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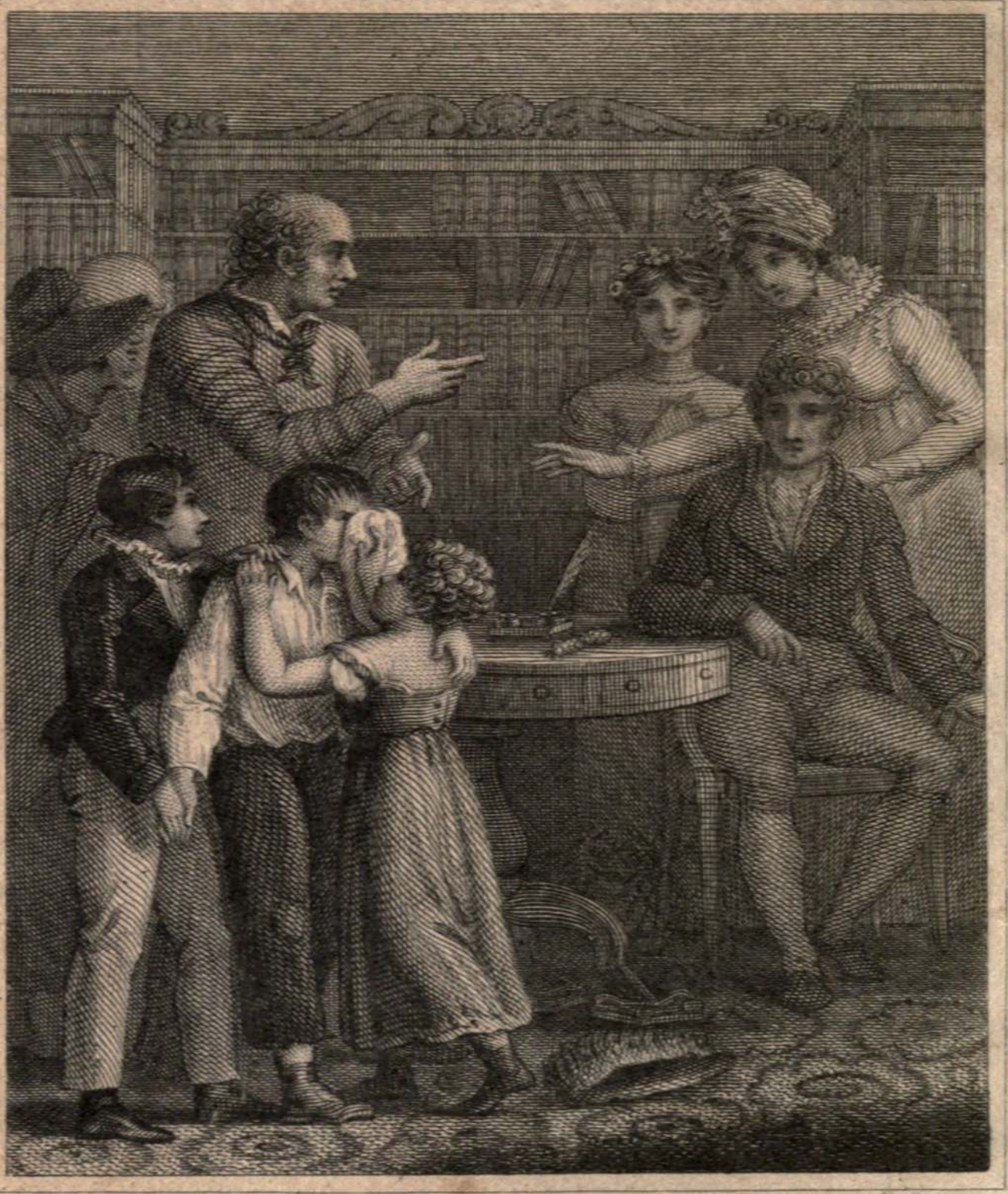

H. Corbould. Del. J. Springsguth. Sculp.

Frederick took hold of Jack's hand, and his affectionate sister Peggy, threw her arms about his neck & wiped the tears from his eyes.

pa. 76.

THE

FISHER-BOY

OF WEYMOUTH:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE PET DONKEY,

AND

THE SISTERS.

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THE FISHER-BOY

OF

WEYMOUTH.

CHAP. I.

THE summer was now far advanced, and Nature assuming a varied hue, gave notice of the approach of autumn. The fashionable world hastened from town, and repaired in crowds to the sea-side.

It must be owned, it seems at first rather surprising, that the rich and great should neglect their elegant and well-furnished houses, their beautiful estates and gardens, to squeeze into miserable lodgings, where there is neither comfort nor accommodation—but then, "to inhale the sea-breezes" is *absolutely necessary*, in order to recruit for the next winter's London

campaign: and still more it is necessary to follow the general custom, and to do as others do.

I may venture to assert, however, that neither of these excellent reasons had any weight with Lord and Lady Berlington; it was partly to indulge their own taste for the beauties of Nature, and partly to gratify the wishes of their daughter Emily, (who had never yet beheld the sea), that they were induced to join the gay crowds who now resorted to Weymouth. Emily and her brother Frederick had long looked forward to this promised scheme; and they now witnessed the preparations for the journey with the eager delight natural to youth.

The pleasure of Emily was however a little damped, at being separated from her younger sister, who, as she was not yet of an age to share in the amusements of a public place, was to be left at home with her Governess. Cecilia was arrived at that stage of her life,

when the sweet anticipation of what is to come, scarcely compensates for present mortification and sorrow; and when time, appearing to fly on "leaden wing," is wholly employed in expectation of future bliss. She was now compelled to look on, an unconcerned spectator, while all the bustle previous to a journey took place; and while the lady's-maid, the old housekeeper, and the faithful butler, seemed to vie with one another, as to which could display the most zeal and activity in preparation.

"Poor Miss Cecilia," said good Mrs. Comfit, in a voice of condolence, (as she passed and re-passed with her jars of sweetmeats)—"poor dear heart, I wonder how my Lady could think of leaving poor dear Miss Cecy behind; but Comfit will do any thing to please her, and she shall go to the store-room, and have as much of the sweetmeats as ever she likes."

"For my part, Mrs. Comfit," said the lady's-maid, "I think it's a sin and a shame,

that poor Miss Cecilia shouldn't be taken out with her sister. I hate *partialities;* if I was my Lady, I shouldn't make no distinctions between my own."

Happily for Cecilia, she was possessed of good sense and a sweet temper; these foolish speeches, therefore, had no ill effect upon her; she knew that her indulgent and beloved mother had good reasons for leaving her at home; and while she looked forward to her next birthday as the æra of her happiness, endeavoured to bear with cheerful content the mortification of being left behind on the present occasion.

When the morning of departure at length arrived, she was the first to awaken the whole house, who arose to breakfast by candle-light. She assisted her sister to dress, made tea for her mother, and flew about the house like a little Ariel, to fetch or do any thing that was wanted. A willing activity, and a readiness to assist and oblige, are always felt to be delightful; but, as in the present instance, in the

hour of hurry and bustle, their effects are invaluable.

The barouche and four now waited at the door, and Mrs. Herbert, the lady's-maid, what with her impatience to be off, and her fears lest any thing belonging to her own, and her mistress's wardrobe, should have been forgot, was in a state of agitation not easily described.

"Are the trunks corded?" she screamed out from the head of the stairs: "Mr. Richard, James, are the trunks corded?"

"Bless us, one and all!" bawled the old housekeeper, bustling this way and that, among the most active—"You're all so in the way, let me get by, for goodness sake; I shall never have all the sweets in else!"

"Here's my Lady's band-boxes; don't forget the band-boxes," again called out Mrs. Herbert—"I know something will be forgot, I'm quite certain of it; I never went a journey with my Lady in my life, that something wasn't left behind."

"No, nothing shall be forgot," said the good-natured Cecilia; "I will watch, and see that every thing is sent. I have almost finished packing Emily's jewel-box; but I must just put in my coral necklace, because she has not got one; and just my pearl clasp, because I know she likes to wear it: let me see, is there any thing else I can think of to lend her."

"No, nothing else, dear good Cecilia," said Emily, who had overheard her sister's conversation: "You have already lent me more than I like to take from you. Ah!" said she, tenderly embracing her, "how much pleasanter will a journey of this sort be, when we can partake of it together, Cecilia!"

The party now stepped into the carriage, and Mrs. Comfit with pride and satisfaction repeated incessantly, "every thing is in, my Lady, a pleasant journey to your Ladyship; every thing is in: you may shut up the door, James, if you please; every thing is in."

"Stop, one moment stop," called out the

breathless Cecilia, as she approached the door, running swiftly, her hands filled with flowers. "They are all out of my garden," cried she, throwing them into her mother's lap—"God bless you!" said she faintly, and with a forced smile as the carriage rolled off, and the tears for the first time rushed into her eyes.

After an easy and pleasant journey, our travellers approached the town of Weymouth, and came in view of the sea. It was a fine evening; the sails of the distant vessels seemed to be tipped with gold, and the rays of the setting sun were beautifully reflected upon the water. The delight and admiration which the first view of the sea presents to a reflecting mind, cannot be described. Emily was lost in pleasing wonder; her faculties were absorbed in contemplating the scene before her, and she was wholly silent. Her brother Frederick, however, a lively boy of about twelve years of age, expressed his delight with artless eloquence.

As they entered the town they heard the band, which was at that time playing on the public walk, while a crowd of gay-looking people were walking backwards and forwards to the sound of the music. Behind them the shops and houses were gaily illuminated. To Emily and her brother, all seemed enchantment; all was to them so new, so beautiful, that they believed themselves in Fairy Land. When Emily retired to rest, the sound of the music still resounded in her ears; she still fancied she beheld the gay procession on the public walk, and the beauties of the setting sun reflected on the water.

CHAP. II.

MANY of my readers who frequent watering places, have no doubt remarked, that after sun-set, the sea is often covered with a sort of gloomy fog, and presents to the eye nothing but a dark and dreary expanse. At this time it is that the weary labourer returns to his wife and his fire-side; a light is seen burning in every little cottage along the shore; the music is silent, and the gay crowds are dispersed: even the little tribe of children, who, from the first dawn of light have been playing about on the beach, and running with little sisters and brothers up to the knees in the water, are safely housed, and fast asleep.

But while some are at rest, it is now that the poor fisherman launches his boat, and sets out upon his dangerous and toilsome expedition: happy it is for him, however, that he

possesses the means of obtaining an honest livelihood, and of supporting his numerous family; his dreary voyage is well repaid, when, as the cheerful morning dawns, he brings to shore his heavy draught of different kinds of fish; sorts, and offers them for sale at the doors of the stranger gentry, and afterwards in the market. How happy is he, when he has been through the town, and returns to his well-earned meal, and delivers up his gains in the hands of his faithful wife; while she, on her part, has prepared a comfortable fire and breakfast, to warm and cheer him, and stands expecting him at the door.

Poor John Smith was the father of a numerous family; he had been the most laborious of the fishermen of Weymouth for many a year, but now it was his hard lot to be frequently disabled from going out with his boat, by violent attacks of rheumatism. On these occasions poor John Smith's spirits sunk, as he lay suffering in bed; and recollecting that he had no

other means of providing food, and clothes, and home to his faithful partner and his children, "God help my darlings," he would say, when the fit was worse than usual, "what will ever become of you all!" and then he cast his tearful eyes upon the numerous little ones that surrounded him!

"To be sure, John," Ellen his wife would reply, "times are hard just now, and my being so weak and sickly doesn't mend the matter: but we must do as well as we can, and hope the best."

"Hope, wife! ah, money won't come for hoping: now that I have got this playguey rheumatism, and can't go out fishing, we shall be left without a farthing to buy bread with, and then where will be the good of *hoping*?"

"It is always good to be content, dear John, happen what will: you know our boy Jack is already of some use in the boat, and often earns a trifle, by lending a help to the

fishermen ; and he is so good and so clever, he will soon be strong enough to throw a net as well as you, and then he will be able to go out in your place, husband."

" Yes, Ellen, in three or four years or so, mayhap he'll be able, as you say ; but what is to become of you all in the mean time ?"

" Heaven will take care of us, John, if we do our best to take care of ourselves."

" What is it you mean by take care of ourselves, Ellen?"

" I mean, if we take care to do our duty, and to be as good as we can. But we must not look with a repining eye upon these our little ones, John, for they were given to cheer and bless us, I am sure they were," cried Ellen, kissing her baby as she spoke, and wiping off her tears with its little hand.

One evening when such a dialogue had been passing, Jack their boy came in, and seeing that his mother had been crying, he endea-

youred to divert her attention. "What a blowing night it is!" cried he, "no boat will go out to-night, father, and you will be well again before the wind changes."

"And before you have finished mending my net, boy, or I'm much mistaken."

"No, indeed, father, for Peggy and I have been hard at work at it all day: but it is so very old—"

"Aye, as old as your father, Jack; we're both worn out, and unfit for service, methinks, and may both be laid by together. Come, children, what do ye stay up so late for? there, Peggy, child, put up the net and go to bed."

