anguish, when you are told that we are all lying beneath the waves! O my soul! are you prepared to meet your Judge? how shall I appear before his awful presence? Will the Saviour's work of mercy extend even to me? Alas! I have lived to him but little as I ought! O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

At this moment, they thought they heard, not afar off, the signal gun of despair. The next moment, a sudden flash of lightning revealed the relics of a ship, tossing on the surges—a few faces of despair were clinging to the fragments. Another moment! the wild cry of drowning men mingled indistinctly with the louder moan of the blast. The devouring deep has swallowed them. They are done with this life for ever. They are gone to meet their God. They have opened their eyes

upon eternity. A blazing signal from the shrouds, announces to the survivors, if there be any, that help is at hand: but all is silence now—no human voice again reaches the listening ear.

By the morning's dawn, the winds had greatly laid their fury. The death-like blackness of the clouds began to clear away. At length the sun looked through them, like an angel: and a rainbow of lucid beauty, heaven's messenger of peace, spanned, "with its bright arch," the angry face of the deep, gradually smoothing itself now from the tumult of the night's agitation. "And we are safe!" was the universal feeling. A beam of joy sat on every face, and pleasant congratulations circulated among the passengers. The Widow's son was upon his knees, and while he looked up to the heavens, now clear and beautiful, and thought of the anxious hearts within his mother's home, Oh! strongly then did affection and speechless gratitude yearn from his swelling heart.

In a few days more they made the American coast, and the sight of the white spires

of New York, at length gladdened the eyes of the weary passengers; while the keen zest, with which they now looked forward to the comforts of society, and of the land again, repaid them for the imprisonment and perils of the voyage. Mr. Stewart, who had expected Gilbert by the *Ospray*, was in waiting upon the quay. The young stranger's eye soon recognised him, though he had not seen him for many years. Soon as they landed, he felt the grasp of his uncle's hand, and the delightful sound of a friend's voice thrilled once more in his ear.—“Gilbert, my dear fellow, you are welcome to America. You are taller than I expected, though I should have known you from your father. I hope you have had a pleasant passage, and will now feel yourself happy in New York.”

As they passed along, Gilbert could not but remark to his uncle, how agreeable the transition was to him, from the dull solitude of the sea, to the sprightliness of a crowded town. All was life and activity along the street. A cheerful sun was smiling upon the bustle of industry.

Every thing wore the air of haste and business. Blacks and mulattoes, numerously mingling among the busy crowd of the white population, imparted a characteristic cast to the scene; while the multitude of negresses, flaunting about in their gaudy finery, and receiving the salutations of their sable admirers, added at least to its spirit and gaiety. Shops of grocery, jewellery, stationery, haberdashery, displayed their various riches and attractions; while, from their little tasteful recesses on either side of the way, the fruitresses invited the passenger to taste of their mellow apples, or to partake of their sweatmeats.

At length they arrived at Mr. Stewart's house. It was a little way out of town, upon the bold and beautiful banks of the Hudson, embosomed in an enchanting richness of scenery, with a well-cultivated garden smiling in the front of it. Gilbert was introduced to a cheerful family of cousins, the younger part of whom were enjoying themselves in the sunshine. Mrs. Stewart welcomed her nephew to her house; and the young people, though some of them at

first, stood shily in the distance, when informed that it was their cousin Gilbert, all came round about him with interest and smiles. Dinner soon invited them to gather round the table: and while, on the one hand, many kind inquiries about his mother and Allan, gained the confidence of the youthful stranger; on the other, the story of his voyage, and its perils, excited a lively attention, and awakened yet a kindlier interest. “ My mother’s prayer hath been heard,” he concluded, “ and here am I safe at length !” while the sudden tear of gratitude to Heaven started, unconsciously, into more eyes than his.

The evening passed away on the wings of cheerfulness and kindness. The demeanour of this new inmate in the family, was respectful and prepossessing; while the novelty and gladness of every thing around him, poured into Gilbert’s heart a tide of unwonted delight: and it was not till he found himself in the solitude of his own apartment, and was offering, on his knees, his evening sacrifice of praise and gratitude to the Lord, that the memory of his far-

distant home came painfully upon his spirit. But, then, when he thought of those he had left behind; of the cottage on the Gare-loch, so sweet, yet so lonely; and of his poor mother, now all alone within the cheerless mansion, and, perhaps, engaged at that very hour in the same exercise as himself, it brought the filial tear into his eye, and he doubled the ardour and tenderness of his intercessions.

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CHAPTER III.

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Should Fate command me to the farthest verge  
 Of the green Earth, to distant, barbarous climes,  
 Rivers unknown to song ; where first the sun  
 Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam  
 Flames on the Atlantic Isles; 'tis nought to me,  
 Since God is ever present, ever felt—  
 In the void waste, as in the city full ;  
 And where He vital breathes, there must be joy.

THOMSON.

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MR. STEWART was partner in a very thriving business; and a place in the counting-house was prepared for his nephew. At first, as could not but be expected, he was rather awkward in his new office: but the steady attention, which both affection, and gratitude, and the force of his religious principles, induced him to bestow on every point of his duty, soon rendered him a valuable acquisition; the uprightness of his conduct, and his conscientious diligence, holding forth an example, even to many of his elders. Though much carelessness as

to religion, and, along with that, no small depravity of manners and of principles surrounded him, in many with whom he necessarily came in contact, yet, by God's grace, he courageously held true to the dictates of his better principles, and kept his integrity against all example: and when sinners enticed him, refused his consent. His companions, in the counting-house, were inclined, at first, to deem the young Scotchman rather rigid in his notions; and his sensitive and decided shrinking from every sort of dissipation, and the regularity of his attention to every thing good and sacred, fixed on him, in some degree, the imputation of ignorance of the world and puritanism. Yet when the whole of his character was gradually developed, and it was found that he added to his most blameless and circumspect deportment the most entire good humour and sweetness of disposition; that with his activity in business, and with the most undeviating reverence for every thing pure and honourable, there was combined in him, the utmost hilarity and cheerfulness of temper, he gradually rose in the

respect, even of those who could have dispensed with a good share of his religiousness, and actually gained upon their esteem, by his open and affectionate demeanour.

Nor less did the good principles of the widow's son raise him in the estimation of his uncle's family. In Mr. Stewart's family there prevailed that sort of negative regard to piety which you so often meet with; but you could scarce say that there was the root and the spirit of the matter. You could gain their acquiescence in any thing good, but there was not the decided energy of vital godliness. Gilbert's unaffected and strong sense of religion was remarked with respect; and the example of his devotion, and daily study of the divine precepts, worked with a silent and salutary influence. Mrs. Stewart would often exhort her young people to imitate their cousin's good habits; and thus, this young lad, without being conscious of it, by simply and conscientiously adhering to the good principles inculcated at home, became the means, in the hand of God, of promoting

among his friends a more decided love and attachment to Christianity. There was in him such an undeviating humility, meekness, and gentleness of temper; such a consistency of character, and such a force of integrity, combined with the deep affection of his remembrances of home, and his adherence to that piety of his mother's house he so interestingly portrayed; that in him Christian-principle appeared with a fairer lustre than they had deemed it to possess: and from one step to another it gradually came about, that the word of God was regularly read in the family, and incense and a pure offering arose daily to the Lord from the domestic altar. Was not this cause for the widow's heart to sing for joy? Was not this a good answer to her many anxious prayers?

As he displayed a strong propensity to extend the sphere of his knowledge in every direction, and especially to visit the districts around, his uncle found frequent opportunities of indulging him, by little commissions of business into the interior of the country. To accompany him in these excursions,

however, though it might lead us into very agreeable, would demand of us too lengthened details, especially as it is my wish to confine the present rapid sketch, to those points of his history which are more fraught with religious instruction to my young reader, and so, in some measure, to make up to him, as I may, for that jealous and rigid exclusion of *all* religion, which too much characterizes the most of those books that are put into his hands for his entertainment and instruction.

I shall, therefore, here content myself with laying before him a single one of Gilbert's letters to his dear friends at home. This letter was written about the end of the second summer after his coming to New York, and will require, I trust, no comments of mine to recommend it to the attention of the young and ingenuous mind.—This was its tenor:—

DEAR MOTHER AND ALLAN,

I HOPE you safely received my letter of the 20th May, and the accompanying packet, which I sent you by the Caledonia.—

I long much for your kind answers. Believe me, when they come, they do me good, like a medicine; for, though I am happy here, as I could desire to be, in my uncle's pleasant family, and in attendance upon his business, yet, I will own to you, the thought of home will often still come sadly across my heart, and sometimes, when wandering by the solitary shore, I can scarce refrain my tears when I think what a weary tract of the ocean separates me from you; and while, perhaps, some of you are looking forth upon the same rolling waters, and the same stars in the sky, that it is not in our power to catch the distant voice, or to mingle, for a moment, our affectionate thoughts. Still we have this comfort, we can write to one another, and Heaven's kind winds will waft our messengers across the deep. Do then omit no opportunity to let me know how it goes with you. Ah! now I doubly feel the force of the wise man's saying—"as cold waters to the thirsty soul, so are good news from a far country." I live indeed in the trust that the Shepherd of Israel keepeth you; but O! I like to see the

accustomed words of your gratitude and hope. And though, in this place, I am blessed with many means of grace, which help to preserve me from the dangerous contagion of the world; yet nothing, believe me, so sustains my resolutions, and encourages my heart, and stimulates me to go on in a Christian course rejoicing, as the words of your admonition, and the example of your piety, to whom God hath linked me by affection's tenderest ties.

