# Original Stories from Real Life

by Mary Wollstonecraft

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ORIGINAL STORIES FROM REAL LIFE; WITH CONVERSATIONS, CALCULATED TO REGULATE THE AFFECTIONS, AND FORM THE MIND TO TRUTH AND GOODNESS.

BY

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

A NEW EDITION.

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1796

# PREFACE.

These conversations and tales are accommodated to the present state of society; which obliges the author to attempt to cure those faults by reason, which ought never to have taken root in the infant mind. Good habits, imperceptibly fixed, are far preferable to the precepts of reason; but, as this task requires more judgment than generally falls to the lot of parents, substitutes must be sought for, and medicines given, when regimen would have answered the purpose much better. I believe those who examine their own minds will readily agree with me, that reason, with difficulty, conquers settled habits, even when it is arrived at some degree of maturity: why then do we suffer children to be bound with fetters, which their half-formed faculties cannot break.

In writing the following work, I aim at perspicuity and simplicity of style; and try to avoid those unmeaning compliments, which slip from the tongue, but have not the least connection with the affections that should warm the heart, and animate the conduct. By this false politeness, sincerity is sacrificed, and truth violated; and thus artificial manners are necessarily taught. For true politeness is a polish, not a

varnish; and should rather be acquired by observation than admonition. And we may remark, by way of illustration, that men do not attempt to polish precious stones, till age and air have given them that degree of solidity, which will enable them to bear the necessary friction, without destroying the main substance.

The way to render instruction most useful cannot always be adopted; knowledge should be gradually imparted, and flow more from example than teaching: example directly addresses the senses, the first inlets to the heart; and the improvement of those instruments of the understanding is the object education should have constantly in view, and over which we have most power. But to wish that parents would, themselves, mould the ductile passions, is a chimerical wish, for the present generation have their own passions to combat with, and fastidious pleasures to pursue, neglecting those pointed out by nature: we must therefore pour premature knowledge into the succeeding one; and, teaching virtue, explain the nature of vice. Cruel necessity!

The Conversations are intended to assist the teacher as well as the pupil; and this will obviate an objection which some may start, that the sentiments are not quite on a level with the capacity of a child. Every child requires a different mode of treatment; but a writer can only choose one, and that must be modified by those who are actually engaged with young people in their studies.

The tendency of the reasoning obviously tends to fix principles of truth and humanity on a solid and simple foundation; and to make religion an active, invigorating director of the affections, and not a mere attention to forms. Systems of Theology may be complicated; but when the character of the Supreme Being is displayed, and He is recognised as the Universal Father, the Author and Centre of Good, a child may be led to comprehend that dignity and happiness must arise from imitating Him; and this conviction should be twisted into, and be the foundation of every inculcated duty.

At any rate, the Tales which were written to illustrate the moral, may recall it, when the mind has gained sufficient strength to discuss the argument from which it was deduced.

## INTRODUCTION.

Mary and Caroline, though the children of wealthy parents were, in their infancy, left entirely to the management of servants, or people equally ignorant. Their mother died suddenly, and their father, who found them very troublesome at home, placed them under the tuition of a woman of tenderness and discernment, a near relation, who was induced to take on herself the important charge through motives of compassion.

They were shamefully ignorant, considering that Mary had been fourteen, and Caroline twelve years in the world. If they had been merely ignorant, the talk would not have appeared so arduous; but they had caught every prejudice that the vulgar casually instill. In order to eradicate these prejudices, and substitute good habits instead of those they had carelessly contracted, Mrs. Mason never suffered them to be out of her sight. They were allowed to ask questions on all occasions, a method she would not have adopted, had she educated them from the first, according to the suggestions of her own reason, to which experience had given its sanction.

They had tolerable capacities; but Mary had a turn for ridicule, and Caroline was vain of her person. She was, indeed, very handsome, and the inconsiderate encomiums that had, in her presence, been lavished on her beauty made her, even at that early age, affected.

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MORAL CONVERSATIONS

AND

STORIES.

## CHAP. I. The Treatment of Animals.—The Ant.—The Bee.—Goodness.—The Lark’s Nest.—The Asses.

One fine morning in spring, some time after Mary and Caroline were settled in their new abode, Mrs. Mason proposed a walk before breakfast, a custom she wished to teach imperceptibly, by rendering it amusing.