Peggy had worked hard all day, her eyes ached, and her fingers were tired; but when her father spoke to her so peevishly, she knew that he was ill, and in pain, and she put up the net with great good humour, and went to rest.

After they were in bed, Jack and Peggy

contrived to talk to one another through the thin broken wall which separated them.

"Brother," said Peggy, "are you asleep?"

"No, not yet, I am thinking of poor father;—how very bad it must be to suffer such pain."

"It must, indeed, Jack; I wish there was any thing we could do to please him."

"If we can finish mending his net, it will please him very much."

"It will be but a poor old thing, after all our pains, brother; but I was thinking, if we could any how contrive to net him a new one. Don't you think, by getting up *very*, *very* early, and working *very* hard all day, we might at last, brother?"

"Perhaps we might, Peggy; it is a very good thought of yours:—but how shall we ever get twine for it? you know, mother can hardly afford to buy enough to mend the old one with; and it will take balls and balls to make a whole one."

"Oh, but we have got a little to begin with, and by the time it is all gone, we may perhaps have money to buy more;—we may spend all the halfpence we get in string; and perhaps we *may* have enough in time: we can but try, you know, Jack."

"Well, so we will; and I hope to my heart we shall succeed. But I am afraid we do not quite know the right way of doing it."

"Oh, but Dame Chapman our neighbour knows, for I have heard her say, that she was taught to make nets when she was young: she will tell us the way; but we must not let father know any thing about it, till it is quite done, brother."

"But how shall we manage, Peggy? he will see us at work at it."

"I have thought what to do, brother;—we must get up every morning very early, and take our work down upon the beach; father, you know, is too ill to go out, and he will

think we are at play with the children in the village, as we used to do."

"Ah, so we must, Peggy: I long for the morning, to begin."

When Peggy fell asleep, she dreamed of sitting on the beach, and beginning her work; but her dream, alas! was not encouraging; she made no progress: the stitches undid as fast as she tied them—for one moment the prospect changed; she was on the point of finishing the net, a great wave came and washed it away: in her eagerness to grasp at it she awoke, and perceiving the sun was rising, she called to her brother to get up. They took with them a piece of bread that was allotted for their breakfast, and hastening to the beach, they sat down side by side, and began their work; and with so real an energy, and hearty desire to accomplish it, that in spite of the crowds of children of all ages who were sprawling and screaming

round them, enticing them to play, and endeavouring to hinder them in every possible way, they continued steadily intent upon their work, and towards the middle of the day, had made some perceptible progress.

CHAP. III.

The first view of the Berlingtons at Weymouth, as is usual when persons of distinction arrive at a watering-place, was now the general topic of conversation among the visitors and inhabitants of the town. "Have you heard of the grand arrival?" said one to another; and "did you see the barouche and four drive into the town yesterday? Oh, such an elegant equipage, and such a charming livery, crimson and gold! I always thought the Berlingtons were dashing people. They say her Ladyship has brought her eldest daughter here, to bring her out this season. Did you see her at the window just now, Miss Peerabout? she was standing quite in view as I was passing: and, would you believe it, she drew back when she saw me staring at her.

I hear she's a great beauty; but they say too she's very shy, poor thing."

In the mean time, the unconscious Emily, who had withdrawn to fetch her work, had seated herself at the open window, and was enjoying at the same moment a delightful view of the sea, and the conversation of her mother. Their quiet, however, was now to be constantly interrupted by the entrance of visitors, who, from a mixture of politeness and curiosity, were all eager to court the acquaintance of Lady Berlington.

A grand ball was to take place in a few days, and Emily was to appear in public for the first time: this ball was the constant topic of conversation during the stay of the morning visitors, who failed not to enquire, "whether Miss Berlington was to grace the assembly?" and to repeat their surmises, that "Miss Berlington would be quite the *belle* of the room." The Miss Colfords, in particular, with whom Emily had formerly some slight

acquaintance, were now eager to be thought intimate friends, and were continually dropping in, as they called it, to settle about the ball. "My dearest Emily," said the eldest Miss Colford, one morning, "we are come to request such a favour of you—"

"Indeed!" said Emily: "what can it be?"

"Why, you know, dear, in the first place, this is to be the grandest ball we've had in the neighbourhood for many years. It is given by the Officers, you know, and they always do things so handsomely: do they not, Sophia?"

"Oh dear, yes; and the room will be so crowded, for all the world will be there: we shall hardly have room to dance, I dare say."

"I hope that will not be the case," said Emily, "for I am very fond of dancing."

"Oh, I don't care a pin about dancing," replied Miss Colford; "I think that is the least part of the pleasure; but I do certainly look

forward to this ball, my dear Emily: every body will wear fancy dresses, and—"

"Is that the reason you expect so much pleaure?" asked Emily, smiling.

"Not entirely, but I think half the delight is preparing one's dress. Sophia and I mean to have blue satin and silver, and we come on purpose to entreat you to have the same."

"Do, dear girl, said Sophia, do let us go dressed in uniform; we shall look like the three Graces, and be so admired."

"Nay, don't make a joke of it, Sophia," said her sister, laughing. "Seriously, Emily, it will be a most becoming dress for you: will it not?" said they, both appealing to Lord Berlington at the same instant.

"I have no doubt it would, replied his Lordship, smiling: in a matter of taste, I would not for the world differ in opinion from such excellent judges."

Emily hardly knew what reply to make to

the persuasions of her fair friends. Her dress, both as to taste and expence, had hitherto been wholly regulated by her mother. She felt, however, at this moment, a sort of false shame, which forbade her to acknowledge this; and a fear of offending them by a refusal, prompted her to give a sort of indecisive answer.

"Oh, I see by her face, I see by her manner," said the Miss Colfords, "she means to oblige us. Well, then, I will send you my dress to look at," added the eldest, "that you may order the exact counterpart, and I shall expect it will be half finished by the time we next see you. And now good bye, dear, dear Emily," said they again and again.

When the Miss Colfords had made their exit, Lord Berlington, who had been a silent spectator of the scene, and had (not without some anxiety, been watching to discover the impression which had been made upon his daughter), now put into her hands a sum of

money. "This, Emily," said he, "will, I believe, be sufficient to purchase a dress of equal splendour with those of the young friends who have just left you: I give it you to dispose of in that or any other way you shall best like."

Emily thanked her father, and felt happy that now it was in her power to comply with the request of the good-natured Miss Colfords: also, she now no longer dreaded the mortification of appearing at her first ball, in a dress inferior to that of her acquaintance. She, however, resolved not to be too hasty in disposing of such a sum of money, and therefore delayed purchasing the dress, and laid the kind present of her father bye in her writing-desk, that she might bestow further consideration on so important a subject.

CHAP. IV.

"Good Heavens! what a storm there is coming on," said Ellen Smith to her husband, as she stood at the door of her cottage watching a tremendous cloud, which grew blacker every moment: "It was mainly foolish, husband, to let our child go out to sea such a dismal night: how could we be so easy, John?"

"Because, Ellen, we mean to make a sailor of him, and sure you wouldn't have the boy such a fool as to be afraid of a storm."

"Heigho! I wish he was once safe at home again, for my part," rejoined Ellen.

"The lad's safe enough, wife, where he is, so never fear. Come then, give the little ones their supper, and light me my pipe, Ellen; it will do no good to stand watching the clouds, you know."

Poor Ellen, pale and tremulous from anxiety, came in from the door, and gave her children their scanty meal of coarse brown bread, and having hurried them into bed, she lighted her husband's pipe, placed his chair by the fire-side, and then stole again to the outside of the door to watch the clouds.

The storm grew more violent, the rain poured down in torrents, and the wind blew with such force, as to shake their little dwelling. John could not smoke the pipe which Ellen had given him, for though he put the best face upon the matter, and pretended to be easy in his mind, he was in truth very painfully alarmed for the safety of his boy.

"It blows a stiff gale, indeed," said he, in a tone of affected cheerfulness, and whistling a tune, as he seemed, as if by accident, to wander to the door: "But what ails you, Ellen? What makes you turn so pale, girl? Why, you should have been the wife of a land-lubber, methinks! Many a time have I

been out in harder weather; but you wouldn't look as white as a sheet for me, hey, Ellen?"

"Oh, yes I should, though," answered Ellen, with a faint smile. "But stay, I think I see something like a boat now, John, only it is so very dark."—

"What signifies thinking or looking, wife, he'll not be home a bit the sooner for that. He's a brave lad, and we must trust him to Providence, who is kind, and knows what's best for all of us."

Ellen saw by her husband's manner of speaking, that he was in a serious mood; and afraid of making him angry, she endeavoured to quiet her fears, and taking out her wheel, she sat down and tried to spin. Little Peggy, seeing how frightened her poor mother was, crept round to her father's side, and whispering in his ear, begged him to sing that song which she knew her mother was particularly fond of—"Do, dear father, sing it," she said, "and then mother will not hear the wind so

plain:" her father kissed her, and unused to refuse his little darling this sort of favour, he began to sing.

SONG.

O, weary and hard is the Fisherman's life,
And narrow his mansion that floats on the main;
Yet he cheerily toils for his children and wife,
And looks out for evening to see them again.

And when in the west sinks the Monarch of Day,
He spreads out his sail, and returns on his way;
O'er the billows light bounding, while darkness surrounding,
Is dearer to him than the bright morning's ray.

Good speed to the bark, and success to the toil,
O, swift fly the hours with such prospects in sight;
The bark richly freighted with ocean's best spoil,
Shall be welcom'd with triumph returning at night.

Then glad is the voice of the children, who throng
Round the Fisherman, dragging his good nets along;
And at last home returning, his fire brightly burning,
His wife spreads his supper, while he sings his song.

John Smith ceased singing, and for a moment all was silent, when suddenly they heard distant shouts, and a confused cry of "help, help!!!" Ellen threw down her wheel and gave a loud shriek; and John was hastening with his best speed to the door, when Jack their son rushed in, exclaiming as he entered, "He is safe, he is safe, and Jack is happy!" Breathless and exhausted, these were the only words he could utter; and his father and mother, seeing him alive and well, seemed for the first minute or two to desire nothing further. His mother's next care was to dry his clothes, which were dripping wet, and to chafe his limbs by the warm fire-side.

As soon as Jack had a little recovered himself, and had been refreshed with something to eat and drink, he seated himself between his father and mother, and while they and his little sister Peggy listened with surprise and curiosity, he gave them an account of his adventure.

"You know, father," he began, "poor David and I went out to sea to-night together."

"Aye, aye, with drunken David, as we all call him," replied his father.

"Ah," continued Jack, "I am afraid, father, he deserves that bad name a little, and to-night in particular; but you shall hear:— We had not sailed very far, when the sky began to look dismal black, as if a great storm was coming on. I observed this, for I was watching the clouds all the way we went. But David had his pipe in his mouth, and seemed half asleep, and knew nothing of the matter; so I made him take notice of the storm that was coming, and persuaded him to let us tack about, and steer home. But before we could reach the shore, it blew such a heavy gale, that our boat was tossed up and down, and I was afraid every minute it would be over. Poor David seemed to be quite unable to manage the boat; I did all I could to

help him, but we wanted another hand: the wind blew harder and harder, and at last we upset sure enough. Just at the moment we were going over, I heard David bawl out with a heavy oath, that he could not swim; so, as fast as I could I swam to shore, and calling loudly for help, I soon got some men to take out a boat to save poor David: they got to where he was almost sinking, just in time to take him up alive: I waited to see him safe upon the beach, and then ran home as fast as I could."

"Well done, my brave boy," cried John Smith, laying his hand upon Jack's head; "young as you are, you have saved a poor fellow's life, which is more than most of us can say."

"Heaven be praised!" interrupted Ellen, wiping her tears with her apron: "what an escape the child has had; and what a lucky thing, John, that he knows how to swim."

"Aye, and that he knows in a moment of

danger to do just what is the right thing to be done, is more lucky still, Ellen."

We must forgive John Smith and Ellen his wife, if they were a little proud of this heroic adventure, particularly as the story ran through the village, how poor little Jack Smith had saved a man's life at sea. And though his mother would often say with tears in her eyes, " my dear boy, never again trust yourself to sail with a man that cannot swim," his father never failed to add, " your mother is but a woman, and you are to follow my trade, and be a sailor; and mind, I shall be ashamed of you, if you ever shew yourself afraid to weather a storm, or to swim for it when a town's-mate's life is in danger."

CHAP. V.

"WHAT a tempestuous night it has been," said Lady Berlington, as she sat at breakfast with her family the morning after the adventure we have just related; "it must have been very dangerous for the vessels, and the fishing-boats out at sea."

"Oh, mamma," cried Frederick, "have you heard of the accident that happened? A man and a little boy who were out together, when the storm came on, and their boat was upset, and they were both drowned."

"So so, Mr. Frederick," replied his father; "you know how to make a good story, I see. Pray who did you hear this account from?"

"From James, Papa; it is quite true, is it not?"