You must know I have been a mighty traveller since I last wrote you. My uncle's business has carried me, at various times, through most of the State of New York, and even so far as Boston and the borders of Pennsylvania. In the course of my excursions, I have been witness to many scenes which, I am sure, will interest you much. I remember long ago, to have heard you often speak with pity of the poor benighted Heathen, who, with the most false ideas of that great Being who has given us all our place in this world, spent their grovelling life in the most dismal and abject superstitions, and, at length, returned

darkling to their dust, without any knowledge of heaven or of a Saviour. Some of these poor Heathens I have now seen, and truly I must say, my heart bleeds for them. O! who is a Christian, that will not do what he can, to lift them out of their debasement, and impart a share of that light which has been put into our hands, to those brothers of the same family, and heirs of the same dangers? I fear, I fear it must double our condemnation in the end, if we have so despised the Gospel, as to think it not worth while to let our fellow-sinners know of it.

How would your feeling hearts be filled with pity to hear of some of the absurd customs and frightful rites that prevail among the Pagan tribes about us. Sometimes they will dance all the night long round large fires, uttering hideous yells, and exhausting their strength in the most frantic gestures; and then, when ready to faint, and covered profusely with sweat, they will expose their naked bodies to the cold air, or roll themselves in the snow, if the season affords it: and after all is done, having

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* See Brow

drugged themselves with spirituous liquors, they will "fall asleep in the open air, perhaps buried in the snow."* And then if, as must frequently occur after these frantic orgies, violent fevers or other diseases carry some of them suddenly off, they will often assemble with their Powaws, (that is, their priests or conjurers,) to inquire of the invisible powers, who it is that has poisoned or murdered their brethren. Then they befool and fatigue themselves with still more pitiful absurdities and incantations than those I have alluded to, sitting round a place prepared for their priests, and singing, howling, and beating with their sticks, sometimes for a whole hour, while the Powaws continue muttering to themselves, and acting their part of the senseless mummery. Then they will betake themselves again to their frantic gesticulations. I shall never forget the frightful description of one of their chief Powaws, which I heard from the mouth of a clergyman in New

* See Brown's Hist. of the Propagation of Christianity.

York. Only figure to yourselves a human being in the guise he described—with “ a coat of bearskins hanging down to his toes, a bearskin cap on his head, and a pair of bearskin stockings on his feet—a large wooden face, the one half painted black, the other half of a tawny colour like the Indians, with an extravagant mouth cut extremely awry—in his hand the instrument he employed for music in his idolatrous worship—a tortoise-shell with some corn in it, fixed on a piece of wood for a handle. With this he beat time as he danced, but allowed no part of his body, not even his fingers to be seen.”*

I will disgust you no further with these details. Thanks to the exertions of Christian benevolence, the dawn of a better Faith is breaking at length upon these wastes. Yes, thanks to the benevolence of the Christian religion! “ The wilderness and the solitary place will yet be glad for her, and the desert will rejoice and blossom as

* See Life of Brainerd.

the rose." The Indians are far from being averse to the reception of the Gospel. Though their priests do what they can to calumniate the intentions of the missionaries, and the traffickers in spirituous liquors, dreading a diminution in the sale of their poison, vilely second these misrepresentations; yet frequently the native sense of the Indians, who cannot but observe the superior civilization of the Christians, and who feel in their consciences that all is not right between them and the Great Spirit, carries it against the whole influence of the gainsayers, and they receive those who come to teach them with good will, and listen to their words with attention and seriousness. I will give you an account of what has come under my own observation.

As I returned to New York from Boston, I was informed that a few miles from the inn in which I staid, a number of Indians were to assemble on the Sabbath, for the purpose of giving ear, the most of them for the first time, to the blessed words of the Christian Faith. I hailed the opportunity of being present at the interesting

scene.* By the time I arrived, a great many Indians had assembled. There was no house sufficiently large to contain them, and therefore they were to hear the word of Christ, as those often did who flocked around the footsteps of the great first Preacher himself, seated upon the ground, under the open canopy of heaven. A spot was selected at some distance from their habitations. The lofty foliage of the forest hemmed it in on one side, while a broad stream that passed among their huts skirted it on the other.

When the venerable messenger of Jesus arrived, along with the friends who had borne him company on his way, several of the oldest Indians of the tribe came forth

* While I have adopted this mode of introducing, to my reader's notice, a few of the most interesting points that occur in the history of the North American missions, it is proper that I should state to him, that though here thus combined into one scene, they have been gathered from a variety of occasions. For the authenticity of the facts, and many of the sentiments brought forward, I refer him to the records of these missions; particularly to Brown's History of the Propagation of Christianity—*passim*. Where I have adopted the actual language of the occasion the reader will find it marked.

from their wigwams, and advanced to meet him; and after they had presented him with the Calumet of peace, as the pledge of a friendly welcome among them, they conducted him and his companions to a rising ground, where they had covered a table with one of their mats of plaited straw, and over which the spreading branches of a chesnut-tree waved their golden canopy.

I could scarce refrain my tears, when I saw the skies of the desert thus looking down upon the opened Word of God, and the red children of the woods bending their serious looks upon the messenger of immortal peace.

After a short prayer, the man of God lifted before them the volume of revelation, and, stretching forth his hand, called upon them to listen to him. I shall never forget the solemnity of the scene. He used not their own language, and, as few of them understood English, an interpreter was necessary; and thus I had time to ponder the simple truths he spoke; and though I had often heard them before, I think they never, till that moment affected me so deeply.

He discoursed, first of all, of the Creation of this world; how God had called it into its present state out of nothing, and covered it with the beauty of light as with a garment. Then he lifted their thoughts, above the earth, to Heaven, where the Almighty sitteth for ever on his holy throne, and the Angels, who have never fallen, serve him day and night, and delight to do his pleasure. Then he spoke of Man, made glorious in his first estate, and moving, without the knowledge of evil, among the untainted delights of an exuberant paradise. Then he told them of the Fall, when man disobeyed his Maker, and the sword of God's displeasure waved round the happy gardens, and the impotent rebel was driven forth at length, to know a darker lot, with evil and death following everywhere his footsteps. Then he read the Law given forth amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai, and the awful threatenings denounced against every one who fails to abide in the pure way of its holiness. "Then are all men, you will say," continued he, "certainly ruined and undone. Listen, my

brethren, this is not the whole which the blessed book of the word of God contains. Your fears are very just, for no man had kept the law, and there was not a human being who had not incurred the fearful punishments of God. What then, think you, was God's determination with regard to us? He could have eased him of his adversaries by one mandate of annihilation. But no, my dear brethren, this was not God's character. He looked down from his heaven, and thought upon us in mercy. What then did he do? He could not break or lower his law. He asked if there was none to save, no means to prevent the sons of men from falling all away into everlasting ruin. Then his own Son, the brightness of his glory, stood forth in our behalf, and his voice was heard in heaven, saying, 'Save from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' Yea, he himself offered to become one of us, for our salvation, and bear, in his own sinless person, the penalty which we deserved. And he did become one of us; he came down from yon heaven to this sinful earth, and making the dumb

speak, and the lame walk, and the blind see,
 yea, and even the dead arise; and exhibit-
 ing to the world a pattern of perfect human
 excellence, and submitting to the death of
 the cross, and rising again the first born
 from the dead, he completed his great mis-
 sion, and ascended to heaven again. And
 now the sons of men are called to repent, to
 confess their own want of righteousness, and
 flee to the great Redeemer for pardon and
 purification. You are *all* invited to come;
 his message was to all the children of men.
 Hear and rejoice, O children of the forest!
 the message has come to *you*: believe and
 ye shall live."

The dark visaged audience were all,
 from the first, very serious and attentive;
 but many of them wept when we preached
 unto them JESUS. For my own part, I
 have never felt the goodness of his grace
 more deeply, or more touchingly than at
 that interesting moment. The next sub-
 ject the preacher touched upon was Death,
 and what should be hereafter. He dis-
 coursed of that happy state, where the re-
 deemed should live for ever surrounded with

Heaven's joy, in a perfect holiness before the Lord: and lastly, he discoursed to them of that place of outer darkness, to which the despisers of God's grace should be banished, where hope comes no more, but evil presides for ever, where God himself hath told us, there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Scarce a breath was heard through the still assembly. They looked at the preacher, and looked at one another, as if with this inquiry, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

They were asked if they understood that which had been spoken to them. They said, "they understood all." And when invited to put queries about the matters they had heard, one of them very naturally asked—"How the English came to differ so much from the Indians in their knowledge of God, and the Saviour from sin, if as the great Book said, which they were told was God's word, they had all but one Father. It was replied to this, that the revelations of Heaven had been at first committed to one nation alone, whom God

chose from among the rest to be the depositaries of his oracles; but after Jesus Christ had come, he had ordered his followers to carry it abroad to all the nations of the earth. In progress of time, it had been brought to the nation of the English, and now according to Christ's injunction, they had come to make it known to their Indian brethren. May the Great Spirit bless you, replied the Indian, you are men of kind hearts. We are very thankful for your coming among us, and for the good news which you have brought. The things which you show us "are very wonderful to our ears."