The sun had scarcely dispelled the dew that hung on every blade of grass, and filled the half-shut flowers; every prospect smiled, and the freshness of the air conveyed the most pleasing sensations to Mrs. Mason’s mind; but the children were regardless of the surrounding beauties, and ran eagerly after some insects to destroy them. Mrs. Mason silently observed their cruel sports, without appearing to do it; but stepping suddenly out of the foot-path into the long grass, her buckle was caught in it, and striving to disentangle herself, she wet her feet; which the children knew she wished to avoid, as she had been lately sick. This circumstance roused their attention; and they forgot their amusement to enquire why she had left the path; and Mary could hardly restrain a laugh, when she was informed that it was to avoid treading on some snails that were creeping across the narrow footway. Surely, said Mary, you do not think there is any harm in killing a snail, or any of those nasty creatures that crawl on the ground? I hate them, and should scream if one was to find its way from my clothes to my neck! With great gravity, Mrs. Mason asked how she dared to kill any thing, unless it were to prevent its hurting her? Then, resuming a smiling face, she said, Your education has been neglected, my child; as we walk along attend to what I say, and make the best answers you can; and do you, Caroline, join in the conversation.

You have already heard that God created the world, and every inhabitant of it. He is

then called the Father of all creatures; and all are made to be happy, whom a good and wise God has created. He made those snails you despise, and caterpillars, and spiders; and when he made them, did not leave them to perish, but placed them where the food that is most proper to nourish them is easily found. They do not live long, but He who is their Father, as well as your's, directs them to deposit their eggs on the plants that are fit to support their young, when they are not able to get food for themselves.—And when such a great and wise Being has taken care to provide every thing necessary for the meanest creature, would you dare to kill it, merely because it appears to you ugly? Mary began to be attentive, and quickly followed Mrs. Mason's example, who allowed a caterpillar and a spider to creep on her hand. You find them, she rejoined, very harmless; but a great number would destroy our vegetables and fruit; so birds are permitted to eat them, as we feed on animals; and in spring there are always more than at any other season of the year, to furnish food for the young broods.—Half-convinced, Mary said, But worms are of little consequence in the world. Yet, replied Mrs. Mason, God cares for them, and gives them every thing that is necessary to render their existence comfortable. You are often troublesome—I am stronger than you—yet I do not kill you.

Observe those ants; they have a little habitation in yonder hillock; they carry food to it for their young, and sleep very snug in it during the cold weather. The bees also have comfortable towns, and lay up a store of honey to support them when the flowers die, and snow covers the ground: and this forecast is as much the gift of God, as any quality you possess.

Do you know the meaning of the word Goodness? I see you are unwilling to answer. I will tell you. It is, first, to avoid hurting any thing; and then, to contrive to give as much pleasure as you can. If some insects are to be destroyed, to preserve my garden from desolation, I have it done in the quickest way. The domestic animals that I keep, I provide the best food for, and never suffer them to be tormented; and this caution arises from two motives:—I wish to make them happy; and, as I love

my fellow-creatures still better than the brute creation, I would not allow those that I have any influence over to grow habitually thoughtless and cruel, till they were unable to relish the greatest pleasure life affords,—that of resembling God, by doing good.

A lark now began to sing, as it soared aloft. The children watched its motions, listening to the artless melody. They wondered what it was thinking of—of its young family, they soon concluded; for it flew over the hedge, and drawing near, they heard the young ones chirp. Very soon both the old birds took their flight together, to look for food to satisfy the craving of the almost fledged young. An idle boy, who had borrowed a gun, fired at them—they fell; and before he could take up the wounded pair, he perceived Mrs. Mason; and expecting a very severe reprimand, ran away. She and the little girls drew near, and found that one was not much hurt, but that the other, the cock, had one leg broken, and both its wings shattered; and its little eyes seemed starting out of their sockets, it was in such exquisite pain. The children turned away their eyes. Look at it, said Mrs. Mason; do you not see that it suffers as much, and more than you did when you had the small-pox, when you were so tenderly nursed. Take up the hen; I will bind her wing together; perhaps it may heal. As to the cock, though I hate to kill any thing, I must put him out of pain; to leave him in his present state would be cruel; and avoiding an unpleasant sensation myself, I should allow the poor bird to die by inches, and call this treatment tenderness, when it would be selfishness or weakness. Saying so, she put her foot on the bird’s head, turning her own another way.

They walked on; when Caroline remarked, that the nestlings, deprived of their parents, would now perish; and the mother began to flutter in her hand as they drew near the hedge; though the poor creature could not fly, yet she tried to do it. The girls, with one voice, begged Mrs. Mason to let them take the nest, and provide food in a cage, and see if the mother could not contrive to hop about to feed them. The nest and the old mother were instantly in Mary’s handkerchief. A little opening was

left to admit the air; and Caroline peeped into it every moment to see how they looked. I give you leave, said Mrs. Mason, to take those birds, because an accident has rendered them helpless; if that had not been the case, they should not have been confined.