"Not quite; the true account, however, though less shocking, is more surprising: as

the man who was in the boat when it went over, could not swim, and must inevitably have been drowned, had it not been for the boy, who saved his life."

"Indeed, father," continued Frederick; "what a brave little fellow he must have been —I wonder who he was."

"His name is Jack Smith," replied Lord Berlington; "he is, I am told, one of a very large family, and his father is a fisherman."

"His parents have reason to feel very proud of him," interrupted Lady Berlington: "so marked a character for real courage and presence of mind in so young a person, is surprising: I venture to predict, that he will become a man of worth, and in every respect a valuable member of the class in society he will probably belong to."

Emily observed, as they rose from breakfast, that the high tide must have driven great numbers of shells on shore, some of which, she thought, she might like to add to her col-

lection; she therefore proposed to her brother Frederick, to go on the beach and search for a few of the most curious. As they rambled about together, their attention was caught by a little boy and girl who were seated quite close to each other on a large white stone, and busily employed at their work, which was netting. My readers will easily guess, that they were no other than Peggy and her brother Jack.

"What are you doing there so diligently, my good children?" asked Emily, walking close up to them as she spoke.

Peggy rose, smiled, made her best curtesy, and looked at her brother.

Jack looked down, and went on with his work.

"Do not be afraid to tell us, little girl," said Emily, "I am sure you are a good girl, by your looks. Do not be afraid to tell us what you are doing."

"What can this be for?" asked her more

lively brother, laughing, and taking hold of Jack's work.

"It is for a fishing net," answered Peggy, blushing deeply.

"Oh, for you and your brother to play with, and you will make believe to go out fishing with it: is that it?"

"Oh no," said Jack, encouraged by Emily's sweet voice; "no, Miss, it is for my father, when it is done."

"*When* indeed," interrupted Emily, smiling, "and when do you think your little fingers will have finished a fisherman's net?"

"I would lay a wager the sea will be dried up first," cried Frederick, laughing heartily.

"Nay, brother, do not discourage them," said Emily; "it is, I think, an easy sort of work, and therefore a good employment for them at least. Go on with your work, little boy; I shall like very much to see you net a little."

"I cannot net any more, Ma'am," said Jack, "for I have used up all the string."

"And have you got more at home?" enquired Emily.

"No, Ma'am," replied Jack, sorrowfully.

"What do you mean to do then, my good boy?"

"We must wait till we got more," said he.

"Wait till the skies rain balls of string," cried Frederick, laughing. "Well, let me know when the time comes, and I will help catch them for you."

"Hush, Frederick, you are inconsiderate in your high spirits, you distress these worthy creatures," interposed Lady Berlington, who had joined them on the beach, and had heard the concluding part of the foregoing dialogue.

"Well," resumed Frederick, turning to Jack, "you are a good fellow, and here is something that will buy more twine for you," putting sixpence into Jack's hand as he spoke,

and at the same moment scampering away to fly a large kite he had brought out with him, fearing he should grow tired of picking up curious shells with his sister.

"Does your father know you are netting this for him?" continued Emily.

"No, Ma'am," replied Peggy, "Father is very bad with the rheumatism, and cannot walk about, and we are doing this to please him," said she, smiling as she spoke.

"Your father is fortunate in having such good industrious children," said Lady Berlington, "they are of more value than riches." At this moment, Frederick, who was at a little distance, called out to his sister, "Emily, sister Emily," said he, "do look yonder, at that boat which the sailors are bringing to shore; it is the very one which the boy was in last night when he saved the man's life."

"That was my brother," said Peggy, her eyes glistening as she spoke.

"Was it indeed!" replied Emily; and

"Was it?" asked the lively Frederick, throwing down his kite, and running up nearer to the group, to question the boy about the whole story.

Poor Jack was so clear in the answers he gave, and seemed such a clever intelligent lad, that Frederick conceived a great partiality for him, and was so delighted and amused with his company, that from that day, they became friends and play-fellows.

On her return home, and indeed during the rest of the day, Emily could think of nothing but these poor children: the bravery of Jack, and the artless manners of his sister Peggy, their innocent scheme, and plan of earnest industry for pleasing their father and mother, excited a lively interest in her feeling heart, for their comfort and their welfare. She knew they would not be able to succeed in finishing their work, and she could not bear the idea of the probability there was that their scheme and industry would end in disappoint-

ment. She felt that she would give all the world to be able to procure for them a new fishing net.

While this thought filled her mind, the ball, and all belonging to it, sunk in her estimation. Often she thought to herself, "the money which my father gave me to purchase a ball dress, is enough to purchase what would make these poor children perfectly happy. And what, after all, will be the pleasure of wearing a fine dress, instead of a plainer, perhaps a more becoming one? Supposing even, that I should be better drest than any one in the room, sensible people would not think the better of me on that account, and my real friends would love me equally in any dress. I might perhaps be more noticed, and more enquiries be made about me, but what would be the pleasure of a few unmeaning compliments, from indifferent strangers, compared to the delight of doing a good action, and making these worthy children happy. When

the ball is over, every thing belonging to it will be soon forgotten; whereas this useful present, may for years be the means of maintaining an excellent and numerous family. Oh, Emily, do not hesitate in your choice; the one would only procure you at best a transient pleasure, an evening's amusement; the other will prove a source of lasting satisfaction."

CHAP. VI.

"COME along with us, Jack," said a party of fishermen, who were just setting out in their boat; "come along with us, if you have a mind to turn a penny; you're a brave lad, so come along with us, for it may hap you may be of some use, young one."

Jack, who was indeed a brave lad, and was so fond of sailing, that he was always glad of an opportunity to go out to sea, now ran to get his father's leave.

"Dear heart!" said Jack's mother, "you won't think of letting the child go out again, sure, husband."

"To be sure, though, I will, wife, again and again, I hope and trust"—

"Do not fear, dear mother," said Jack, "who knows but I may earn a trifle to bring

home to you; don't look so dismal, Peggy, you will frighten me."

"I thought," said Peggy, who remembered the night of the storm, "I thought, brother, you would have helped me sort our shells to-night."

"And I wanted you, Jack," said his mother, "to have helped me take in the things I have been washing, and—"

"Oh, but I can do all that another time," replied Jack, "and you know, we must sail when the wind serves. Good bye to you all," cried he, running off as hard as he could.

"God bless him!" said his poor mother, in a voice of sorrow; but she would have been still more uneasy, had she known that the men who had invited Jack to join them, were an idle, worthless set of fellows: they had this day been making holiday, and had been drinking more than usual, and if it had not been for the assistance of Jack, they would

not have had the skill even to push off their from the shore.

At first setting out they were so noisy and quarrelsome, that poor Jack was frightened, and wished himself at home more than once. He was much shocked at the oaths they uttered, and he thought to himself, "my father never swears, tho' he is a sailor, and I hope I never shall."

It was just at the moment when our little hero was making this wise reflection, that the moon, which appeared suddenly from behind a black cloud, discovered something which shone very bright in a corner of the boat. Jack went eagerly to the spot to discover what it was. "It is a purse full of money!" he exclaimed; and as he picked it up, he saw that it belonged to his young friend and benefactor, Frederick Berlington: he now remembered that he had been at play with him all the morning, and that they had been jumping in and out of the boats, as they stood at anchor

on the beach. "Oh, how sorry he will be when he misses his purse," said Jack, "and how glad I am I have found it!"

"You're a lucky fellow indeed," bawled one of the men, "but you don't mean to keep all your luck to yourself, I hope."

"No, no," interrupted another, "sink me, mate, but we'll share the booty."

Jack, who fancied that by "sharing the booty," they meant, sharing the pleasure of giving back the purse, made answer, "Oh, *do* let *me* give it back, because it was I who found it."

"Give it back!" they all exclaimed, with a volley of oaths, "give it back!" no, no, you wouldn't be such a fool as that, neither."

"Not give it back!" said Jack, much surprised; "why, what else would you do with it?"

"What, why divide it amongst us, and make merry with it, boy; and you shall have your share as well as the best of us."

"I!" re-echoed Jack, indignantly, "I have my share! I wouldn't touch a farthing of what did not belong to me for the whole world."

"Come, hand it over here, my lad," said one of the men—"let us look at the colour of it."

"No, that I will not," pursued Jack in a resolute tone, and colouring high as he spoke, "that I will not, unless you promise to give it back to Frederick Berlington."

"Holloa, avast my lad, you *won't*. Dare you to say you *won't*, to us? we'll soon see what you *won't* do," cried the men all in a breath, and endeavouring to snatch the purse from him as they spoke.

Jack resisted them for some moments with all his might, but at last was obliged to yield to their superior strength. The fishermen opened the purse to count the money;—it contained five guineas. "Good luck!" bawled they one to another, "here's one

a-piece for us all; and if that young chap will humble himself so far as to say, he is sorry for his impertinence, and will promise moreover to hold his tongue, why, here's an odd five shillings for him," said one of them, offering a dollar to Jack.

"Not I," replied Jack, "not a finger will I lay on the money for all the world."

"Offer him a guinea," muttered one of the men, "he can't resist that, as you will see."

"Well, Jack," they continued, "you're a brave lad, and your father and mother are poor—promise to hold your tongue about the prize, and here's a golden guinea for you—we all consent to give it you."

"You *cannot* give it me," answered Jack, sturdily; "it is not yours, you have no right to it: and I tell you again, I will not touch it. My father and mother are poor, it is true, but I will not make them miserable, by doing a wicked thing."

"The boy must be quite an idiot," cried

the men, laughing, " but he shan't spoil our sport," continued they, taking the money out of the purse, and dividing it among them.

" You are very wicked," exclaimed Jack, " and I will tell Frederick Berlington ; I will tell all the world, if you steal that money."

" You will, will you ?" replied they, enraged at his undaunted courage—" you will, will you, you little rascal," and one of them forcing him off his legs, flung him across his shoulder, and lifting up his heels, protested with an oath, he would that instant throw him overboard.

" Now, then, mate," cried these cruel men, " swear, for your life swear, never to breathe a word of this affair to any living soul, or this moment we will throw you in."

" Throw me overboard, if you chuse, if you can," answered the brave little fisher-boy. " I had rather die an honest boy, than live a wicked thief."

Upon this, drunken David, (who had till

now been sitting half asleep, and half awake, thinking how much drink and tobacco his guinea would buy); was roused by the brutal behaviour of his comrades; remembering that he owed his life to the exertions of this little spirited lad, drunken David exerted himself so far as to take his pipe from his mouth, and interfere in his behalf.

"Holloa," he called out, "avast there, my lads, no foul play; fair words go farthest with Jack, I can tell ye. I say, my good fellows, I take it you'd best not have the boy's life to answer for."

Surprised that all their threats seemed to produce no other effect than that of increasing Jack's spirit of honest intrepidity, and that all attempts to intimidate him were in vain, the men consulted with each other, and at last agreed to let him go: but the nearer they approached towards home, the more afraid they became, that when out of their hands, he should betray their secret, and disclose the

dishonest trick they had been playing: they tried therefore every means to extort from him a promise of secrecy. They told him, that if he betrayed them, he would be the cause of their all being hanged, and so would have their lives to answer for; and next they threatened, if he would not swear to be secret, they would revenge themselves upon his father and mother. This artful menace at last succeeded, and poor Jack, tho' still to the last reproaching them with their unworthy conduct, gave a solemn promise not to mention a word upon the subject to any one.

CHAP. VII.

"MAMMA," said Emily, as she and Lady Berlington were sitting together on the beach, "do you think my father wishes me to buy a ball dress?"

"I think, my love, he wishes you to do as you best like about it: you may remember, he told you so himself."

"Yes, Mamma, I know he would not compel me to buy one; but what I mean is, do you think he will be disappointed to see me—I mean, do you think he will wish me to seem as well dressed as—"

"I understand you perfectly, dear Emily, and I can assure you with truth, that with regard to your dress, so long as it is in every respect consistent with propriety, your father and myself have not a wish concerning it; tho' true it is, that we both unite in a taste

for plainness and simplicity, especially in very young people."

"Then, Mamma, I dare say you would rather not see me dressed like the Miss Colfords."

"If you like it, my love, I have no objection; it is too trifling a matter, to be worthy of much consideration. My only wish is, that you should not acquire a fondness for dress, or bestow too much thought or time upon it."

"Oh indeed, Mamma, I have no fondness for dress; and to prove to you that I have not, I do not intend to buy a ball dress at all. I have another, a better way of spending my money; the only thing that made me hesitate, was the idea, that you or my father might like to see me as well dressed as the Miss Colfords."

"Let me now then take the opportunity of assuring you, my dear child, that your parents are not desirous that you should be distinguished in any respect, but for the endow-

ments of the mind. You are now, Emily, just entering into the world, and from your rank in life, the eyes of that world will be turned upon you; but your anxious parents are only desirous that you should secure the esteem of the wise and good. Your superior situation in life, will give you a large share of influence in society; they are solicitous you should exert that influence to the best purposes, and leaving it to others to set the fashion of a gown, or of a cap, they would wish you to be an eminent example of all christian perfection."