Another asked, "how a man might come to know Jesus Christ," who had so come down from Heaven to save us? Pray to him, was the reply. He will hear you from his holy dwelling-place above, and give his good Spirit into your heart, if you ask it. So you will be sanctified, and at your death he will receive you.

Another inquired, "if Jesus Christ would hear prayers addressed to him in the Indian language," (the opening prayer had been in

English.) Yes, it was answered, Christ will listen to any language, provided it be the language of the heart: whether you speak aloud, or whether you silently think to him, he will graciously attend to the humble petition.

Another of them put this question, How it came to pass that the white people, who had that book called the Bible, which was full of the knowledge of the Great Spirit, and of his will, were guilty of so many evil deeds, nay, were often worse than the Indians. “The white people,” said he, “lie, and drink, and steal, more than their red brethren. It was they who first taught the children of the Forest to drink, and they steal from one another to such a degree, that their chiefs are obliged to hang them, yet all this does not deter others from committing the same crime.” True, it was replied, the white people had the Bible, but many of them loved their sins better, and would not receive that Bible’s sayings. These were Christians only in name—they were not true Christians. “All good Chris-

tians abhorred such practices, and did not wish the Indians to learn them."

After this an old man arose. The snow of many years was white upon his head. His dusky face wore the air of deep earnestness and anxiety, and, with tears in his eyes, he bade the interpreter ask, "Whether it was not too late for such an old man as he, who was now near death, to repent and seek after God?"

It was not one alone over whose cheeks the big tears had rolled this day; but there was one woman who was observed to shed tears more profusely than the rest. The question was put to her, "why she wept so?" She said, "when she thought how the Son of God came down from heaven, and was slain like a lamb, and shed his blood for sinners, she could not but weep" for his great love.

After this a person of superior mien and attire, the same who had, at the beginning, received the Missionary Apostle, rose, and laying his hand upon his heart, addressed him in this manner.—"Man of God, we thank you with our hearts. 'You have

come like a father and a true friend, to advise us for our good.' 'We hope that the bright chain of friendship shall henceforth exist between us,' and that nothing will happen to break it or to dim its brightness. 'We have been attending for many years to the vast difference between white people and Indians. We have laboured much to investigate the cause. The one appears to be the favourites of heaven, and honourable in the sight of men—the other to be despised and rejected of both. We, Indians, therefore, must alter our conduct. We must give up our pagan customs. We must unite with all our wisdom and strength, to cultivate the manners and civilization of the white people.' 'We believe it was the will of the great good Spirit, that your forefathers were brought over the great waters for a certain good purpose. Our forefathers then appeared like tall trees, but they were under the dark clouds.' 'Father and brothers, we should be very glad to have some good man among us, to teach us the meaning of the beloved speech in the good book called the Bible; for we are in

darkness—you have much light;’ come then to help us, and light the torch in our dwellings. ‘We wish our children to learn to read, that they may be civilized, and happy when we are gone; that they may understand the good speech better than we can. Will you not then pity us and our children, and send a schoolmaster to teach our children to read and write. If you will, we will rejoice, we will love him, we will do all we can to make him happy.’ We repeat our request, that you will send some one ‘to sit by our fireside, to watch over us, to instruct us, and to lead us in the way to heaven.’”*

Do you not weep for these poor people? And yet, my dear mother, I have met with men, who will shake their heads and doubt, when you talk of any exertions for imparting the blessing of our Christianity to the poor Indian tribes. I have heard one even

* This speech, as my reader is aware, is made up from a variety of occasions; and if he cannot therefore, consider it as the voice of one individual, let him consider it, what it really is, the united voice of many hearts from the deserts of Pagan America, coming at once to his ear, and entreating him.

say, that he thought them better without it. Alas! alas! do they hold the Indians as brutes, who have no accountable souls, and are not worthy of Christian brotherly kindness? They say it makes them worse. O! surely they mistake. It is never what we give them of pure and true Christianity that makes them worse. It is the contagion of the depravity of those ungodly men, who, though they have been baptized into the Christian name, are, in reality, no Christians. *These* have indeed corrupted the Indians. Genuine Christianity has corrupted them not.

I only wish all those who dread the effects of Christianity being introduced among the Indians, had been with me last week, when I visited the Tuscarora village. Yes, if the sight of growing domestic comfort, and cleanliness, and contented industry, of reason unbinding the fetters of superstition, and civilization teaching her milder manners, and a Christian Sabbath conducting to the house of prayer the footsteps of many meek and rejoicing worshippers—if these things have any charms for them, let

them go to Tuscarora. And when they have contrasted* what here meets the eye with the depravities and superstitions to be found among their heathen brethren; when they have remarked their neater cottages, their sabbath hall, and school house; their children learning to read, and their females to spin; their fields of wheat, and Indian corn, smiling peacefully around them; their savage orgies and idolatrous feasts now all given up; the ugly sight of drunkenness no longer, at least scarcely, to be seen; so much general harmony prevailing, that you can scarce avoid crying out, "Behold, how *these Indians* love one another!" then let them lay their hands upon their hearts, and say, whether Christianity which works such good effects as these, is a thing that so much deserves their calumny and their scorn.

* Hear the testimony of an Indian chief himself, who was a Pagan. "The contrast, he confessed, was striking, between the sobriety, industry, and comfort of the Tuscaroras, and the drunkenness, idleness, and misery of the Senekas." See that interesting little work "Duncan's Sabbath among the Tuscarora Indians."

Ha! what a very long letter this has grown. But I hope you will not complain, since it respects the dissemination of the knowledge of Christ. I must defer all further details of my excursions, till the next opportunity I have of writing you. We go on in New York as usual. All my uncle's family desire to be kindly remembered to my mother and my brother. Omit no opportunity to write, and believe that I remain, yours,

With constant affection,

GILBERT STEWART.

After nearly three years had elapsed, and all was going on prosperously with his uncle, and Gilbert, by his attention and steady good conduct, had raised himself very high in the estimation of the company, it occurred to Mr. Stewart to propose, as a reward for his nephew's behaviour, to invite his brother out to take part in the same duties, and his mother to spend her old days happily with them in New York. Gilbert's eyes glistened with tears of joy at the idea. He did not speak, for his heart was full,

but his uncle saw that the proposal pleased him. "Well," said he, "so it shall be, and you yourself, Gilbert, if you please, will be the messenger. We have some business at this moment to be transacted in Glasgow, which I should wish to be attended to by a person on the spot. We cannot intrust it to better hands than yours. Therefore prepare to go out in the good ship Hope, about the beginning of next month. The same vessel will bring you all back, if you can get matters so speedily arranged."

The whole of this plan delighted Gilbert beyond measure. How happy, thought he, shall we now be—all pleasantly together. Here my poor mother will be relieved from her loneliness, and will spend the closing days of her pilgrimage in peace. From this time, he busied himself at every leisure moment in constructing an arbour in a recess in the garden, looking forth in front upon a parterre of flowers, and commanding behind a view of the broad waters of the Hudson. The plan was soon completed with the assistance of the gardener and his cousins; and when his uncle and aunt in-

quired what he was about. "Dear uncle," he said, "indulge me for once in a childish fancy. I have taken it into my head that this is somewhat like the spot where my mother's cottage stands in Roseneath; and here I wish to bring the good lady when she comes, where she may sit in the evening sunshine, and tell us tales of old Scotland, or knit her stocking thriftily, or read her pious book." "You are a kind lad," replied his uncle, "be it even so." One thing more he desired, that he might have liberty to place an inscription within it, and just the day before he set sail, he finished with his penknife this filial motto, "My Mother's Bower."

At length, setting out for his native land again, his heart bounded with a thousand pleasing anticipations, all unconscious of the scenes of sorrow which there awaited him: and though "The Hope" careered over the surge with a prosperous rapidity, yet seemed it not a little tardy and tedious to the impatience and eagerness of the affectionate messenger.

CHAPTER IV.

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And might it be, that while ingenuous woe  
 Bleeds thro' the verse; while the succeeding page  
 Weaving with my sad story the detail  
 Of crimes, and punishments, and prisons drear,  
 Of present life and future—sad discourse  
 And serious shall contain; O! might it be,  
 That human hearts may listen and improve;  
 O! might it be, that benefit to souls  
 Flow from the weeping tablet.

DODD.

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AFTER nearly a month of weary sailing,
 as Gilbert had just finished his morning
 orison, and had commended himself to the
 care of his heavenly Father for the day, his
 ears were saluted with the joyful sound,
 that land was in sight. He hastened on
 deck to ascertain the truth, and to feast his
 longing eyes on the wished-for prospect.
 Creation was just clothing itself with its
 mantle of light, and the native land of the
 mariners was seen breaking, with its blue
 hills, the uniform line of the horizon.

The favouring breeze did not slacken,

till they entered the Frith of Clyde. How our young voyager's heart palpitated as he looked up its narrowing channel! All the son and the brother awoke tenderly in his soul; and it was in vain that he strove to restrain the warm and rapturous tear which blinded his eye, as it rested at length upon the fair and sunny slope of his own Rose-neath once more. As they neared the peninsula, in beating up the channel, he prevailed on the captain to allow him to be set on shore.