They had scarcely reached the next field, when they met another boy with a nest in his hand, and on a tree near him saw the mother, who, forgetting her natural timidity, followed the spoiler; and her intelligible tones of anguish reached the ears of the children, whose hearts now first felt the emotions of humanity. Caroline called him, and taking sixpence out of her little purse, offered to give it to him for the nest, if he would shew her where he had taken it from. The boy consented, and away ran Caroline to replace it,—crying all the way, how delighted the old bird will be to find her brood again. The pleasure that the parent-bird would feel was talked of till they came to a large common, and heard some young asses, at the door of an hovel, making a most dreadful noise. Mrs. Mason had ordered the old ones to be confined, lest the young should suck before the necessary quantity had been saved for some sick people in her neighbourhood. But after they had given the usual quantity of milk, the thoughtless boy had left them still in confinement, and the young in vain implored the food nature designed for their particular support. Open the hatch, said Mrs. Mason, the mothers have still enough left to satisfy their young. It was opened, and they saw them suck.

Now, said she, we will return to breakfast; give me your hands, my little girls, you have done good this morning, you have acted like rational creatures. Look, what a fine morning it is. Insects, birds, and animals, are all enjoying this sweet day. Thank God for permitting you to see it, and for giving you an understanding which teaches you that you ought, by doing good, to imitate Him. Other creatures only think of supporting themselves; but man is allowed to ennoble his nature, by cultivating his mind and enlarging his heart. He feels disinterested love; every part of the creation affords an exercise for virtue, and virtue is ever the truest source of pleasure.

CHAP. II The Treatment of Animals.—The Difference between them and Man.—Parental Affection of a Dog.—Brutality punished.

After breakfast, Mrs. Mason gave the children Mrs. Trimmer's Fabulous Histories; and the subject still turned on animals, and the wanton cruelty of those who treated them improperly. The little girls were eager to express their detestation, and requested that in future they might be allowed to feed the chickens. Mrs. Mason complied with their request; only one condition was annexed to the permission, that they did it regularly. When you wait for your food, you learn patience, she added, and you can mention your wants; but those helpless creatures cannot complain. The country people frequently say,—How can you treat a poor dumb beast ill; and a stress is very properly laid on the word dumb; for dumb they appear to those who do not observe their looks and gestures; but God, who takes care of every thing, understands their language; and so did Caroline this morning, when she ran with such eagerness to replace the nest which the thoughtless boy had stolen, heedless of the mother's agonizing cries!

Mary interrupted her, to ask, if insects and animals were not inferior to men? Certainly, answered Mrs. Mason; and men are inferior to angels; yet we have reason to believe, that those exalted beings delight to do us good. You have heard in a book, which I seldom permit you to read, because you are not of an age to understand it, that angels, when they sang glory to God on high, wished for peace on earth, as a proof of the good-will they felt towards men. And all the glad tidings that have been sent to men, angels have proclaimed: indeed, the word angel signifies a messenger. In order to please God, and our happiness depends upon pleasing him, we must do good. What we call virtue, may be thus explained:—we exercise every benevolent affection to enjoy comfort here, and to fit ourselves to be angels hereafter. And when we have acquired human virtues, we shall have a nobler employment in our Father's kingdom. But between angels and men a much greater resemblance subsists, than between men and the brute creation; because the two

former seem capable of improvement.

The birds you saw to-day do not improve—or their improvement only tends to self-preservation; the first nest they make and the last are exactly the same; though in their flights they must see many others more beautiful if not more convenient, and, had they reason, they would probably shew something like individual taste in the form of their dwellings; but this is not the case. You saw the hen tear the down from her breast to make a nest for her eggs; you saw her beat the grain with her bill, and not swallow a bit, till the young were satisfied; and afterwards she covered them with her wings, and seemed perfectly happy, while she watched over her charge; if any one approached, she was ready to defend them, at the hazard of her life: yet, a fortnight hence, you will see the same hen drive the fledged chickens from the corn, and forget the fondness that seemed to be stronger than the first impulse of nature.