Emily, at the end of this conversation, tenderly embraced her mother, and said she would endeavour not to disappoint the hopes of her parents.

The long-expected evening at length arrived, and the brilliant assembly took place. Emily, as she entered the ball-room, was almost afraid to meet the eyes of the Miss Colfords, whom she expected to shew that they were much of-

fended with her, for not appearing in a dress of the same pattern as their own; and she had armed herself with all patience to endure their reproaches or their raillery. But to her comfort and surprise, she soon discovered that they were much too intent upon themselves, and their partners, to bestow a thought upon her: they seemed, indeed, wholly occupied in the amusements going forward, of dancing, and chatting with those they considered the best dressed, or the most stylish-looking persons near them; so that Emily was at a loss to conceive why they had shown any anxiety about one so young and so much a novice as herself. Her fears about their displeasure, therefore, being quieted, peace and pleasure took entire possession of her heart; the scene was one of animated enjoyment, and she felt no reluctance in joining the well-bred crowd assembled around her. Now and then, however, in the midst of the bewitching fascinations of the dancing, the music, and the attentions paid

her on this occasion of her first appearance, by her father's acquaintance, Emily's kind heart was engaged in imagining the delight of poor little Peggy and her brother, when they should receive the present she destined for them: she pictured to herself the glistening eyes of Jack, and the glowing cheeks of his sister, upon their first sight of the new fishing-net. These pleasing ideas made her heart as light as her steps, and she danced the whole evening with continued relish and animation.

In the mean time, however, (for we are bound to declare the matter), several dire events had occurred, to check the mirth, and sour the temper of the Miss Colfords. Terrible to relate! upon their first entrance into the room, in all the pride of blue and silver, they were met by Lady Julia, and Lady Amarantha Highflyer, who were arrayed in white and gold, which, by the consent of eyes all round the room, was acknowledged to be much more elegant. In addition to this very

heavy mortification, neither of them in the course of the whole evening had called a single dance; nor had Lord Mimini, just come of age, and their professed admirer, solicited the honour of either as a partner.

Such a series of misfortunes, it must be owned, would have subdued the stoutest hearts. Accordingly, the high spirits and visible self-complacency of the Miss Colfords, by degrees wore off—in one, it was succeeded by a pensive melancholy; in the other, by ill-concealed vexation.

"Is this the ball we've been looking forward to so long?" cried the eldest sister, upon their return home—"Thank Heaven, it's over, it has been the most ill-conducted thing I ever knew."

"I own I am quite surprized," answered her sister; "really, I quite repent that I took such excessive pains about my looks. We have been a fortnight now, thinking of nothing but our dress, and you see what it is come to."

"I do not think I shall ever go to one again," said her sister: "I am sick of balls, and I hate dancing; and our dresses looked like nothing, when we got into the room."

In this manner did the Miss Colfords lament the failure of their schemes, and the disappointment of their hopes.

Very different was the impression that had been made on Emily. She returned home, perfectly satisfied with her evening's amusement. She had gone to the ball, not with the view to be admired, but to dance, and she had danced all the evening with extraordinary grace and spirit.

"Did you perceive," said Lady Berlington to her husband, "that Emily did not appear in the fancy dress that was so much talked of?"

"I know not what her dress was," said Lord Berlington, "but I know I was particularly pleased with her dress, her manners, her dancing, and herself," replied he, kissing her.

Emily, delighted with the approbation of her father, retired to rest serene and gratified, and blessed with the happiness of a self-approving conscience. She sunk to rest, and fell into pleasing dreams, in which her virtuous favourites, Jack and Peggy, presented themselves more frequently to her fancy than the blue and silver of the Miss Colfords, the white and gold of Lady Julia and Lady Aramantha Highflyer, or even than any of the innocent delights she had enjoyed at the ball.

CHAP. VIII.

When poor Jack returned home to his father's cottage, he felt very unhappy.—He had indeed the comfort of knowing that he had done his duty, and this, in cases of distress, is the greatest of all comforts. But it was the first time he had ever been obliged to conceal any thing from his father and mother; and he was of so open and ingenuous a temper, that it was a task both difficult and painful to him in the execution. Besides this, the wickedness shewn by the sailors had filled his young artless mind with horror: he felt truly wretched at the idea that his young friend and benefactor would be robbed of his money, and he would have given the whole world to have been able to restore it to him.—At one moment, he was upon the point of relating the whole of what had happened to his father and

mother; and then again he was of the mind to tell it rather to his young sister, Peggy. But the threat of the fishermen, that they would be revenged upon his parents, made him shudder but to think of it, and effectually sealed his lips. "Besides," said he to himself, "I have given them my word not to tell, and father has often said, that promises should always be held sacred. I am sure then it is my duty to keep my promise, and I will do my duty, happen what will."

Having made this resolution, Jack felt his heart grow much lighter, and he sat down on a stool by the fire.

His father and mother, however, saw by his countenance, that something was the matter. "Is this our Jack?" said his father: "why, what in the world's come to the boy? he looks down hearted, and as if somewhat ill had come across him methinks — what ails thee, Jack?"

"He is tired, may be," interrupted his mo-

ther—" he'll be himself again after a good night's rest. He would tell us, I know he would, if any thing had happened; for I never knew him afraid to speak out, or wish to conceal any thing from us."

" My heart misgives me, but something has happened though," replied John Smith. " The boy looks so strange—I never saw him look so before: come, prithee, tell us, Jack, what has befallen thee, for find it out we must."

But it was to no purpose that John and Ellen questioned their child; they could not prevail on him to disclose the secret, and though they, from his manner, became more and more uneasy, they found it was in vain to press him further.

Soon after, Jack went to rest upon his hard, worn-out mattress, and for the first time in his life, he passed a restless night, deprived of sleep.

In this place we must not omit to inform

our young readers, that the fishermen, in their eagerness to divide the money, so wickedly obtained, had let the purse which contained it, fall to the ground. Jack knew that Frederick Berlington had a particular value for this purse, it having been netted and presented to him by his mother; he therefore, without being observed by them, caught it up and put it in his pocket, determining, if ever the affair was brought to light, to restore it to its owner.

Early in the morning, it was Jack's first care to find some hiding-place for the purse, as he was afraid both of losing it, and of its being found upon him. After considering for some time, he at last determined on laying it at the bottom of a basket of shells, which belonged to him; and this basket, he put in the corner, upon a shelf on which his mother usually kept some old china-cups, that belonged to her great-grandmother. As this shelf was out of the children's reach, and as

the cups were never touched, he thought it the safest place he should be able to find for it.

It happened in the course of the morning, that Lord Berlington, with his son and daughter passing by the cottage of John Smith, condescendingly stepped in, and enquired if his wife and children were well. Having stayed a few minutes, he recollected that Frederick had lost a favourite purse somewhere upon the beach, and asked if they had heard any one mention having found it?

Jack was not present when this question was proposed, and John and Ellen Smith replied, that they had heard nothing of the matter. Ellen, though proud of her guests, was somewhat ashamed of the mean appearance of her habitation.—"Be pleased to sit down," said she, modestly blushing, and placing the chairs—"this place is not fit for such fine company, but it is clean I hope, and the best we can afford."

"It is very clean, and very neat," said Emily, smiling, "and that is the chief requisite for comfort, after all."

"What fine children yours are," continued she, and she took the baby in her arms as she spoke. "You have indeed a large family, but I dare say they will all do well, and grow up to be a comfort to you."

"Aye, Madam, and that they will," cried Ellen, (curtsying down to the ground)—"for though I say it, there never were better children born; and as I tell my poor husband, though they are a care and a trouble now, they'll be a blessing and a help to us by and by, please God."

"As for our biggest boy," continued Ellen, "he's a great help to us already, for now that his father is so lame, and can't go out to sea, Jack often takes his place, and brings us home his share of fish, and a trifle that he has earned for himself besides—for he's a sharp lad.—But I shouldn't be praising of

my own, to be sure, Madam," said Ellen, looking down.

"You have reason to be proud of your son," said Lord Berlington, "for he is a good and a brave boy."

"Jack," called out his father," "why don't ye come in and speak to the gentlefolk—I don't rightly know what's come to the boy, not I, but ever since last night he has looked as if he were main down-hearted about somewhat. I thought, wife, it would have passed off, and we should have seen him like himself to-day."

As John Smith was speaking, the thought occurred to Lord Berlington, that his son, Frederick, had been at play with Jack the whole of the day on which he lost his purse, and that it was possible the boy might have been tempted to steal it.

"Come in, Jack," again called out his father; "come in, I say to ye, and hold up your head, and don't look like a fool—Why, what in the world is come to ye?"

Just as his father said this, the town crier, who was passing by, stopped immediately opposite the door. Jack listened, and heard him say distinctly,—"Lost, supposed to have been dropped on the beach, a small silk purse, containing five guineas: Whoever will bring the same to the Crier, will receive one guinea reward."

As this was being cried, Lord Berlington looked stedfastly in Jack's face. The poor boy could not conceal his emotion—he first coloured like scarlet, and then turned as pale as ashes. Lord Berlington perceived it, and felt his suspicion very strong.

"Jack," said he, in a serious tone of voice, "do you know any thing of this purse?"

"I—I—have not taken the money," replied Jack.

"That is an odd answer," rejoined Lord Berlington. "I ask, do you know any thing of it?"

Jack looked down, and said nothing.

"Dear heart! no," interrupted his mother; "the boy is frightened, my Lord; the boy knows nothing of the matter, my Lord!"

"Speak out, Jack," said his father; "what are you afraid of, boy? We don't suspect you."

"God bless you, your Honor, but Jack is as honest a boy as ever drew breath—he'd sooner eat his fingers off than tell a lie, or steal, though I'm his father that say it."

"Ah! that I'm sure he is, Papa," added Frederick. "I am certain he is a good honest boy, and would never rob any one, and I think he loves me too well to rob me."

"Speak, dear brother," said Peggy, stealing round, and whispering in his ear:—"speak, or they'll suspect you."

"He will speak, by and by," cried Emily; he is frightened before us; I dare say he will speak presently;"—and, to turn the conversation, she asked Ellen to let her look at an old China cup, which she saw upon the shelf of the cupboard. Ellen stood upon a chair to

reach it down; in taking it out, she nearly upset the basket of shells, which Jack had put up so carefully in the cupboard.

"Oh, Jack's basket, it will be down," called out Peggy: and Ellen, in her eagerness to save it, threw it down. The shells covered the floor, and among them, to the horror of one family, and the surprize of the other, the purse was seen conspicuous.

Poor John and Ellen felt at this moment as if struck with a thunderbolt: they looked at one another, but neither had power to utter a word. Jack still kept his head down, and his eyes fixed on the ground. Lord Berlington was the first to speak: he took up the empty purse and the basket.

"To whom does this basket belong?" asked he.

"To Jack," answered the father.

"Young boy," continued Lord Berlington, "how came you by this purse, and where is the money it contained?"

Poor Ellen trembled like an aspen leaf. Jack was still silent.

" Speak, Jack," said Lord Berlington, more kindly ; " you have been tempted to commit a dishonest action, but you are very young ; make, therefore, the best amends in your power, by an ingenuous confession of your crime—by this means only can you hope for pardon from God or man."

"Do," cried Ellen, falling on her knees to her child,—" do, dear boy, confess, confess it all," said she, hiding her face with her apron, and bursting into tears. Poor Peggy sobbed aloud.

" See what distress a wicked child occasions to his family," observed Lord Berlington.

" Father—mother," said Jack, in a firm tone, " I am not wicked, I am innocent."

" God grant it," rejoined Ellen, clasping her hands.

" Prove it then, Jack," cried his father ; " Prove it, for our sakes."

"No, I cannot," said Jack—his father groaned aloud.

"And can you bear this sight?" said Emily, pointing to Ellen, who was still on her knees.

"Yes," said Lord Berlington; "if he has a heart to rob his benefactor, he can do any thing, ungrateful boy."

"I am not ungrateful," said Jack, with earnestness; and, looking at Frederick, he added, "You have indeed been good to poor Jack, and he would die to serve you."

"Well, then," cried Frederick, "do but confess it, and all will be forgotten."

"Jack," said Lord Berlington, rising as he spoke, "perhaps, you do not know that there are means for discovering the truth of these sort of things—you are so young, that for your own sake, and that of your good parents, I shall not bring you to public disgrace, if I can avoid it, but take notice of what I am going to say:—I give you the remainder of this day, to consider about it; but if to-morrow

you shall not have confessed to me the whole truth, I must—it will be my duty, to take you before a magistrate, where you must undergo a public examination." Having said this, Lord Berlington quitted the cottage.

Emily and Frederick returned home with aching hearts. All Emily's plans about the fishing-net seemed spoiled and over, and she bitterly lamented the misery of the poor family, who, destitute of every other comfort, seemed to have little but their honesty and good name to depend upon. Deeply did she sympathise in the mother's feelings, whose maternal pride one blow had seemed to crush; and who felt humbled to the dust, with the fall of her child: she hoped he would be saved from public disgrace, though she dared not believe him to be innocent.