And now he was on Scottish ground again—on the scene of his childish sports—the place where he had first been taught to lift his erring heart to heaven, and to “worship his Creator in the days of his youth.” And now was he drawing nearer and nearer his mother's home—the abode of so much affection, tenderness, and piety. In a few minutes he would lift the latch, and rejoice her old heart with his messages of gladness. Allan, too, would come over, and hear the happy news, and one day of joy would be spent again on the banks of sweet Lochgare.

As he passed along, almost every new object brought the tear of memory and delight into his eye, while all-unconsciously something of the stripling's pride mingled with the gush of these rising emotions. It was no longer the boy, who had tripped it through these woods with the vagrant train of vacant and merry childhood; or who had been noted by the passenger taking his way along the shore, with his book under his arm, passing to or returning from school. He was now the youth of eighteen, who had visited foreign climes, and had rocked for days and nights upon the wide and weltering deep. The dawn of manhood was now beginning to shade his ruddy cheek, and altogether to the distant and respectful glance of the villagers, his appearance was that of some youthful stranger intent upon their scenes of rich rural beauty. He hurried through the village, half-noting his old friends, half-turning his eyes away that he might avoid interruption. At length his eye catches in the distance his widow-mother's dwelling, and all the filial power of childhood returned overwhelmingly

upon him, dissolving his spirit into sudden tenderness and tears.

She is not upon her wonted seat before the cottage-door. Scarce a tiny vapour from the chimney tells that there is life within. Ah! little dreams she that her Gilbert's step is on her threshold! He lightly raised the latch. There is she, his mother, still in the weeds of her widowhood, but seemingly at this moment in the distress of some extraordinary affliction—wringing her spent hands, and raising an eye of agony to heaven, drowned in tears, and red with the traces of no ordinary sorrow. He hesitated whether to approach. The kind pastor of the parish was administering some words of comfort. He had heard of Mrs. Stewart's distress, and his Christian mind, alike attentive to maintain the too oft neglected interests of piety among the great, and to visit with its consolation the cottages of the poor, had brought him promptly hither in this heavy hour of need. What could it be! Gilbert listened, if he might gather it from the words of the comforter—some fearful calamity, which, it was plain,

his tenderness ever shrunk from any direct allusion to. Gilbert could hold no longer—"My dear, dear mother! what is this that fills the house with lamentation? And is it thus I am to find you, when I have crossed the seas to visit you?"

The widow looked up—started—it was her son—flew from her seat to clasp him to her breast—"My dear, dear Gilbert!" Nature could not sustain this additional struggle. She would have sunk to the earth, had she not been supported by the arm of the young stranger. It was with difficulty she was conducted back to her seat, and prevented from swooning away by a cup of cold water which her Gilbert promptly administered to her lips. "And what calamity has befallen, dear Mr. Melville," said the youth, "that has caused my mother such distress?" "Inquire not at present, my dear Gilbert," said the pastor. "Speak not of it, I pray you, till your mother gets composed. Mrs. Stewart do try to compose yourself. You will seriously injure yourself, if you think so deeply of this matter. Bear it like a Chris-

tian. It is a hard case, no doubt; but the Father of mercies can yield to those who look to him, a support and a guidance even in such an extremity." "O! that I should have ever lived to have seen this dismal day. Your brother, Gilbert, is in prison. It was only yesterday I heard of it. He is to be tried to-morrow—and you—why have you come at this moment to witness his disgrace and mine?" "Allan in prison!" cried Gibert. "Surely it cannot be! What has he done; what has he been guilty of?" "O! how could he do it," cried the distracted mother. "Why did I ever send him from this poor home of mine? He has fallen among bad companions—they have ruined my poor boy!" "Mrs. Stewart," said the kindly visitor, "there is yet some hope. I would not deceive you by speaking too flatteringly, but there is yet a chance that your son may be restored to you. The issue of the trial is doubtful. At all events, it becomes you, as a Christian, while you groan under this dispensation of heaven, to try to bring the best out of it. Come weal or come woe, let us

hope, at least for God's grace to your son. Human justice has only power over the body. The rescued spirit may be plucked, like a brand, from the burning." "That indeed," said the mother, "is a comfortable hope; but O! is there not an awful fear that also mingles with it? How will God clear the guilty, unless they be washed in the blood of the Saviour?" "I do not deny," replied the pastor, "that this anxiety is well-founded. Ours is still the part of fear and trembling. But with God all things are possible. The working of his grace is beyond all human hope. The evil heart may be changed. The sinner may be brought to repentance. The light of a consoling faith may arise upon the awakened conscience. The inmate of the dungeon may become the spiritual prisoner of hope. The malefactor may ascend from the cross to the paradise of his Lord. Allan has sinned in God's sight, as have we, one and all; but, I think I may say, he is not hardened in sin. The good seed you and I once attempted to sow in his heart may yet spring up, if God is pleased to shed down

his spiritual influences. The sun of righteousness may arise upon him with healing in his rays: and the grace which has begun in the hour of darkest calamity may rise up above the sorrows of the tomb, and, in the end, it may be given to flourish gloriously in an immortal life."

With these suggestions, the mind of Mrs. Stewart was somewhat calmed. The high and consoling truths of Christianity shed, as they ever do, an elevating sacredness over her spirit, that mitigated the intensity of the earthly distress. "At least it is my duty to go to visit the poor culprit," said she, "and try what a mother's tears, and a mother's prayers, can do to lead him yet to the Lord, and make his Eternity happy, if so be, that no smile of happiness more is doomed to fall upon his earthly life. Gilbert, it is a melancholy work this you have come to, but you will not refuse to accompany me to Allan's dungeon, and assist me to sooth him, and comfort him, and raise his thoughts upward from this world of sin and sorrow to a better." "But what is his crime," said Gilbert, "you have

not yet told me that. I cannot think Allan could be guilty of a felony." His mother, who had risen from her seat, again sunk down upon it. "He is accused," said Mr. Melville, "since I must tell you, of having committed a forgery upon the Greenock Bank. He is indicted to stand trial to-morrow. I cannot forbid you to go to see him, though I should fear it might be too much for Mrs. Stewart."

Remonstrances were vain, however, with the distressed mother:—"She rest at home, while her Allan was groaning in a dungeon! she must, she must be to Glasgow this very night." Gilbert refused to taste what was offered him. His heart was full for his poor brother, and throbbing with anxiety, and his impatience to be gone was now scarce less intense than that of his mother, who was, by this time, busying herself in making hasty arrangements for the journey.

Mr. Melville accompanied them to the ferry-house, from which is the passage across the Gare-loch from the peninsula to the mainland. Helensburgh afforded them no

ready conveyance; and ill as she could stand it, Mrs. Stewart insisted on proceeding instantly to Dumbarton on foot. The effort, however, was beyond her strength. It was with extreme difficulty that she reached the last mentioned place; and, against all the strongest impulses of her will, she was obliged to stop there for the night, to recruit exhausted nature for the morrow's painful task. Few and short were her snatches of sleep. Images of terror—dungeons, gibbets, and executioners rose in her feverish dreams. The only balm of her pillow was to call upon her God. The humble heart never cries to HIM in vain. “Have mercy upon me, O gracious Father! have mercy upon me, and upon my children. If it be thy will, O! preserve to us his life: if not, at least interpose thy grace, and, if his life be taken away, save his precious soul. Save him from going down to the pit, for the sake of thine own promised ransom.”

The morning had not long dawned before our travellers were both at the door of the inn where they had lodged, impatient

of the delays which prevented their immediate departure. At length the conveyance they expected took them up, and with dismal thoughts and heavy hearts, they found themselves gradually approaching the dreaded scene, where they must meet their dear Allan, in the midst of ignominy and bitterness.

They arrived in Glasgow a little after nine o'clock. The streets were unusually crowded. Some pageant, it appeared, was drawing all eyes towards it. It was the Lords of Justiciary passing to the courthouse! The idle multitude were flocking round them to witness the awful pomp, and to delight their ears with the shrill trumpet's breath, that nearer and nearer sung its note of despair into the trembling heart of those whose doom was depending. Ah! how felt the mother and the brother at that moment! Mingling with the crowd, they saw the pageant pass; and every merry laugh and unfeeling joke of the populace went to their hearts like a blow of cruelty.

They hurry to the jail. They ask for Allan Stewart. They cannot be admitted

at present. That is the young man whose trial comes on first. He is to be put immediately to the bar. With much entreaty they obtained a place in court. They ventured not to whisper that they were—his mother and his brother! The Judges are upon the bench. The Jury are taking their solemn oath of equity. The court is thronged with careless spectators. Ah! here were two to whom it was no merry sight! They took their places in a corner, trembling and heart-sick. Scarce could they lift their eyes upon the solemn scene; and O! how did they shrink from the sounds of the coming footsteps which attracted from all sides the idle eyes of curiosity. It is the pannel brought up from the prison—and now he stands at the bar between the liveried officers. “It is my own son,” said Mrs. Stewart’s heart, as her eyes caught the pale face of the culprit, “my own fair-haired Allan, who used to make my evenings pass away so cheery! O sin! what a fearful thing thou art! How can any one love thee, since such is thy end!

And must we all come to this, at the judgment-seat of God!"

The indictment was read, charging Allan Stewart with a forgery. He is asked, whether he is Guilty or Not Guilty of this charge. "Not guilty, my Lord," was his faltering reply. "Not guilty!"—it bounded to the widow's heart with rapture—"He says he is 'not guilty'—then is he innocent yet—when was my Allan known to speak a falsehood?"