Animals have not the affections which arise from reason, nor can they do good, or acquire virtue. Every affection, and impulse, which I have observed in them, are like our inferior emotions, which do not depend entirely on our will, but are involuntary; they seem to have been implanted to preserve the species, and make the individual grateful for actual kindness. If you caress and feed them, they will love you, as children do, without knowing why; but we neither see imagination nor wisdom in them; and, what principally exalts man, friendship and devotion, they seem incapable of forming the least idea of. Friendship is founded on knowledge and virtue, and these are human acquirements; and devotion is a preparation for eternity; because when we pray to God, we offer an affront to him, if we do not strive to imitate the perfections He displays every where for our imitation, that we may grow better and happier.

The children eagerly enquired in what manner they were to behave, to prove that they were superior to animals? The answer was short,—be tender-hearted; and let your superior endowments ward off the evils which they cannot foresee. It is only to

animals that children can do good; men are their superiors. When I was a child, added their tender friend, I always made it my study and delight to feed all the dumb family that surrounded our house; and when I could be of use to any one of them I was happy. This employment humanized my heart, while, like wax, it took every impression; and Providence has since made me an instrument of good—I have been useful to my fellow-creatures. I, who never wantonly trod on an insect, or disregarded the plaint of the speechless beast, can now give bread to the hungry, physic to the sick, comfort to the afflicted, and, above all, am preparing you, who are to live for ever, to be fit for the society of angels, and good men made perfect. This world, I told you, was a road to a better—a preparation for it; if we suffer, we grow humbler and wiser: but animals have not this advantage, and man should not prevent their enjoying at the happiness of which they are capable.

A she-cat or dog have such strong parental affection, that if you take away their young, it almost kills them; some have actually died of grief when all have been taken away; though they do not seem to miss the greatest part.

A bitch had once all her litter stolen from her, and drowned in a neighbouring brook: she sought them out, and brought them one by one, laid them at the feet of her cruel master;—and looking wistfully at them for some time, in dumb anguish, turning her eyes on the destroyer, she expired!

I myself knew a man who had hardened his heart to such a degree, that he found pleasure in tormenting every creature whom he had any power over. I saw him let two guinea-pigs roll down sloping tiles, to see if the fall would kill them. And were they killed? cried Caroline. Certainly; and it is well they were, or he would have found some other mode of torment. When he became a father, he not only neglected to educate his children, and set them a good example, but he taught them to be cruel while he tormented them: the consequence was, that they neglected him when he was old and feeble; and he died in a ditch.

You may now go and feed your birds, and tie some of the straggling flowers round the garden sticks. After dinner, if the weather continues fine, we will walk to the wood, and I will shew you the hole in the limestone mountain (a mountain whose bowels, as we call them, are lime-stones) in which poor crazy Robin and his dog lived.

## CHAP. III. The treatment of Animals.—The Story of crazy Robin.—The Man confined in the Bastille.

In the afternoon the children bounded over the short grass of the common, and walked under the shadow of the mountain till they came to a craggy part, where a stream broke out, and ran down the declivity, struggling with the huge stones which impeded its progress, and occasioned a noise that did not unpleasantly interrupt the solemn silence of the place. The brook was soon lost in a neighbouring wood, and the children turned their eyes to the broken side of the mountain, over which ivy grew in great profusion. Mrs. Mason pointed out a little cave, and desired them to sit down on some stumps of trees, whilst she related the promised story.

In yonder cave once lived a poor man, who generally went by the name of crazy Robin. In his youth he was very industrious, and married my father’s dairy-maid; a girl deserving of such a good husband. For some time they continued to live very comfortably; their daily labour procured their daily bread; but Robin, finding it was likely he should have a large family, borrowed a trifle, to add to the small pittance which they had saved in service, and took a little farm in a neighbouring county. I was then a child.

Ten or twelve years after, I heard that a crazy man, who appeared very harmless, had piled by the side of the brook a great number of stones; he would wade into the river for them, followed by a cur dog, whom he would frequently call his Jacky, and even his Nancy; and then mumble to himself,—thou wilt not leave me—we will dwell

with the owls in the ivy.—A number of owls had taken shelter in it. The stones which he waded for he carried to the mouth of the hole, and only just left room enough to creep in. Some of the neighbours at last recollected his face; and I sent to enquire what misfortune had reduced him to such a deplorable state. The information I received from different persons, I will communicate to you in as few words as I can.