Poor Jack knew not what to think or do; his father and mother used every means in their power to bring him to confess the truth, to no purpose. He was sturdy and resolute: "come

what will," said he to himself, "I will not break my promise."

In the mean time, the affair was known and talked of in every street near the poor fisherman's hut, and the hardened guilt of the boy, and the misery of his industrious parents, was canvassed and commented on from door to door.

Poor Jack, to get rid of the importunities of his father and mother, and dreading the suspicions of every one he saw, stole out from his cottage by himself, and took a solitary walk along the shore. Having got out of the sight of every one, he sat himself down upon a white stone upon the beach, and covered his face with his hands.

"Jack," thought he to himself, "thou art a poor, a miserable boy. The friend and benefactor whom you would die to serve, accuses you of ingratitude. You have made your parents wretched; you are suspected of the worst of crimes, and, to-morrow, you will be brought

to a public examination."—Again he thought, "how canst thou say, Jack, thou art miserable! what think you must be the feelings of those wretched children, who have in reality been guilty of the crimes of which you are suspected? Who have proved ungrateful to their benefactors; who have, by their conduct, brought their parents to shame, and, worst of all, who have lost the favour of heaven. Be thankful, Jack, this has not been your lot. You have been exposed to trial and temptation, but you have been enabled, young as you are, to do your duty. You have been strictly honest, you have spoken the truth: you have kept your promise. Doubt not, therefore, that the great God, the protector of the poor and innocent, will bring you out of these troubles. Jack, though thou art poor and destitute, account thyself a happy boy."

He had scarcely ended this soliloquy, when he was startled by rather a rough tap upon his shoulder, and turning round, he saw his old

friend David behind him, the man whose life he had saved.

When David in the morning had recovered his sober senses, he repented very much that he had any share in stealing the money; but when the story came to his ears, that his friend and deliverer, Jack, was suspected of the crime, and that, though suspected, he forbore to accuse those who were really guilty, drunken David was struck with remorse, and he determined to exert himself in Jack's behalf. He set off immediately to the men who had divided the money, and swore to them, that if they did not each that moment, give up the guinea they had stolen, he would turn king's evidence against them, and have them all hanged.

The men, frightened to death, quickly restored their ill-gotten prize, and David, with more activity than he had shewn for many a-year, set out in search of Jack, to restore to him the whole sum.

"Here, my brave lad," said he, "come,

cheer up and be jolly; you saved my life once, and I've not forgotten it, and no one shall say that David never did a good thing in his life; and so clear off those cloudy looks, and be happy, honest Jack, as you always was, and always will be: and now set off as fast as your young legs can carry you, and give this same money to the rightful owner, and get the reward offered; for sure you deserve it, and no one else: and I'll come along with you, and give the whole story point blank before his Honor; for its a shame that such an innocent one should be suspected wrongfully.—And no one shall say that David never did a good thing in all his life."

Those who have sympathised in Jack's misfortunes, will rejoice with him at this happy event. He did indeed set off as fast as his legs could carry him; and poor David, who was not quite so young and active, found it a hard matter to keep up with him.

It happened that during Jack's absence from

the cottage, Lord and Lady Berlington had sent to his father and mother, to consult with them upon the melancholy occasion; and Emily had desired to see Peggy also, as she wished to instruct her to persuade her brother to a disclosure of the truth.

Lord and Lady Berlington, Emily and Frederick, John, Ellen, and Peggy, were all assembled in Lord Berlington's library, when Jack, with glistening eyes and glowing cheeks, ran into the room, threw the purse of money upon the table, and then, covering his face with his hands, burst into tears. They were the first he had shed upon the occasion. Supposing them to be tears of repentance, Lord Berlington was beginning to speak, when David entered the room, bowing and scraping.

"Please your Honor," he began, though he was so much out of breath he could hardly speak,—"please your Honor, will you give me leave to say a word or two, for I must see the boy righted, seeing as how, he is the same

you'g one as saved my life, which may be your Honor knows."

Lord Berlington having desired him to proceed, David, to the inexpressible delight of John and Ellen Smith, and the complete satisfaction of the Berlington family, gave a full account of Jack's sturdy integrity and inflexible courage. When he came to the part where he described with honest warmth the sailors holding Jack by force in their arms, while the boy called out, "*Throw me overboard if you will, if you can; I had rather die an honest boy, than live a wicked one,*" his mother sobbed aloud for joy, and tears started to the eyes of Lady Berlington and her daughter. Frederick took hold of Jack's hand, and held it, while David finished the recital; and his affectionate sister, Peggy, threw her arms about his neck, and wiped the tears from his eyes.

Emily felt even more happy than she had done before, that she had not wasted her money in a ball dress, and thought she should

have double pleasure in rewarding the merit of her little favourites.

"Jack," said Lord Berlington, "give me your hand. I am heartily sorry for the unlucky circumstances which led us to suspect so good a boy; but the pleasure you feel at this moment, must amply compensate for all you have suffered. You possess that richest of all treasures—a good conscience, and this will enable one to endure with patience even the injustice of one's fellow creatures. Go on, my worthy lad, in the straight and even path of duty, and, as you advance in years, you will, I have no doubt, attain to such a station in life, as your excellent dispositions deserve. Never forget the pleasure you feel at this moment; it is worth all the riches the world contains. Your parents are poor, but they are rich in the best of treasures—a *good son*."

Frederick, as his father was speaking, stole round behind his chair, and whispering in his ear, asked permission to give the five guineas

to Jack. To this Lord Berlington readily consented, and our grateful and happy hero was thus enabled to relieve the wants of his suffering family; but his father and mother would not receive the benefit at his hands, till it was on all sides agreed to give a guinea out of the five to poor David, to whom they felt the most lively gratitude for the zealous part he had performed, in bringing the truth to light, and who, they declared, was the person the best entitled to the reward, for finding and restoring the money.

CHAP. XII.

THESE unexpected and gratifying occurrences contributed greatly to the recovery of the happy father of Jack, who was shortly after able to renew his toils, and go out to sea.

One fine day, as Lord Berlington and his son were taking a walk together, they called to Jack to join them. When they had proceeded to some distance, they reached a place where a new boat was building; it was particularly neat and commodious in its form, and seemed to be nearly finished.

"Who can this boat be building for?" said Lord Berlington; "do you know, Jack?"

"No, indeed," answered he; "it seems a very pretty one, and the neatest and the strongest built I ever saw."

"Read what is the name of it, Jack," said Frederick, "perhaps that will tell us."

Jack jumped upon a log of wood by the side of the boat, and read aloud, "*Happy Jack! or, the Reward of Honesty.*"

Jack felt his heart leap within him, but he could scarcely believe his eyes, much less could he imagine the boat was meant for him.

"It is for you, Jack," said Frederick.

"Yes," added Lord Berlington, "young as you are, you are to be the possessor of this boat. Your father will be the manager of it, till you are old enough, and then it will be your own. Observe, Jack, it is good conduct which has gained for you the means of relieving the distress of your parents, and of enriching your whole family. It is always my great pleasure to reward merit. I wish you joy of your new boat, and hope to see it often return to shore profitably laden—who will not wish success to "*Happy Jack!*"

His heart almost bursting with joy, Jack ran home to bear the joyful tidings to his pa-

rents, who were thus enriched and blessed by the merit of their child.

"Dear Jack," whispered Peggy to her brother, "there is but one thing wanting to complete our happiness."

"I know what you are going to say, Peggy; but you know we cannot have every thing. We have done our best to obtain it, and we must now bear the disappointment as well as we can. To be sure, if we could have had a new fishing-net to have given our father just now, it would have been complete, as you say. But think what a blessing it is that father is well again, and can go out in his new boat, and never mind about the net, Peggy."

"No, Jack, I will not mind it more than I can help. I think I was very silly, to suppose I could net a whole large net properly; I ought to have known better. We have now been a whole month working at it, and what a thing it is, after all our pains: it is all full

of holes, and all sorts of shapes; I can hardly help laughing when I look at it."

"It will do to tye up a cabbage with," said Jack, laughing, "if it will do for nothing else."

The new boat happened to be completed the very day before the departure of the Berlingtons from Weymouth. It was agreed that John Smith should take his whole family out in it the same evening, for a holiday. It was a fine summer's evening, and Lord and Lady Berlington and their children went down to the beach to see *Happy Jack* and its company embark on this agreeable expedition.

"Where is your fishing net?" said Emily to Peggy, as they were setting out. "I suppose you have finished it in readiness for the new boat; what a nice useful present it will be to your father now."

Peggy looked very sad at this question—"Dear Miss, no, we havn't finished it," she

began, "and it won't do; after all our trouble, nothing will come of it."

"Oh, let me see it," cried Emily, "it will be of some use, I dare say." Peggy felt ashamed of producing her net, but she felt bound to obey, and therefore ran back to fetch it.

In the mean time the rest of the family got into the boat. Jack, the proud and happy Jack, jumped in and out a hundred times himself, and then lifted in his little tribe of brothers and sisters, one after another. Ellen went with her baby in her arms—they were all ready to set off;—"but where is Peggy?" cried the impatient Jack, "what can she be gone out of the way for just at this time? Oh, here she comes, but what is she bringing in her hands?"

"Joy, joy!" called out Peggy, as she approached, dragging a great fishing-net in her hands, which it was as much as she could do to carry. "Now, brother, our joy *is com-*

plete," exclaimed she, quite out of breath. "Only think, I went to look in the old box for our old pieces, and there I found this new fishing-net, and I know it is for us," continued she, colouring, and looking at Emily.

"Yes, you are right; it is for you, my good little girl," replied Emily—"I give it you, Peggy, as a reward for your patient industry, and filial gratitude. Let it be also an incitement to future toil, and patience; and though you must not expect always to meet with success, yet remember, that industry is the road to competence, and that doing something, however trifling, is always to be preferred to idleness."

This short lesson ended, Emily and Frederick took leave of the humble cottagers, who, though mean and lowly in station, had proved rich and great in real merit. At the moment of departure, the eyes of the whole party were filled with tears. John and Ellen poured forth sincere and heartfelt blessings upon their

benefactors; and the children, from the biggest to the least, in imitation of their parents, repeated from one to the other, God bless you!

Frederick desired, that at the shoving off of *Happy Jack*, they would give three cheers, which they did with loud voices and joyous hearts, and then it sailed away.

Frederick and Emily continued on the beach watching for some time, for Frederick would have Emily observe the gay effect of the flags he had made for it, all with his own hands, and which, as the setting sun shone upon them, we will confess, looked very bright and pretty. They could plainly see their young favourite still standing up, and continuing to wave his hat. At last, when distance dimmed the scene, and they no longer distinguished *Happy Jack* upon the waves, they gave a last look, and returned home.

THE

PET DONKEY.

"WELL, wife, there's no good in talking on about the matter," cried honest Giles Webber one morning to his partner, "for I can't afford it no ways."

"No, there's no use in *saying* any thing more," interrupted Judith, "but I will *do* something about it if I can."

"You know, Judith, I'm as sorry as you, to see the poor old man suffer so with the cough and asthma; but as to buying him a great-coat, it's what I can't do—I can but just earn enough to pay my rent and buy bread for you all, though God knows I work hard from sun-rise to sun-set."

"I know that well enough, dear husband,

and you are very good to work for all as you do. God knows what would become of us without you. It wasn't that I thought you could any way afford it; but if I could think of any thing I could do, or any thing I could part with, that would fetch a little matter to buy a warm great-coat for poor grandfather, it would make me very happy."

"Dear mother!" cried Tom, their eldest boy, running up to her as she spoke, "Is there nothing *I* can do? nothing *I* can part with, that would help but a little to do what you wish?"

"I am afraid not," replied Judith; "there is nothing, I fear, you can do, because you are very young, and there is nothing you can give, because you are very poor; but some time hence you will be older, and perhaps richer, and then you will buy a present for poor grandfather." Saying this, his mother kissed him, and went away.

"What are you thinking of, Tom?" said his father.

A long silence ensued.

"Tom, my boy, what are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking, father, that I wish I was a man, and could buy this great-coat."

"Could, Tom? why, I know how you could now."

"Oh! good," said Tom, "do you father?" going eagerly up to him.

"Yes, I know how you *could*—but do not know that you *would*—could and would, are two things."

"Oh but tell me, tell me, and I *will* do it."

"It's not to *do* any thing; you are too young to earn money, but if you were downright willing, good boy, you might part with *something*."

"Aye, that would I, but I have got nothing."

"Yes, you have—a Donkey."

"What, my poor Ned," cried Tom;—"but he could not buy a great-coat."

"The Donkey could not, but the money that he would fetch, would buy one, Tom."

Poor Tom turned pale—he tried to speak, but something seemed to choke him—he stooped down, and began tying and untying his shoe-string, to hide a tear that would start into his eye.