The trial, however, solemnly proceeds. The proof is brought forward on the part of the public prosecutor; and as, one after another, the witnesses give in their testimony, scarce a mother can deny, that the case looks not well. The able advocate, who had undertaken Allan's cause, made a very feeling address to the jury, and adduced several ingenious defences of his client, at once exculpatory and palliative. But, alas! it would not do. The crime had been fully proved and clearly brought home to the prisoner at the bar. Every word of the impartial Judge fell like thunder upon

the hearts of the widow and Gilbert, quenching at length the last lingerings of their hope, and seeming to cover the courthouse with the gloom of death. The verdict of the Jury was unanimous and unhesitating; but in consideration of the youth, the contrite appearance, and previous good character of the offender, they, at the same time, with one voice, strongly recommended him to mercy. The sentence of the law must, however, be passed. The Judge warned him not to count too much upon the recommendation of the Jury. His was a crime too dangerous in a commercial country to be often visited with the lenity of the crown. He advised him, "to pass the short time that remained to him in sincere penitence and Christian meditation: that, though it was a fearful thing to be deprived for one's crimes of the blessed light of life, it was still more fearful to fall without redemption into the hands of the living God. Therefore, my young man, be advised, and take warning. To you *this* tribunal has a solemn aspect; but what is it to the tribunal before which we must soon all stand? If

this world; evil as it is, must exact such punishments for crime, how shall the ungodly and the sinner appear, when confronted by the awful holiness of Heaven? Evil would over-run the universe, if the guilty were easily cleared. But, blessed be God! there *is a way* of pardon and recovery. The ministers of the gospel, who shall visit you in your cell, will make it better known to you than I at present can. Listen to their instructions, young man, my heart bleeds for you. May God forgive you—and may your soul be saved.”

The sentence of the court was now formally passed. Its tremendous tenor was, that “on such a day, and at such an hour, for the crime of forgery proved against him, he should hang between heaven and earth, till he be dead, dead!” Gilbert’s knees were rattling against each other, and the cold sweat of horror exuded from every pore, as he heard these final words pronounced over his brother. For the widow! the breathlessness of still wistful expectation alone preserved her from fainting away. Stupified and thunderstruck, her agonized

spirit had not yet perceived the correct impression of all that she had heard. Poor Allan stood firm before the pitying spectators. His thoughts seemed occupied more with some deep distant grief than with his present fate. Pale as death, his lips had not ventured on a single utterance; but meekly bowing to the Judges, he yielded himself to the officers, who now prepared to lead him back to his cell.

Gilbert and his mother, as soon as they could, made their way out of the court. They told their errand to the jailor, and entreated to be allowed admission to the criminal who had just been condemned. The jailor bade them follow him, while he led the way along a dusky passage to a strongly mailed door. Then, with his large key, turning the jarring bolts, he gave them the hapless sight of the felon in his fetters. It was too much. The eyes of a tender-hearted mother could not stand it. They swooned to sudden dimness, and she fell back into Gilbert's arms; while Allan sprung from his seat, and coming as near as his clanking chain would let him, exclaimed in a wild agony, "My mother

and my brother! and is it thus we meet again? O God, forgive me!" Gilbert hastened to fetch some water; and sprinkling it upon the widows hands and face, she awoke to the oppressive sense of her situation again. The jailor permitted them to enter the cell: then, having locked the massive door upon them, he went off to his other duties.

Now was there a scene of heavy agony and tears. "Allan! my poor brother! have we lived to see this day!" "Despair! despair!" cried Allan, "what have I done? why did I put my hand to that pernicious work! And how is that *you* too have come to be witness of my disgrace!" "I came over," replied Gilbert, "on business of my uncle's. It was but yesterday I landed in Scotland, and heard of your unfortunate situation. But, is it true, that you were really guilty of this forgery? I thought you said to the Judge, in court, that you were not guilty."

Allan. I was advised to say so. You will say, this was adding crime to crime. The advocate thought he could bring me off: but you see it did not do. O mother,

can you forgive me ! can you yet so grasp my hand, dear Gilbert, as a brother ! Yes, yes, I was guilty. I was enticed by bad companions. They led me to expenses, which were too much for my income: and when, if I had but kept in the simple paths of piety and affection, I might, like a dutiful son, have been administering my small pittance to your needs, I had plunged myself deep into debt—till, with shame and ruin before me, in an evil hour, I applied my skill in engraving, to this work for which I now wear these felon's chains. Little, mother, did you think, when you received the last packet of money from me, that that was any thing else than the savings of honest industry: and little, I am sure, Gilbert, you thought, as you crossed the wide ocean, that you were coming to see poor Allan hang on the gallow's-tree.

Gilbert. My brother, my dear brother, do not fall into despair. What can be done, we will do to save you. In the mean time, let us humbly look up to God, as we used to do of old, for comfort: yes, let us look to him; he will not fail us now in our hour of need.

Allan. Oh! call up no remembrances of piety and peace to me. You tell me to look to God—how can *I* look to him? This only adds darkness to the gloom of my despair. God, yes God! the God we used to pray to—I have of late forgotten: his service I have neglected; his days I have mispent; prayer has been a stranger to my lips; and now I cannot—I cannot pray. There is no salvation for a wretch like me! O! I see Heaven's gates yonder, closing upon me—see they are now barred against me—against me for ever! My portion is outer darkness, with the spirits that have no hope! Farewell! farewell! I am separated from you eternally!

Gilbert. Allan! my dear Allan! do not give way to these dreadful thoughts. Your mind is disordered by the events of this day; nor can I wonder at it, for I feel that neither am I, at this moment, myself. But let us try to compose ourselves, and lift our minds to better thoughts. Say not that, at the worst, you are yet an outcast from God. Remember his own words—“he has no pleasure in the death of any; but rather that even the wicked should turn

from his way and live."—Yet, yet you *may* come back to him; he will not cast you out. There is efficacy in the blood of Christ to wash away all your sins, if, from this hour, in your heart, you do truly repent and believe in him. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Remember these words, my brother, and let some hope yet drop its balm upon your agony. God is still waiting to be gracious. There is yet access in Christ. Nay, hide not thus your face. We love you yet, and will pray for you. Come, let us draw our hearts again together in one of those sweet psalms which used to compose all our differences long ago. Memory will supply the well-known language. Hear, your old mother approves that it should be so.

It was a trying attempt. Tears and bursting sobs broke in on every line. Yet it was soothing. It somewhat calmed away the anguish of their hearts. A holy serenity descended upon their spirits; and a gleam of Heaven's peace, for a moment,

seemed to irradiate the darkness of the cell. It was a part of the 102d Psalm they chose, and they sung it to the slow and plaintive tune of the Martyrs.

Allan sobbed aloud, as they concluded the last verse. His own voice mingling again in a cry to heaven, with that of his dear mother, and that of his brother, still the same, though deepened to a manlier tone, reminded him so forcibly of the innocence and simplicity of former days, that his spirit had almost soared above the gloom of his present situation; till his eye falling upon his pallet of straw, and his chain clanking upon his legs, as he moved to look upon his brother, brought him suddenly back to the sense of the lamentable plight into which *his* crimes had now plunged them all.—O! I do not deserve this, my mother, and my brother! you lift not a look of upbraiding upon me; you speak not a word of anger!—what will not the servants of Jesus do!—but this tenderness is too much. Go and live happy. I am unworthy you should thus come unto me. What have I done! what ruin have I brought upon you!”

“Think not of us, my dear Allan,” said the widow, “God will yet provide. Think now but of yourself, and of the saving of your precious soul. The redemption of Christ is open, even to the chief of sinners. While life remains to us, it is not too late to repent. There is not one that has not sinned: and O! there is not one, but the grace of God may yet lead back unto his holiness.”

Allan. And think you there can be a way, even for the return of such a one as I?

Widow. Assuredly there is; the way of simple faith in Christ, and of sincere repentance.

Allan. O pray then for me, that this grace may be given unto me—and stretch forth your hand, once more, in forgiveness, and yet bless me, even me also, O my mother!

The jailor now opened the door of the cell to say, that certain arrangements would render it necessary for the strangers to leave the prison for the present. To-morrow they might have access for a little, if they so desired. The prisoner was to be transferred to another and securer cell. The

brothers embraced, and grasped each other's hands, and the mother, bidding her poor boy farewell, entreated God to bless him, and be with him till they returned.