Meanwhile his father went on—"But to be sure, you can't part with your poor Donkey—You're so fond of him, and he is so gentle and useful, and your little brothers and sisters ride so merrily to market on his back;—and then he's such a nice play-fellow—to be sure your poor grandfather suffers pain, and—" (Tom looked up, and again tried to speak, but in vain)—"And he is old and infirm, and this great-coat would ease his pain, and be a great comfort to him, and it would make your mother quite happy, but—"

"Oh, do not say any more, dear father!

I will give up Ned with all my heart, if you will let me."

"Let you, my brave boy! the animal is yours; it was given to you, and you have a right to do as you please with it—but you forget, that the day after to-morrow is your birth-day, and that you had promised little Joe and Mary to give them a long ride for a treat."

"No, father, I don't forget it; and I had made all the garlands, and the lady's-maid at the Squire's has given me some old ribbands to dress him in.—But that does not signify," cried he, wiping his eyes. "I will do something else to please Mary and Joe; and now I will go and tell mother," continued Tom, for he wanted to get out of sight, because he could not quite restrain his tears.

His father looked upon him as he went away, saying, "blessings on the brave boy! —he is his father's own son, and will make

me proud and happy some of these days—God bless him!"

When Giles had related to Judith all that passed between him and Tom, they shed tears of joy together, and blessed God for giving them so good a child. Judith was very unwilling, however, that the Donkey should be parted with. She knew the pleasure it gave the children, particularly to her darling Tom, and she tried every argument to dissuade her husband from giving his consent to it, but without effect.

"No, Judith," cried the worthy fellow, "the ass shall go. It is not for the money he will fetch, for poor Ned is so very useful, that we may hap to be losers by the bargain; but it would be a sore pity to thwart our boy in this generous action. It will draw down the blessing of Heaven upon him, and he will be the happier for it hereafter—at least that's my way of thinking."

Judith seemed to yield; she could answer nothing to this argument, for she was more than half way of her husband's mind; but here the conversation was interrupted by a loud shouting and screaming among their children. My readers, do not be alarmed—they were in danger neither of fire nor water—little Mary and Joseph were safe and well,—but the moment they had heard that their old favourite Ned was to be sold, they both expressed their sense of the misfortune, in a way that seemed to set all consolation at defiance. In a little time, however, what with coaxing and rebuke, Judith succeeded in softening their grief, and when their lamentation had in some measure subsided, Tom sat himself down on the ground between them, and tried further to soothe and comfort them.

"That's my dear sister;—there's my good brother," cried he, drying their eyes by turns with his handkerchief as he spoke—"there now, leave off crying; and when Tom is a

great man, he will buy you another Donkey, and now you shall have all my play-things instead;—my basket of shells, and my soldier's feather, my long stick, and my ball of string —you shall have them all, only leave off crying, or you will make mother unhappy, and disturb poor grandfather."

Here his artless prattle was interrupted, for his father called him—"Come boy," said he, "What *must* be done, may as well be done first as last. It is time to set off—you must take poor Ned to market, and mind to come home in time, to get to work with me. "God's blessing on it, continued the father, "and lose no more time, my lad. I see Ned is well rubbed down and cleaned;"—(for we must inform our young readers, that he was half afraid least Tom should not stick to his purpose).

"Yes, father, he is quite ready," answered Tom.

"Away with you then, my good fellow," said the father.

Tom walked, or rather, affected to stride away in a resolute manner—he went straight to the yard, and without uttering a word, threw the halter round the ass's neck, and led him out quietly, in hopes that his little brother and sisters would not see the departure of their favourite. But Mary ran eagerly after him, "Oh, stop, stop, brother, don't drag him him away; don't lead poor Ned away!"

"Hush!" cried Tom, in an imposing tone, "he *must* go, Mary, he *must* indeed; so pray be a good girl, and go home."

Little Mary returned crying, and Tom proceeded on with the Donkey; his brother and sister watching him with a heavy heart.

When he had got quite out of sight of the cottage, he gave free vent to his feelings. "Poor Ned!"—he began, while the tears ran down his cheeks—"You are going to have a new master—I hope he will be a kind one—I hope I have been a good master to you—I am sorry now that I ever beat you."—He went

on weeping and talking to him in this manner all the way.

The person to whom the poor ass was to be offered for sale, was standing at the door of a shop in the town; as soon, therefore, as Tom came up, he stopped and accosted him with, "Well, my lad! what's the price?"

Tom's heart was too full to make any answer, but took whatever the man first offered—the bargain, therefore, was quickly made, and Ned given up to his new master at the shop-door.

It happened that a little girl was at the window of the shop, and while her mamma was busily engaged in purchasing different articles, she amused herself in watching the transaction of the purchase of the Donkey. When the farmer led poor Ned away, Tom covered his face with his hands, and burst into a flood of tears.

The little girl stole out at the shop-door, and asked Tom what he cried for? Tom,

ashamed of any body seeing him in this condition, hastily dried his eyes, and said, nothing was the matter.

"Oh, do tell me," said the young Lady, "and I will do all I can to comfort you. Was that Donkey yours?"

"Yes! it was once," answered Tom.

"And is it not yours now?"

"No! my father has sold it to that man."

"And you were very fond of it, and sorry to part with it—it is this makes you cry, is it not?"

"No, that is not all, Miss," said Tom, in a broken voice.

"Well, what is all? Tell me, do tell me all," continued she.

Tom could not resist her soft persuasive voice. "Why, to-morrow, Miss, is my birth-day," said he, "and I had promised my little brother and sisters they should have a long ride on him, and I had made garlands to tie round him, and—but he's gone forever, and there is

no help for it—and I must go home to work with my father, or he will be angry." Saying this, Tom made his best bow to the young lady, and ran home.

The good-natured Cecilia (the name of the little girl who held this dialogue) was well acquainted with Tom; indeed he was so good a lad, that his character was well known in the village, and every body was fond of him.

"My dear Papa," said Cecilia, with one of her engaging smiles, when she got home, and seating herself on her father's knee, "My dear Papa! have you forgot your promise?"

"In truth, I probably have, my dear Cecilia," replied he, "but I give you leave to remind me of it.—Pray what was it?"

"Don't you remember the day my brother came home, you told me I might ask some favour of you to remember it as a holiday, and that you would grant any request I should make, provided it was nothing wrong:—And you may remember, I puzzled—and puzzled—

and I could not think of any thing to wish for, or to set on foot as a particular treat—for then I was quite happy, and wanted nothing."

"So far, so good—proceed," replied he.

"Well, and then you know Mamma advised me to wait till I did wish for something, and not to try and invent a wish, for then it most likely would be a vain and silly one—and then you promised, Papa, that the first time I felt a great desire for any thing in particular, you would induge me, if you could."

"I remember all this clearly," said her father, "and so you have now been a full month without any particular desire—few people can give so respectable an account of themselves, my Cecilia; but it is a sign my girl possesses a contented temper, and I shall perform my promise, I assure you, whenever the time arrives, and you make your claim."

"The time *is* arrived, my dear Papa."

"Is it indeed!" replied he (pretending to

look alarmed). "Well, let us see—my Cecilia will not bear too hard on this said promise.—I wonder what she will ask for—not a slice of the moon, I hope."

"No," said Cecilia, (laughing heartily).

"A palace of silver, perhaps," resumed he.

"No, no, nothing like it."

"A gilt coach and six?"

"No, no, no, no—it is—it is—Farmer Webber's Donkey."

"Bless me!" continued her father, "a prodigious boon indeed! *Farmer Webber's Donkey!*—Now I know a man that has got four donkies; hadn't you better have them all, and you can harness them to your little carriage, or ride upon them by turns."

"No, thank you, Papa; I would not wish for more than one—nor for any one in the whole world but Farmer Webber's."

"Farmer Webber's then you shall have, if it is to be had for love or money, and methinks there will be each of these ingredients

in the affair, for I doubt not I shall get the said Donkey from my honest friend for money; and my Cecilia will obtain it from me for love," said he, kissing her as he spoke.

And here the conversation ended, as the servant that moment entered to summons them to dinner.

The next day, Tom was very busy all the morning, though it was his birth-day; for his father happened to have a great deal for him to do, and he was an industrious lad, and always striving to do his utmost to please him, he had therefore been working very hard from sun-rise. He had performed his promise to his little brothers and sisters, and had given them all the play-things he was possessed of, that they might be happy on his birth-day, while he himself was laboriously employed in carrying hay for his father, which he had been so lucky as to dry between showers, and to which the industrious cottager looked for paying a quarter's rent at Christmas.

Tom had nearly finished his day's work, and was telling his brothers he should soon come and play with them, when he heard the sound of music at a distance; he left off work to listen —it sounded like Collins, the village musician, playing upon his tabor and pipe, which he did on May-day, or any similar occasions. The sound became louder and louder.

"Oh look, mother! look, father!" exclaimed the children, "here are girls and boys with garlands in their hands—and more with baskets of flowers; and there is Collins sure enough, with his tabor and pipe, and Philip with his drum—Goodness me! and here are some fine ladies behind, oh!—and they are turning in at our garden—here they come, here they come!"

"Hush, my dears," cried Judith, "don't make such a noise, and let us see what can all this mean."

But the children continued jumping and hallooing, "Here they come, here they come!

But what is that behind them all?—It is some animal—but he is so covered with ribbands and flowers, I can't tell what it is."

The procession came into Giles's little garden, and there they held up their flowers, and sung a chorus in honour of Tom's birth-day. The words of the chorus were as follows: who they got to write them, I do not know, but suspect it was contrived by the tender-hearted Cecilia; for she, with her mother, and a numerous train of friends, made a part of the animated group, and I verily believe it was she and no other, who had formed this little procession—who had made up the garlands and the ribbands, and had conducted them in order to Farmer Webber's cottage.

CHORUS.

Come, boys and girls, forsake your play,
In glad procession come,
And celebrate this happy day,
The birth-day of poor Tom!

For what tho' Tom is poor and low,
He's ever cheerful and content,
And every station can bestow
Pleasure to the innocent.

There are, who blest with every joy,
Whom fortune's gifts await,
Might envy Tom, a ragged boy,
For *goodness* makes him *great*.

Our poor hero looked half delighted and half abashed, while this was loudly and merrily sung. He hung his head and twisted his buttons, and did not quite know what to do. But his father bowed, and took off his hat, and Judith wept for joy. The old grandfather too, leaning on his stick, kept taking off his hat, though interrupted by a cough.

The music now ceased for a little while, and the odd animal, covered with branches of laurel and flowers, was led forward. "It is ours, it is ours!" cried Mary—"It is Ned, it is poor Ned come back!"

Tom thought he was in a dream, and he could scarcely believe the testimony of his eyes, or of his ears, when Cecilia ordered the Donkey to be presented to him, and he saw, that it was indeed their old favourite he had so lately parted with.

"Do you remember me?" said Cecilia to him.

"Yes, Miss," replied Tom, making his best bow.

"I have brought you your old friend back again," continued the young lady—"You must receive him now as a present from me."

"Thank you, thank you!" was all Tom could reply.

"Somehow or other, I thought the poor creature seemed sorry to leave his old master," continued Cecilia, "for by some odd chance, all the village knows he was a very kind and good one. So I thought it a pity such good friends should part;"—and saying this, she put the bridle into Tom's hand, and the children sung again.

CHORUS.

Poor animal, how hard thy lot,
If taken from thy simple home,
Return to Giles's lowly cot,
And to thy master, happy Tom.

Now patient standing by his side,
Await his ever mild commands,
While playful children on thee ride,
And feed thee with their little hands.

Come, boys and girls, forsake your play,
In glad procession come,
To celebrate this joyful day,
The birth-day of poor Tom.

THE SISTERS.

Mr. Egerton, the wealthy and amiable proprietor of Beech-Grove mansion, had early in life been induced by an over anxious solicitude in his parents to see him settled, to enter the marriage state. The lady who became his wife, had been rather his father's choice than his own: she was very young, very pretty, and very silly. She had fallen violently in love with Mr. Egerton at first sight, and her friends perceiving that her health and spirits were affected, eagerly promoted the match.

A marriage was after some time determined on; but an union which is not founded upon mutual esteem, is rarely productive of happiness. Mr. Egerton was an enlightened scholar, and a sensible man—he required therefore

to make him happy, that his wife should be a rational and congenial companion. He soon found that mere personal attractions could ill supply the loss of intellectual endowments; and he looked in vain to his wife, for one who should be the confident of his thoughts, and his adviser in difficulty; who should share his tastes, and sympathise in his feelings. Mrs. Egerton was little more than an insipid beauty; for beauty is insipid when unadorned by sense and virtue.

Mrs. Egerton, in the mean time, thought it pretty and interesting to profess on all occasions the most exuberant attachment for her husband: this she carried to such an absurd extreme, as rather to give him pain than pleasure. In gratitude, however, he endeavoured to display a return of affection, and treated her during her life with the utmost indulgence.

The birth of a little girl was an event that gave the greatest pleasure to its father, and

would also have endeared its mother to him more strongly, had she not overacted her part in trying to display fondness for her offspring.

Conscious that she looked to great advantage with her baby in her arms, she would frequently say to her husband in an affected tone, "Ah! you do not love me! I know you do not; but I beseech you love my baby. When I die, you will marry again, and my poor infant will have a strange mother. Oh, my dear husband," she would add, fixing on him her beautiful eyes, and laying her white hand on his, "promise me, if you should have a second wife, to give my child to the care of my sister; do not," she added, with horror in her countenance, "if you wish me to rest in peace, do not give my child to a mother-in-law."

Mr. Egerton saw with pity and contempt the folly and affectation of his wife's petition; but when, some time after, it was repeated upon her death-bed, his feelings overcame his

better reason, and he was easily prevailed upon to give the promise required, that his Matilda, then only two years old, should be consigned to the care of her mother's sister during her life.

After passing several years of widowhood, Mr. Egerton became attached to a young woman possessing in abundance those qualities for which his heart so long had sighed. He sought and gained the valuable prize.

Mr. Egerton, in his second wife beheld a living picture of that which his imagination had so often drawn: beauty of mind adorned with outward charms, and sense joined to unaffected modesty.

And now it was, that he first began to enjoy "the calm sunshine of domestic life." His wife was a congenial and enlightened companion, and the education of their children formed their study and delight.

With regard to his daughter Matilda, Mr. Egerton felt perfectly happy in having obeyed

the wishes of her mother respecting her. He knew his sister-in-law to be a most excellent and respectable woman, and one who from her temper and habits was peculiarly fitted to educate a child: he knew also that she was wealthy, and would provide for her amply; he felt rejoiced, therefore, that he was not obliged to burden his wife with a child that did not belong to her; and as he had never been particularly partial to Matilda, and was satisfied of her welfare, he very soon ceased to think of, or even to wish to see her.

Matilda in the mean time lived with her aunt in town, and grew up to be the comfort and delight of her life. Mrs. Manville lived entirely secluded from the gay world during the education of her niece; she saw no company, and Matilda was her sole companion. This excellent lady planned and regulated the education of her niece with the most tender solicitude. She had perceived and lamented the errors of her departed sister, and it was from

similar errors that she was anxious to guard her niece.

Matilda, in her person, bore a striking resemblance to her mother; she possessed as large a share of beauty; and Mrs. Manville occupied herself in the affecting task of embellishing it with those graces, of which her mother's was destitute. She stored her mind with ideas, enlarged and cultivated her understanding, and at the same time instilled into her temper the charms of unaffected and simple modesty. Matilda became remarkable for her strong sense and quick capacity; and though in person she was the image of her mother, her mind bore a strong and decided resemblance to that of her father. Mrs Manville preserved in her niece a pious respect for her mother's memory, but she told her nothing of her situation in life, and Matilda expressed no curiosity on the subject: perfectly happy with her aunt, of whom she was dotingly fond, she rather feared than desired, a change of fortune.

That peaceful enjoyment, however, which rarely lasts beyond the period of infancy, Matilda was no longer to possess. As she grew up, her aunt wished her to receive those advantages of education, which she felt herself unable to bestow; and having endeavoured to fix her principles, and strengthen her character, she with little apprehension, though with much anxiety, sent her to a fashionable boarding school in the metropolis.

After she had formed this plan, Mrs. Manville found it necessary to call up all her resolution, all her good sense, to enable her to make the sacrifice. Painful indeed it was to her, to part with the darling object of all her best affections; the more painful, as she knew that the separation would be equally felt by Matilda, who trembled at the thought of quitting her aunt, to live among perfect strangers.

It was in vain that Mrs. Manville endeavoured to convince her of the advantage she would derive from it: for the first time in

her life she ventured to maintain an opposite opinion.

"Surely," said she, "you can teach me all you know, and it cannot be necessary that I should be better informed than you are. Do not send me from you. To you I owe gratitude, duty, every thing; do not send me away."

"Matilda," replied Mrs. Manville, "if you feel you owe me gratitude and duty, show it me in this instance, by a cheerful and ready compliance with the plan I have adopted for you."

Mrs. Manville said this in a more serious tone of voice than she was accustomed to employ, and Matilda ventured not a reply. Her good sense soon enabled her to overcome her feelings, and she promised a ready and cheerful obedience.

Mrs. Manville went herself to the school with her niece, that she might consign her with her own hands to Mrs. Gregory's care: and my readers must represent to themselves Matilda's feelings, when, as she was standing at the par-

lour-window, she beheld her aunt step into the carriage and drive away. She smiled, however, and kissed her hand with an air of gaiety, while her aunt could see her, and it was not till she was out of sight that she suffered her tears to flow.

The novelty of the scene which surrounded her, in a short time, however, served to dispel her grief. Mrs. Gregory, who was a charming woman, perceiving Matilda's timidity and suppressed sorrow, and aware that upon her first introduction she would be exposed to the stare, perhaps to the ridicule of some of her companions, offered to defer it till her spirits should be more composed, and Matilda accepted with gratitude her proposal of spending the first day or two in the parlour.

In the mean time the news of her arrival was spread around in the school-room, and "a new girl," "a new scholar," was whispered round.

"Don't you long to see her?" said one.

"I wonder if she's pretty," said another.

But there was no need of wondering long, as the expected moment soon arrived, and holding the hand of Mrs. Gregory, Matilda was introduced into the school-room.

"You seem as if you were unwilling to part with me," said Mrs. Gregory, smiling, "you hold my hand so firmly; but I must resign you to one who I am sure will take care of you."

Saying this, she joined Matilda's hand with that of her daughter Mary, and adding that she hoped they would be good friends together, she left the room.

Matilda's embarrassment increased, when upon looking round, she observed that all eyes were fixed upon her, and that she was regarded with curiosity and attention.

Mary Gregory, however, endeavoured to dissipate her fears, and taking her round the room, pointed out to her any thing that she thought would be likely to interest or amuse her. She happily succeeded, and in a short

time had engaged Matilda in interesting conversation, while the surrounding multitude, having satisfied their curiosity with respect to Matilda's dress and appearance, ceased to regard her as an object of speculation.

When the eyes of her school-fellows were withdrawn from her, Matilda had leisure to gaze upon them, and she was much amused with observing their various faces and employments.

Mary in a low voice told her their different names and characters, and pointed out to her, with great good sense, some who were amusing as companions, others who were desirable as friends; some who were beloved for their amiable qualities, and others who were disliked for bad ones.

Matilda was highly entertained. She thought Mary was a delightful girl, and hoped to make her a constant companion; but she was disappointed to find that, except during the hours of school, when she assisted in the tuition of

the scholars, Mary seldom appeared, as she spent her time in the society of her mother.

"And who, Mary," enquired Matilda, "is that pretty girl who is sitting in the corner with her head upon her hand, and who seems so dejected and unhappy?"

"Poor Emily!" replied Mary, "she is indeed unhappy; but she indulges her sorrow too much. She has nothing to lament but absence from home, which you and all around feel in common with herself, but since her arrival she has done little else than give way to tears and repinings: it is in vain to endeavour to comfort her: my mother has tried every means without effect: and believing her to be sullen, she thinks it better to leave her to herself to recover her serenity."

Matilda was particularly interested with the appearance of Emily; her compassion was excited for her; and while she pitied her sorrows, she almost forgot her own.

"Poor girl!" said she, "perhaps she has been

too fondly indulged at home; how hard for her to be sent from that home to a little world of strangers! I think I know what she feels,—she looks round upon all these new faces, and then she thinks of her absent friends, who have been more than kind to her."

Matilda continued to gaze and pity, and Emily to weep, till the hour of repose arrived, when Matilda found, much to her delight, that Emily was to share an apartment with herself.

When they were left together, Matilda made many ineffectual attempts to converse with Emily; but, repulsed by her look of determined sullenness, she could not for some time gather courage to speak to her.

At last, when the curtains hid her from her sight, and there was no light in the room, except that which the glimmering rush-light afforded, she ventured to begin a conversation, and offered in the most affectionate manner, to do any thing in her power to comfort

and make her happy; but it was in vain she spoke, no reply was heard, and discouraged by this vain attempt, Matilda herself shed tears, till, exhausted by fatigue, she fell to sleep.

The first dawn of morning usually summoned the whole house to the duties of the day.

It happened one morning that Matilda had translated an exercise so much to the satisfaction of the French teacher, that she was recommended to Mrs. Gregory, as deserving some particular reward. Mrs. Gregory, with a smile of approbation, declared to Matilda, that if she would make some request before the end of the day (provided it was within the compass of her ability), it should be complied with. Matilda thanked her, but felt that she should never be able to ask a favour of her governess.

During the rest of the day Matilda was entreated on all sides to ask for different things.

"Oh, my dear Miss Manville" (for her aunt

with true maternal fondness, had insisted upon calling her by her own name, and she did not so much as remember to have heard her father's), "do ask that we may have leave to go to the pastry-cook's this evening, you know we have just had our allowance paid."

"Now, if you wish to oblige us one and all," said another, "you will ask for a holiday to-morrow; surely you can have nothing better than a holiday."

"Ask to go to the play," cried a third, "that will be the best; do, my dear Matilda, ask to go to the new theatre; that will please us all as well as yourself."

"I wish I could please you all," said Matilda, smiling, "but I fear that is impossible."

The dinner-bell here put an end to the conversation. Matilda continued to watch Emily with interest, she offered to assist her in her work—in her lessons—but Emily preserved her gloomy silence, and showed no gratitude for this attentive kindness.

It was just as they were all preparing to walk in the square, that an elegant carriage drove up to the door; the whole party rushed to the window.

"It is my mother!" exclaimed Emily, clasping her hands; and immediately she threw off her bonnet, expecting a summons to the drawing-room. "Do I look as if I had been crying?" said she, trying to look cheerful, and patting her inflamed eyelids.

"No," said the gentle Matilda, going up to her and assisting her to adjust her cap, "you do not look as if you had been crying now: how happy I am your mamma has come to comfort you!"

"How long they are before they send for me!" said Emily, peevishly.

But she had yet much longer to wait, and her patience was almost entirely exhausted, when, at length, the door opened, she made an involuntary spring towards it, and met the

servant, who put a note into her hand and left the room.—Emily, astonished, opened it, and read as follows:

"How much am I disappointed, after having travelled from so great a distance to see my Emily, to find at my arrival, I cannot be permitted that delight!—O my dear child, for your own, for my sake, continue not a gloomy sullenness, hurtful to yourself, and displeasing to your friends. Let me, when next I visit you, behold you restored to your usual serenity and sweetness of temper: it will greatly comfort

"Your affectionate Mother."

Emily threw down the note, and burst into an agony of tears, and Matilda was scarcely less affected. The carriage still remained at the door. After a few minutes had elapsed, Mrs. Gregory appeared.

Matilda instantly ran up to her, and throwing herself into the most entreating attitude,

exclaimed, "Dear madam, you promised to comply with my request—forgive Emily, and let her see her mother."

Mrs. Gregory raised Matilda with a look of approbation.

"I cannot break my promise," said she, "particularly to one so deserving. Emily, Matilda pleads for you; you have leave to go to the drawing-room."

Emily, overcome by Matilda's persevering kindness, threw her arms round her neck, saying, she had not deserved it.

"Do not let me detain you," said Matilda; "fly to your mother; she will best be able to comfort you."

When Emily returned to the school-room, she ran immediately to Matilda, expressing remorse for her late conduct, and saying, she trusted they should be the best of friends in future:—"but alas," she continued, as she took hold of Matilda's arm to walk, "is it not hard, *is it not miserable*, to be sent from home?"

"Indeed, Emily, you do not know what it is to be really miserable. You should endeavour at least to be content, in whatever situation you are placed. It is not, you know, worse for you than for the rest of your numerous companions."

"I do not know why it is, but I think they do not feel so much as I do."

"They do not give way to their feelings, Emily."

"Were *you* very sorry to leave your home to come here, Matilda?"

"Indeed, Emily, I was; but from the instant I saw and pitied you, I entirely forgot my own sorrows."

Just at this moment, a wretched-looking boy came up to them, holding up some pretty little painted wicker-baskets to sell.

"What is your name, poor boy?" said Matilda, taking the baskets from his hand: "do not be afraid, I will buy them all, if no one else will."

"Here," young ladies, said she, displaying them to her companions, "here are some beautiful baskets, of all shapes, sizes, and colours."

They were soon disposed of, and the boy received the money for them, saying, "Thank you, good ladies, and thank God, sister will not die now."

Matilda enquired what he meant, and where his sister was.

He said his sister was lying at home very ill.

And where are your father and mother?

"We've got none in the wide world," said the boy, "they died both *on* 'em, and left sister and I to take care of one another; and Patty makes these here to save us from starving: but she overworked herself last night. But this will buy her something to do her good."

The boy pulled off his hat, as he finished his speech, and was hastening away. Matilda asked permission to go and see his sister; this

was granted; and Matilda and Emily, accompanied by one of the teachers, followed the boy home.

He led them to the door of a miserable-looking hovel, where, after they had ascended two or three narrow stairs, they entered a little wretched hole, for it could hardly be called a room, in which, stretched upon an old rug, lay a pretty little girl, looking as pale as death itself, and holding both her hands to her head, saying she was in great pain. By her side lay some little bundles of wicker, and near her was one basket half made. Matilda took up the basket.