This transference being made, the prisoner was left to the unmitigated solitude and bitterness of his own reflections. The sentence of death upon his head, and the darkness of ignominy upon his name—his reflections were dismal indeed, beyond all description of language. Why did he ever leave the safe and happy line of his duty? why did he listen to the voice of the enticer, when a better voice had ever spoken in his heart—"Beware, beware, you know these courses to be wrong." Why had he forgotten the regular reading of God's word, which, as long as he had continued it, had raised a bulwark around his path, that successfully repelled all the assaults of the wicked one? Why had he given up his early habits of prayer, that made his heart a sanctuary, into which evil was afraid to enter? Why had he trampled on the law of his mother? Why had he sought his own pleasure on God's holy day, and presumed that he had a right to employ the

blessed Sabbath as it pleased him? Ah! it was on the Sabbath his hand had grasped the fatal tool. Its solitude, and its secrecy, he had taken advantage of, to ply the guilty work! How could he forget that the eye of God looked down upon his doings! How could he expect, but that the hand of God's providence would have brought him to this! He had deceived his friends; but how could he so wofully miscalculate, as to leave out of his account the holy cognizance of that greater Being, whose omniscience cannot be deceived, and whose holiness is armed with an avenging power, unescapable and eternal against every form of iniquity! O! how had he forget himself! Had he escaped the active vigilance of mere human justice, how was he to escape the sure and unerring judgment of Heaven! Was there no tribunal, but that he had this day stood before, which would search into, and expose the secrets of his history? O! then how Eternity rose upon his sight! the purity of Heaven's kingdom, for ever purging away from itself every approach of evil! the light of God's omniscience, at last let forth upon the whole dark history of our

world! the heart-struck, and shrinking, and abhorrent look of sin, before the flaming chariot of the descending Judge! the gathered myriads of men standing, at length, before that very solemn tribunal! the books which contained the secret history of every individual! the ministering angels standing forth to tell how their oft-repeated messages of mercy had been slighted and spurned! the prophets rising from their graves with their words of heavy accusation! the Saviour himself, now wearing his crown of glory—his eyes a flame of fire against those who had stood out against his offered gospel! Behold a sight at last to make the hardest sinner quake! The period of the Almighty's long-suffering is now come to a close! The Angel, with his trumpet, is standing on the sea, and, through the vault of Heaven, the echoing voice resounds, "that Time shall be no longer! The day of final wrath and retribution is come! and who, of the sons of Adam, shall now be able to stand?"—Evil and good may mingle no more. The middle place of Earth, swallowed in a devouring conflagration, is now but smoke and ashes. The pride of human

life hath passed away for ever. Paradise or the Pit, high Heaven or Hell, are now the sole and awful alternatives. O! is there a son of man that can abide this tremendous hour? Where is he, that has goodness sufficient to stand before his God? The mighty multitude are mute—not one of all can say, I have done good and sinned not in thy sight. Who then are these that are saved; for some take the right hand of the Judge—angels make way for them—they are robed in white, and palms of victory adorn their hands! The Saviour receives them! They are those for whom he died. Their sins have been altogether washed away in his blood. Theirs is the endless blissfulness of Heaven. But how came they there? had they merit in themselves? No, they laid hold of the rich mercies of the Gospel. “Come ye blessed,” says the voice of the Judge, “your sorrows are now over; enter into joy. All now is yours, believers in my promises, for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. This is the consummation ye waited to see; behold the joy that cometh in the morning! But, as for the rest, the despisers of my

grace, who would never endure that I should rule over them; who rejected my yoke of holiness, and would have none of my salvation; ah! now the day of their reward hath come! behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! Ye rejected my timely counsels; ye mocked at my kind reproofs! Depart then, depart from me for ever, ye lovers of iniquity!"

Such thoughts and visions flashed through the prisoner's mind. *He* was a heavy sinner, even in the estimation of this world, though little, indeed, had been discovered to its eyes, of the conscious evil and depravity of his heart. Could he then hope for pardon at the hand of God? This was an awful thought: it brought him prostrate to the ground. "Then am I ruined," he exclaimed, "both for this world and the next!" Thus long he lay, an image of despair—till, at length, that Scripture's long-forgotten language descended upon his agony, like the dropping of balm—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "Sure this, said he, has a voice

to me, for I am chief of sinners. But can it be true, that the holy God has love even for me? Is it possible indeed, that I should yet return and be saved? Would not pure Heaven abhor my presence? O! I abhor myself! Great God! what am I, that thou shouldst think of me in mercy!"

Painful as these reflections were, they yet shed a mysterious calm into the sufferer's soul. He even ventured, at length, upon the unwonted exercise of prayer: and, sad as was the doom that was now hanging over his head, before many hours of the evening had tolled their weary knell, his exhausted spirit was given to taste the balm of a sweet repose.

His dreams were of the innocence and peace of his early days—the contentment of his mother's cottage—the sweet Sabbath School of Roseneath: but when his eyes opened, at length, upon the dim twilight of his dungeon, and he recollected what he now was, and what had brought him to that state, ah! then, all tranquillity departed again: reflection and conscience came upon him with their daggers.

CHAPTER V.

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 Heaven saved ONE THIEF, that no one might despair,  
 But only ONE, that no one might presume.  
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HIS mother and brother, when they left the cell, had passed on for a while in a state of blank stupefaction, scarce knowing whither they went. They durst not lift their eyes from the ground, for every object around appeared to be invested with the consciousness of their disgrace, and every new look of the careless passenger sent into their hearts new thoughts of shame and sorrow. Gilbert had letters of introduction from his uncle to several wealthy families in the city; but feeling that to develope at present the darling object of his return to Scotland would only add to the intenseness of his mother's distress, he ventured not a word to her, either of his own hopes or of his uncle's wishes: and the widow timidly shrinking, in this the day of her disgrace, from the happy friends of her former affluence, they took up an obscure lodging not

far from the jail, that they might pass readily, and unrecognised, to the apartment of the culprit. Here, all absorbed in the fate of her poor boy, the widow passed her dreary hours, when she was not permitted to be with him in the cell. Attention to the business with which he had been intrusted by his uncle, demanded some part of Gilbert's time; but most of it he devoted to what he rightly deemed, in the present circumstances, the still more imperative business to which at once affection, and pity, and Christian charity called him.

Not a day, therefore, passed without the attendance of both in the cell, where they employed every act of kindness and earnest solicitude, to break, with the radiance of Christian faith and hope, the fearful gloom of Allan's despair, to assure him of *their* forgiveness, and to lead him to understand that there might be extended even to him the forgiveness of God: since it was not the righteous that Christ came to call, (for no truly righteous in the wide world there were;) that it was the express object of the whole scheme of mercy devised for man in heaven to call the unrighteous, as

we all were, to repentance: that the errand of the good Shepherd into this region of the creation was not, rigorously to visit each with the just retribution of his merits or demerits, since at that rate his award had been solely the recompense of evil for evil; but it was, blessed be Heaven's mercy! to seek and to save those who were lost: to gather the sheep, who had wandered, back to the fold of God.

“But think you, think you,” cried Allan “the good Shepherd can ever regard one so rebellious and so lost as I? I heard of all this before, and yet I never thought of taking it to myself. How were all your instructions and prayers lost upon me! You set the gospel before me, but it never came into my heart. I saw not then at all in sin, what these chains and this dungeon have taught me. I looked not upon the end of life, and the opening of Eternity, in that light in which they appear to me now—now that my days are numbered. And for the scheme of Heaven's mercy, of which I heard so much, I saw no beauty in it, that I should desire it. The holiness of God, and such doctrines of religion, seemed to me

all only matters of mystery, and irksome and empty sounds. Ah! *now* I see their truth breaking fearfully upon my lost soul, through the gates of death—*now* would I cry to God, but, alas! it is too late. I see wondrous beauty in the Saviour at last; but no, no, no! it is not for me! I have sinned against the clearest light—there remaineth nought for me but a certain, fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation!”

Gilbert. My dear brother, think not and speak not thus. You dishonour the greatness of divine grace. The goodness of God is not stinted like man's. It still waits and waits, entreating the sinner to repent. It still rejoices in his return, even at the latest hour, provided that return be in unfeigned sincerity. If God hath opened your eyes at last, even by the power of this sorrowful dispensation, rejoice, yea, rejoice, my brother, that even so you have learned Christ. The eyes of the thief, you know, were opened upon the very cross, and assurance visited him from the lips of the suffering Saviour himself, that that very day his regenerated spirit should ascend to Paradise. O! say not, and think not, it is yet too late

for you. There is mercy, mercy, mercy ! to the last, if only you will see your former sin as abhorrent, and sincerely desire to leave it, and henceforth to serve the Lord in the beauty of his holiness. The blood of Christ's atonement can wash out of the soul the deepest taint of its evil, the darkest crimson of its sins. Seek but, dear Allan, to the Cross in implicit self-abasement, and gratitude, and faith; and then, though we must grieve, and that bitterly, at your death, we may yet not be forced to grieve as those who have no Christian hope to cheer them in the death and departure of their friends; the consolation may remain to us that you are happy in the other world, and that, if *we* live the life, and die the death of the righteous, we may meet you yet with joy in heaven, at the Saviour's right hand.

Allan. No, no, no! these hopes are not for me; I repented not, nor believed, when it was time for me to repent. I know that He to whom we go at last is not one that will be mocked. He will not receive me now, who refused to come to him before. I know that to be partakers of the salvation

he bestows, we must come to him not out of constraint but willingly, not driven by sudden terror, but attracted by cordial love. And since I despised all his counsel, while life and liberty remained to me, it is but just that now he should laugh at my calamity, and mock when my fear cometh.

Widow. Nay, my dear Allan, think not so hardly of God. Certainly he is not one that will be mocked, nor will the ear of his Omniscience endure one word of the hypocrite's prayer; but the sincere penitent he will never reject, and however late be his coming, if, awakened at length, he do come in genuine faith, he will not—yea he himself hath declared it, he will not cast him out. Various are the means his mercy employs. Some he leads gently to himself and his salvation, by the simple voice of effectual instruction; to rescue others more hardy, he is forced to use the rod: but it were wrong to look upon these chastisements as the final declarations of his wrath. And now, my son, if God will save you, as it were by fire, and turn your evil to the praise of his glorious grace, why

would you set at nought this way of his mercy?

Allan. I would not, I would not! if they were the instruments of bringing me yet to one sure ray of Christian hope, I could even now almost love these fetters. But how can I know whether God has given me a sincere repentance? May not all my present conviction of sin be only the gleamings of an alarmed conscience, looking down upon a ruined Eternity? May not all my present apprehension of the cross, be but the desperate graspings of a drowning soul for safety; and all the confessions that are now extorted from me, but the confessions of a man upon the rack? If I were once at liberty and in ease of mind again, would I retain my present keen sense of sin, and my present keen sense of the need of a Mediator? How can you assure me, that I yet retain not in my heart all the virulence of my natural ungodliness; and if opportunity occurred, that I would not slide back again into the tempting ways of sin, though at present they so distinctly appear to me to be the ways of destruction? No, no! it is not for me to

hope! as long as I could, I served the ways of sin, and now that my feet are bound round with iron, is it seemly that *I* should look up to heaven for pardon?"

Such were now the rather hopeful workings of Allan's mind: hopeful we call them, because, though affording little present comfort to his spirit, they involved some of the first steps of the regenerated life, a strong conviction of his own utter unworthiness, and a profound sense of the essential holiness of the Divine character and government. Would that we had all attained such a right view of things! Then would the grandeur of Heaven's grace indeed appear to us; the cross of Calvary would be seen invested in its true glory, and there would be nothing in all the earth which we should delight in or prefer before it. Allan had a sufficient extent of religious knowledge to be aware, that, though God desired our salvation, he would not accept the sacrifice of constraint: that the sinner who grasps at the offers of reconciliation merely as a refuge from the terrors of coming vengeance, and not from the constraining of gratitude and love, and not from a cor-

dial admiration of the Divine character, is yet far from being in the state which God approveth; that the kingdom of eternal holiness must be sought for its own sake; and that the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness would never be vouchsafed, if it was sought merely to cover the shameful multitude of our sins, which yet we had not the will nor the resolution from our hearts to renounce. Therefore it was anxiety that predominated in his conscience, and he strongly feared it were mere presumption in him, to take any comfort from these all-environmental hopes which his mother and brother so tenderly administered to him.

They were not, however, without the trust, that Allan's was now somewhat a hopeful state; and though the fond idea which they had at first cherished, that he would one day have an opportunity of effectually evincing the sincerity of his repentance, being restored to them, and the duties of the Christian life again; had by this time begun to wane from anxiety into darkness; they still consoled themselves in their distress with the humble hope, that his death, when that awful event should

come about, would not be altogether the death of an alien, and that his spirit would be received on high, purified by the washing of regeneration, and renewed by the Spirit of grace into the glorious image of God, and a fitness for his presence.

Mr. Melville, the affectionate pastor of Roseneath, had read to his grief the trial and condemnation of Allan Stewart, and being touched to the heart, both with sympathy for the mother, and a tender concern for the poor culprit who had, not many years before, been on the list of his Sabbath-scholars, he was only prevented by the pressing duties of his parish from visiting immediately the scene of their distress; and he seized the first opportunity that presented itself of making his way to Glasgow, to alleviate, if he might, with the soothing applications of Christian tenderness, the agony of distressed affection, and the gloom of the malefactor's cell.

Allan was much affected by this kindness of the man of God. "This is very kind, Mr. Melville," said he, "I did not deserve it of you—I who have strayed so far from the line of your admonitions. Ah!

if I had but taken to heart the instructions you often gave me, I had not this day drawn the footsteps of my friends to the dreary cells of a prison; but here you see me now, the monument of the consequences that flow from the neglect and abuse of good opportunities, a disgrace to my friends, and I fear an outcast from God.

Mr. Melville. It grieves me, Allan, indeed, to see you in this place; yet am I happy to find you in this contrite state of mind. But take heart: the Lord is merciful and giveth grace to the contrite. You remember what you used to repeat to me—
 “When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient to his voice, He will not forsake thee. Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord.”

In this strain the good Mr. Melville comforted the prisoner. From the rich stores of the Word of Truth, he brought forth again many of those precious sayings which had passed between them before. But O! now with how different an effect! God had touched with his Spirit the heart

of the careless one. He had redeemed it, by his love, from its natural alienation. The irksome mystery which, to the unrenewed mind, rests upon spiritual things, he had withdrawn; and now every sweet and important word of the truth, fell, like the dropping of dew, into his soul. Here was God's messenger speaking to him in the tones of kindness, *he* also pointing his hopes to the *mercy* of Heaven. His soul could not stand it. It overwhelmed him quite. "O! yes, these are precious sayings, and worthy of all acceptation," said he, and wringing Mr. Melville's hand, he wept bitterly.

CHAPTER VI.

There is an hour of peaceful rest,
 To mourning wanderers given;
 There is a calm for souls distressed,
 A balm for every troubled breast—
 'Tis found above—in Heaven.

There Faith lifts up the tearful eye,
 The heart with anguish riven;
 And views the tempest passing by,
 The evening shadows quickly fly,
 And all serene—in Heaven.

AT length hope deferred was beginning to make the heart sick. The cloud of their anxiety was hourly darkening around the poor family whose story we are tracing. The period of eager expectation was now drawing to a close. The day of despair was at last within their view. But three sleepless nights remained, before that morning should arise, which would, to them, clothe the heavens with sackcloth. A reprieve had arrived for another culprit, but not a word of mercy for Allan Stewart. The staff of the widow's fortitude began to shake under her. Powerful nature was

invading the empire of religious trust. She had written to every friend she had, or dared approach, who might have it in their power to make any interest for her son. "Is it then," said she, as she rose from her knees to make her way to the prison, "is it then all of no avail! and must he die! O Heaven! give me strength to stand this bitter trial. Give me strength to administer to his lips the cup of charity to the last. My poor boy! my poor boy! O will his soul be safe, when it goes to meet its God. May I have this assurance, then will I die in peace; and when the careless crowd have had their gaze at him, we will go to heaven together, never, never again to sin or sorrow more." With these thoughts she hastened to the cell. A deadlier paleness than usual gathered upon the culprit's look, as she showed her face of tears at the grated aperture in the door; and after it had closed on its creaking hinges, they both sat for a long while in that bitter dumbness, which speaks, more than words or tears, the rending agony of the spirit. "Well, mother," at length said Allan, still covering with his hand his aching forehead, "it will soon be

over now. Do you forgive me, as I do hope forgiveness of my Maker?" "O rend not my heart," said she, "with asking *my* forgiveness. Come, lay your head upon my bosom, you are yet my dear, dear son. How your forehead burns!—let me wipe it with this napkin. Ask not my forgiveness again; I hope a better forgiveness is yours: and though human justice will not relax its sternness, I cannot but hope that Divine justice will yet smile upon you, my son, in the face of the Anointed.

Thus they spent the time till Gilbert joined them. He brought a little wine and bread, and they partook of it together. Their converse gradually turned upon Heaven, and its sweet and holy joys. There, no more liable to sin, the redeemed of the Lord shall see his face for ever. There, a life of exulting holiness will number out to them its bright and happy days. Every thought will be pure, every prospect will be cloudless, every accent of the lip will be praise to the Lord, and every action of the hand fraught with the high reward of conscious uprightness. The fruit of the tree of life shall be their food. The bitter

fruit of the knowledge of evil they shall taste no more. Of the rivers of eternal pleasure they shall drink their fill. They shall unite their voices in a Psalm, and shall have the radiant presence of the Father in the midst of them. Not a thought of sorrow more will pass across their spirits; not a shade of evil again will come to obscure the rapture and rejoicing of their long eternity.

So spent they this evening, and poured a healing balm into the bosom of him who was to suffer. When they left him for the night, the widow repeated over him her prayer for heaven's forgiveness, and entreated that the holy Comforter might descend into his heart, with a blessing of grace that might never, never pass away: and Allan, clasping her hand in his, and pressing it to his lips, clung to this parting, as if it had been the last; while the struggling sob of prophetic affection choked in either throat the utterance of the word "farewell."

The effort of this day had been beyond the widow's strength. It was with difficulty that her son could support her footsteps

homeward. He trusted, however, that the rest of the night would restore her strength. "But why should I live," said she, "why should I live to see to-morrow's light? Nay nay, my weary pilgrimage is done; I will not look upon the day when the idle crowd shall flock together to witness my Allan's death."