"Poor, dear little girl," said she, "you have worked then, till you could work no longer, to keep yourself and your brother from starving? Oh, Emily! here is a picture of *real misery*."

"But is there no one to take care of this poor child? would they have left her here to die?" said Emily.

Just as she was speaking, an ill-tempered, dirty-looking, old woman entered the room.

"Good woman," said Matilda, "this child is very ill indeed, and seems to be left quite alone."

"She's none of mine," said the old woman, in a surly tone, "none of mine; only lodges here."

"But would you leave her here to die, because she is not yours?" enquired Matilda.

"What can I do?" said the old woman, "I can't afford to pay for doctors nor for doctors' stuff. I've had enough brats of my own, and could hardly make shift to keep 'em."

"And who pays for these children's lodging, and who buys their food?" asked Matilda.

"They pays for it *theirselves*," said the old woman, "for they be *horphans;* and the girl makes these *here* baskets, and they gives me sixpence a-week for this *here* room, which is little enough, and the rest I suppose goes in victuals; but I never cared to ask, for its no business of mine."

Matilda and Emily were much shocked at the inhumanity of this woman; they felt inclined to reproach her with her conduct: but Matilda thought it would be wiser to practise forbearance with her for the present, and to bribe her to take better care of the poor invalid, till they could remove her into safer hands. Matilda and Emily therefore produced their purses, and each gave some money into the hands of the old woman, charging her to put the child into a bed, to send for a surgeon, and to procure for it any thing that should be ordered. The features and appearance of the old woman underwent a sudden alteration at the sight of the money.

"Adso and bless us!" she began "I'd no notion that the poor thing was in such a taking, because, my lady, when I was here in the morning, my lady, the poor *cratur* was as busy as a bee, and as gay as a lark;—but I'll go myself for the doctor, and she shall want for nothing depend on't, my lady: poor dear soul!"

she added, raising the child and feeling her head.

Matilda and Emily waited to see the child actually put to bed; and then (being warned by the teacher that it grew late) they renewed their injunctions to the woman, and bidding the little boy see that his sister was well taken care of, returned home.

At night when they retired to rest, they conversed together for a considerable time, upon the events of the preceding day.

"How wicked was I," said the ingenuous Emily, "to be giving way to such grief and discontent, while I was enjoying every comfort of life! Oh, Matilda, I shall never forget the sight of that poor little girl—it will make a lasting impression on my mind."

"I am afraid such sights are not uncommon, my dear Emily; for my aunt has often told me, that there is more misery in the world than we can form any idea of: but this thought

ought to make us at least contented, while we are, as you say, enjoying every comfort."

"Matilda, how very like my father you talk! That was just such a thing as he would have said, and spoken just like him; do you know, you often remind me of him, when you are in your grave humours. My father is so very grave, and he wants, I believe, to make me so too; but he will find that a hard matter; now you would just suit him, you are a girl after his own heart—so grave—so discreet——"

"Hush, dear Emily, do not laugh so loud."

"What! are you forbidding me to laugh? A little while ago you would not let me cry. I cannot please you, Matilda."

"You do please me, Emily; and though I cannot exactly tell why, I like you better than any one I know, except my aunt."

"You have no mother, I think you told me?"

"No, I lost my mother when I was scarcely two years old; but I have never felt the loss, for my dear aunt has well supplied a mother" place."

"I wish you knew *my* mother, Matilda. I think, I am sure, you would like her very much; and I am certain she would dote upon you. I shall write to-morrow, and tell her what a dear friend I have found in you, that I am quite happy now, and shall be sorry to leave school, as I must then part with you."

"Oh, that will be saying too much, Emily, and she will doubt your sincerity: but we must not talk any more now, for it is very late."

The next day, Matilda and Emily gave an account of the preceding day's adventure to their governess, and obtained permission to pay another visit to their little patient.

They found the little girl much better, but still in a very helpless state. Upon enquiry, they discovered that the woman of the house had been out all the morning, and would not be back till night; and that the child in the

mean time was left neglected and alone. They therefore agreed to place her under better and more humane care.

This was easily done. They found out a worthy and kind-hearted woman, who was willing for the same money, to give them a room in her clean, tidy house; and here they had the satisfaction of seeing the poor little brother and sister quite comfortable and happy. As for the boy, he hardly knew how to express his joy, when he saw his sister sitting up in a clean little bed, eating a bason of warm broth, and looking almost well again.

The hours of Emily and Matilda now passed so agreeably, in cheerful labour, in pleasant recreation, and the sweet offices of friendship and charity, that day after day fled rapidly away; and, happy in one another's society, these inseparable companions felt nothing to wish. Part of their occupation was in making caps, handkerchiefs, and other little necessaries for their devoted and fatherless *protégée* and her brother.

Many of their schoolfellows, who consumed what they termed their play-hours in mere idle play, nay, some in staring about, and doing nothing, could not forbear envying Matilda and Emily, as they sat together in a corner of the room at a neat little work-table, with their baskets before them, both so usefully and busily employed.

In about a week's time they had finished a pretty collection of things; and they filled a basket with them, and presented them to Susan, who, having recovered her health and strength, was now able to resume her amiable industry.

"How true it is," said Emily, "that the best way to relieve our own sorrow, is to endeavour to soothe the distress of others! Oh, Matilda, your example and advice will make me what I ought to be, and what my parents wish to see me. My mother used to pray that, when I came to school, I might find a friend like yourself, whom I could love, and

whose example and friendship would be a benefit to me. Her prayers are heard; you are, Matilda, that dear friend."

And now the happy time drew near,
When girls from school to home repair.

Every mother had received a letter from her daughter, which upon opening, she found to contain, in copper-plate style,

"*Honoured Madam*,

"*I have the pleasure to inform you, our holidays are fixed for the 26th of July, &c.*"

That eventful day was now arrived, and the delightful bustle commenced. Carriages driving to the door, clothes packing, trunks cording, accounts settling, farewells taking, and "good bye, good bye," echoed by many tongues, whose joyful faces seemed to say, "How glad I am to leave you!"

There was one parting however, one farewell pronounced with sorrow; and that sorrow was heart-felt and sincere. When Matilda and

Emily bade adieu to one another, they both experienced the pang which rends the heart at a separation from those we love. Emily, when she returned home, was to revisit school no more; and therefore, though Matilda bade her hope that chance might at some future period bring them together, yet they could foresee no likely prospect of a meeting.

"Comfort yourself, dear Emily," said Matilda, before she stepped into her aunt's carriage, which waited for her at the door, "and do not indulge in useless sorrow: remember the little girl and the wicker-baskets! Return in spirits to your happy home; and let us cherish the hope, that some future day we may have the happiness of seeing one another."

"Oh, Matilda! stay one moment longer; let me at least endeavour to express my gratitude."

"Oh! do not talk of gratitude to me, Emily; we are friends and equals, and our feelings of love and gratitude are mutual."

"No, Matilda, we are not equals—I feel

I am inferior to you; but my parents will, I hope, find me improved, and to you it is owing that I am so."

"Farewell, dear Emily," said Matilda, disengaging herself from her warm embraces; for she felt unable any longer to repress her feelings, and had Emily detained her another minute, she must have given vent to them in a flood of tears.

When Emily returned home, her anxious parents were truly delighted at perceiving the striking improvement in her mind and manners! and they both felt grateful to the young friend, to whom, as Emily assured them, she was indebted for every thing. In the society of her parents, and brothers and sisters, Emily could not fail of being happy: she found such full employment in conversing with her mother, in playing duets with her sister, in teaching her little brothers to read, and in nursing the baby, that she had no time to indulge in grief for the loss of her friend.

Matilda, upon arriving at her aunt's house, found her in a declining state of health. Mrs. Manville, however, preserved her usual serenity and cheerfulness. She expressed delight at having Matilda again with her, and rejoiced in witnessing the progress she had made in her different studies. She listened with pleasure while Matilda sang, or played on her harp; but her gaiety, alas! was forced, and only assumed in the presence of her niece. She was convinced that her end was approaching; and indeed her decay was so sudden and so visible, that Matilda, from native sagacity, and affection merely, grew to forebode the worst.

Mrs. Manville was shortly after confined to her room, which she never afterwards quitted. Matilda nursed her with constant and unwearied care; she sat by her side all day, and at last all night.

Feeling herself grow hourly worse, Mrs. Manville desired to know the truth of her si-

situation, and the physician pronounced her case hopeless. She sent immediately for her brother, that she might resign Matilda to his protection; and her alarm lest he should not arrive in time, considerably increased her indisposition.

In the mean time she endeavoured to prepare Matilda's mind for the event that was to take place; she acquainted her with the circumstances of her birth and situation, and prepared her for the reception of her father, to whose care she was now to be consigned. Poor Matilda was overwhelmed with grief at the idea of losing her aunt, and trembled at the very thought of being committed to the care of strangers; but she was much too sensible to give way to her feelings. She constantly maintained a complete command over herself, and assumed an appearance of content, nay, even of cheerfulness, which afforded the greatest comfort to the mind of Mrs. Manville.

Mr. Egerton hastened to town upon the

receipt of his sister-in-law's letter. He was much grieved at her sudden illness, and shocked at the alarming state in which he found her.

Upon his entering her aunt's room, Matilda shrunk timidly from his sight, and remained concealed from his view, till her aunt stretched out her hand, and bade her embrace her father.

Mr. Egerton gave an involuntary start, when he beheld Matilda; she seemed to him the living image of her mother, and she looked at this moment so pale and so melancholy, that the likeness struck him with horror; he almost shuddered, and embraced her with coldness.

"My brother," said Mrs. Manville in her last moments, "I resign to you your child, and humbly hope I have performed my duty by her: what she has been to me no words can express; may she be the same to you, and

then you *must love* her with all the fervency I wish."

Matilda, at these words, took her aunt's hand, and pressed it to her lips: but finding she could not restrain her tears, she turned aside to pour out a cordial draught; and presenting it to her aunt, she bade her not talk, lest it should fatigue her.

Mr. Egerton looked at her at this moment, and struck with the beauty of her countenance and the gracefulness of her manner, he thought her quite angelic.

Ah! thought he, she certainly possesses the *beauty* of her mother: if her *mind* corresponds with her person, what a treasure shall I possess!

"Matilda," continued Mrs. Manvitle in a feeble tone, "let me talk now, for these are perhaps the last words you will ever hear from me."

Matilda fell on her knees by the bed-side;

and her aunt in the most tender manner pronounced her blessing upon her, and shortly after closed her eyes for ever.

The conduct and appearance of Matilda deeply interested and affected the heart of her father; he reproached himself bitterly for having so long neglected his daughter, but felt justly punished, in having endured so long the loss of her society. He now resolved to make amends for his former neglect, and determined during his future life, that her happiness should be the object of his study.

He remained in town with his daughter till after the funeral had taken place, and Matilda was dressed in deep mourning; her innate piety forbade her to give way too long to the indulgence of her grief, and the kindness of her father soothed and dissipated her fears.

In their journey together, Mr. Egerton endeavoured to raise her spirits by repeated promises of love and tenderness: he assured her no pains should be spared to make her easy

and comfortable; that Mrs. Egerton would be, in the real sense of the word, a *mother* to her; that he was certain their minds were congenial, and that they would love and esteem one another. Her new brothers and sisters also, he hoped, would prove interesting and amusing companions; his eldest daughter in particular, he trusted, he said, would enjoy the advantage and pleasure of her friendship.

Matilda in return, endeavoured to express her sense of his kindness, and of her own peculiar good fortune, in possessing such kind friends after the loss of her aunt.

In such interesting conversation they beguiled the time, till they arrived at Beech-Grove; but, notwithstanding what had passed, Matilda, naturally timid, felt alarmed at the idea of her introduction to strangers. Knowing however it was an event that must happen, she called up her courage to sustain it.

Mr. Egerton took hold of her trembling hand, to introduce her in form to his wife and

eldest daughter. How great was his surprise, when, upon opening the door, Matilda and his daughter Emily, both gave an involuntary scream, and in an instant were in one another's arms! The mystery was soon explained, when Emily exclaimed, "Embrace her, my dear mother, embrace your *daughter!*—*her* to whom you owe my improvement, who has been a true friend to me, and whom I may now call my *sister!*"

"My sister!" said Matilda, bursting into tears: "do I indeed find a *sister*, in one whom I have loved so well—so long?"

The pleasure experienced by Mr. and Mrs. Egerton at this event, is not to be described: they had both been greatly interested for the sweet girl, to whom, from Emily's account, they owed so much; they longed to see and to reward her; they now discovered her in the person of their *child!*

Her appearance and character confirmed all that Emily had related, and they felt it would

be their future delight to endeavour to repay her services.

Matilda was equally delighted with her new parents: her mother-in-law, she thought the most delightful of women; and in the society of Emily, she soon felt perfectly happy: and often would they agree together, that female friendship, so pure, so lasting, was scarcely to be expected between any but SISTERS.

THE END.

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