Sleep however did somewhat relieve her; but the burning agony had gone from her heart to her head, and she awoke to the light of day in a very high state of fever. Gilbert felt it his duty to seek the assistance of a surgeon; but he had not gone far on this filial errand, when he was stopped by one of the prison-officers, who came running up to him, relaxing his dark features, for a moment, into a smile—"I have good news for you, Sir," said he, "a pardon has this hour arrived for your brother." "Do you say true, my good fellow," said Gilbert, grasping the officer's hand, "and when will he be liberated?" "Immediately, as I understand, Sir," replied the officer. "Ah!" said Gilbert, "this is the true medicine. I was running for Dr. ———. Will you be so good as

to bring him to our lodgings, while I hasten back to inform the poor lad's mother of your joyful news." "That I will," said the man, while Gilbert hastened back to his mother's room. "He is safe, he is safe! a pardon has arrived," cried he, as he drew the curtain aside. His mother turned a stare of wild delirious vacancy upon him. "Their hearts are stone," she exclaimed, "they have no bowels of pity—let him go, you gloomy jailor, he is as innocent of it as a lamb—why do you put fetters on his legs—Allan! my dear Allan!—nay now, hold off, let me wipe his burning brow—take a little wine, you are pale, pale, poor boy!" "Mother, he is safe; a pardon has arrived," said Gilbert, gently taking her hand, and trying to soothe away the delirium that oppressed her. But without hearing or heeding him, she still continued to rave, "Why are the people running so; my Allan is to be pardoned—I heard a sweet voice saying that a pardon had come—O glorious angel! have you brought a pardon for my Allan?—Stop, stop the execution—take off the rope from his neck—do not pull that white night-cap over his face

—my boy is pardoned—bring him down from the scaffold—the fire in my cottage is out; but we will kindle it, Allan,—Gilbert has come from America to see us——”

This passionate burst of delirium relieved her brain. She sunk down upon the pillow with a more composed look. Her reason returned to her. She saw Gilbert standing by her bedside, and she stretched forth her hand to him to bid him good morning. “May God’s blessing, my son, be upon us this day.” “I am,” said Gilbert, “the messenger of God’s blessing. Compose yourself, and hearken to me, I have good news to tell you. A pardon has, at length, arrived for Allan. It will not be long till he is at liberty. We will be happy yet. Uncle Joseph wishes us all to go out to him to New-York. “O God be praised for this goodness,” said Mrs. Stewart: yes, he causeth the widow’s heart to sing for joy. May you both live long and happy with your good uncle, though it will not be permitted to me to see it. I feel, I feel my hour is come. Might I but be allowed to see my dear Allan restored to us! I should then die happy. O! hath not the

Lord dealt kindly with his handmaid—I trust it will be given me to see my God in peace—Gilbert, I feel that I am dying—give me your hand. May God’s grace be upon you both, and keep you in the way of truth. Comfort your poor brother, and watch over his footsteps. Here—take this ring; it is almost all I have to leave you. Your father gave it me—it will be a memorial of her, who prayed over your childhood. Live in peace with poor Allan; and O! above all, live as you would die.”

Her strength almost spent itself upon these parting words. The surgeon, who had, by this time arrived, only applied himself to sooth her departure. Gilbert presented some wine to her lips, but they refused to taste it. Her breast heaved with a few convulsive sobs. She clasped Gilbert’s hands between hers, and looking up with the languor of death in her face, “I know that my Redeemer liveth”—she said; then drawing a long sigh, she turned her head from the light, and in a few moments—her spirit had departed.

I will not attempt to describe the state of her affectionate son—the darkness that

came over his soul—the stupefaction—the long agony. It seemed to him as if the world were reeling round, and the firm earth under his feet were giving way. A fearful duty remained to him, to apprise his brother of the event. He dreaded the consequence of his bursting in unapprized. He hurried therefore to the cell, if, perchance, he might anticipate the moment of his liberation. But no: Allan was seen, not far from the house, hurrying towards it, on the arm of the kind-hearted pastor of Roseneath. There was an air of eagerness and suppressed joy upon their faces. Gilbert knew not how to meet them. He could not lift his eye from the ground; but—“Stop,” said he, “stop, I pray you: you must not go home to our lodgings at present. I cannot tell you the reason; but do turn back a little.” “What, not let my poor mother,” said Allan, “see that I am free! Do you mean to jest, Gilbert? Nay now, I must go on.”

Gilbert. Look in my face, Allan, and see whether I jest or not. O! would that I could jest, and that every thing were joy for the light-hearted spirit that has just re-

gained its freedom; but, O my brother, how shall I communicate the tidings: your mother?"——

Allan. Speak, has any evil come upon her?

Gilbert. No, I trust not; but you and I shall share her care no more.

Allan. What mean you; speak plainly.

Gilbert. Then, brother, you and I are orphans. Our mother is beyond the reach of evil. It is only her clay-cold corpse that your house contains.

Allan. O worse than all! *my* crimes have killed her. No, no, look not on me pitifully: there is no balm in Gilead for this.

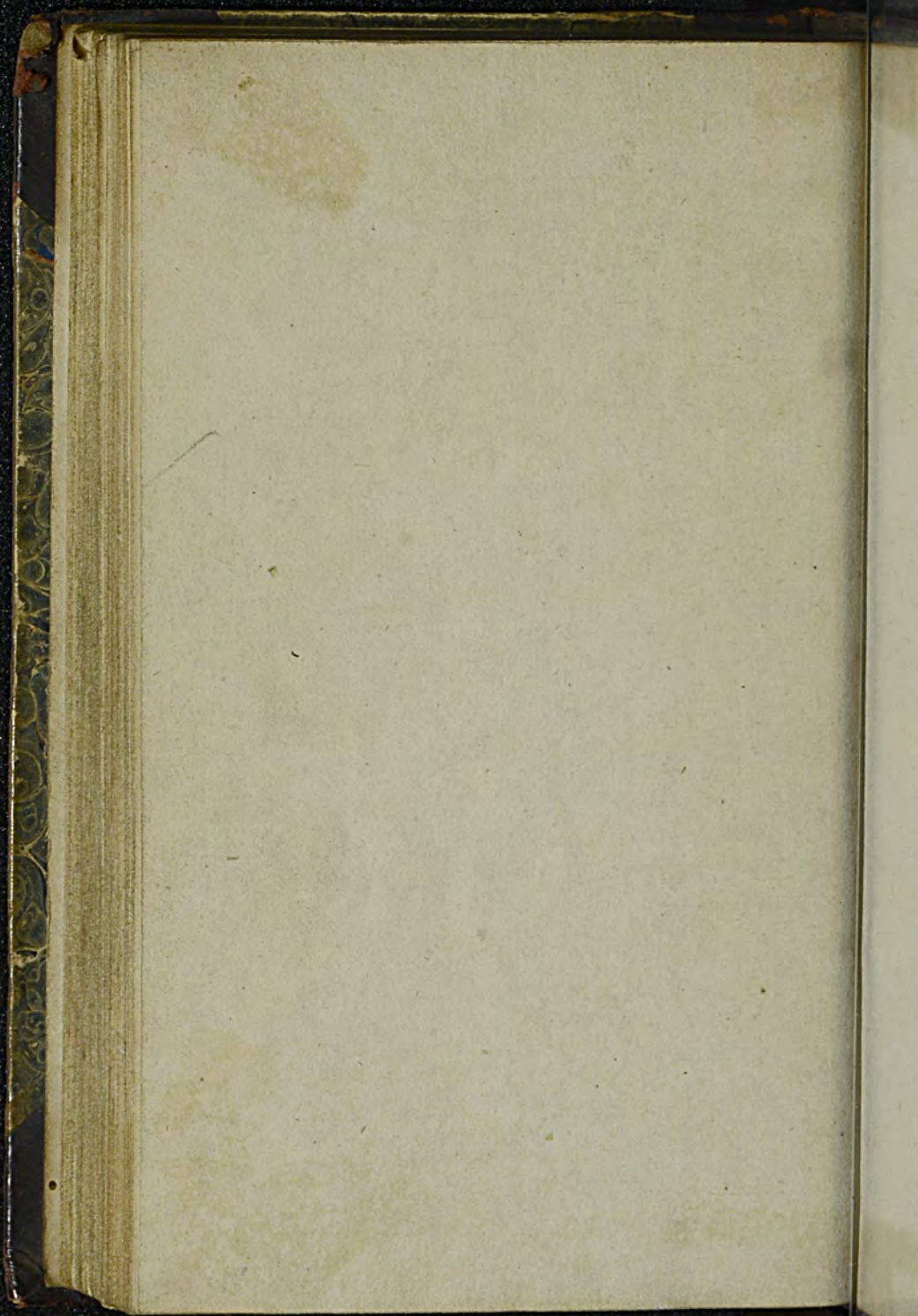
It was a hard duty the Christian comforter had now to perform. There was no power in words to take off the dumb oppression of this hour. It was in vain to try to dissipate the gloom that had now fallen, with its blackness, upon the radiant promise of this morning: and, when that face of surpassing affection was seen—now stiffening to marble upon its pillow; and that eye which used to melt with such floods of maternal tenderness, looked forth now dim and glassy from beneath the drooping eye-lid—and all lay there, still and composed, for the

narrow house; it was in vain to speak the words of Christian advice. . One look within those curtains—surpassed a thousand homilies.

Nor need I protract, with obvious moralizing, the melancholy scene. Wisdom's lessons are brief. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. They bore their mother's corpse to the lonely retirement of her widowhood. They saw her quietly interred beneath the smooth green sod. They trusted that her spirit was happy at length, in the mansions of the redeemed. They put their hands upon their eyes, as they left their native land. They turned away in tears, when they came in sight of the Bower, all beautifully smiling on the banks of the Hudson. They mourned for their mother many days, and forgot not her lessons of piety. They lived long to serve the Lord, and promote his kingdom among men: but Gilbert used, with tears, to remark of his brother, that from the hour he had been told of his mother's death, he never once was seen to smile again.

THE END.

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