Several of his children died in their infancy; and, two years before he came to his native place, one misfortune had followed another till he had sunk under their accumulated weight. Through various accidents he was long in arrears to his landlord; who, seeing that he was an honest man, who endeavoured to bring up his family, did not distress him; but when his wife was lying-in of her last child, the landlord dying, his heir sent and seized the stock for the rent; and the person from whom he had borrowed some money, exasperated to see all gone, arresting him immediately, he was hurried to gaol, without being able to leave any money for his family. The poor woman could not see them starve, and trying to support her children before she had gained sufficient strength, she caught cold; and through neglect, and her want of proper nourishment, her illness turned to a putrid fever; which two of the children caught from her, and died with her. The two who were left, Jacky and Nancy, went to their father, and took with them a cur dog, that had long shared their frugal meals.

The children begged in the day, and at night slept with their wretched father. Poverty and dirt soon robbed their cheeks of the roses which the country air made bloom with a peculiar freshness; so that they soon caught a jail fever,—and died. The poor father, who was now bereft of all his children, hung over their bed in speechless anguish; not a groan or a tear escaped from him, whilst he stood, two or three hours, in the same attitude, looking at the dead bodies of his little darlings. The dog licked his hands, and strove to attract his attention; but for awhile he seemed not to observe his caresses; when he did, he said, mournfully, thou wilt not leave me—and then he

began to laugh. The bodies were removed; and he remained in an unsettled state, often frantic; at length the phrenzy subsided, and he grew melancholy and harmless. He was not then so closely watched; and one day he contrived to make his escape, the dog followed him, and came directly to his native village.

After I had received this account, I determined he should live in the place he had chosen, undisturbed. I sent some conveniences, all of which he rejected, except a mat; on which he sometimes slept—the dog always did. I tried to induce him to eat, but he constantly gave the dog whatever I sent him, and lived on haws and blackberries, and every kind of trash. I used to call frequently on him: and he sometimes followed me to the house I now live in, and in winter he would come of his own accord, and take a crust of bread. He gathered water-cresses out of the pool, and would bring them to me, with nosegays of wild thyme, which he plucked from the sides of the mountain. I mentioned before, that the dog was a cur. It had, indeed, the bad trick of a cur, and would run barking after horses heels. One day, when his master was gathering water-cresses, the dog running after a young gentleman's horse, made it start, and almost threw the rider; who grew so angry, that, though he knew it was the poor madman's dog, he levelled his gun at his head—shot him—and instantly rode off. Robin ran to his dog—he looked at his wounds, and not sensible that he was dead, called to him to follow him; but when he found that he could not, he took him to the pool, and washed off the blood before it began to clot, and then brought him home, and laid him on the mat.

I observed that I had not seen him pacing up the hills as usual, and sent to enquire about him. He was found sitting by the dog, and no entreaties could prevail on him to quit the body, or receive any refreshment. I instantly set off for this place, hoping, as I had always been a favourite, that I should be able to persuade him to eat something. But when I came to him, I found the hand of death was upon him. He was still melancholy; yet there was not such a mixture of wildness in it as formerly. I pressed him to take some food; but, instead of answering me, or turning away, he

burst into tears—a thing I had never seen him do before, and sobbing, he said, Will any one be kind to me!—you will kill me!—I saw not my wife die—No! they dragged me from her—but I saw Jacky and Nancy die—and who pitied me?—but my dog! He turned his eyes to the body—I wept with him. He would then have taken some nourishment, but nature was exhausted—and he expired.

Was that the cave? said Mary. They ran to it. Poor Robin! Did you ever hear of any thing so cruel? Yes, answered Mrs. Mason; and as we walk home I will relate an instance of still greater barbarity.

I told you, that Robin was confined in a jail. In France they have a dreadful one, called the Bastille. The poor wretches who are confined in it live entirely alone; who have not the pleasure of seeing men or animals; nor are they allowed books. They live in comfortless solitude. Some have amused themselves by making figures on the wall; and others have laid straws in rows. One miserable captive found a spider; he nourished it for two or three years; it grew tame, and partook of his lonely meal. The keeper observed it, and mentioned the circumstance to a superior, who ordered him to crush it. In vain did the man beg to have his spider spared. You find, Mary, that the nasty creature which you despised was comfort in solitude. The keeper obeyed the cruel command, and the unhappy wretch felt more pain when he heard the crush, than he had ever experienced during his long confinement. He looked round a dreary apartment, and the small portion of light which the grated bars admitted only served to shew him, that he breathed where nothing else drew breath.

## CHAP. IV. Anger.—History of Jane Fretful.

A few days after these walks and conversations, Mrs. Mason heard a great noise in the play-room. She ran hastily to enquire the cause, and found the children crying, and near them, one of the young birds lying on the floor dead. With great eagerness each of them tried, the moment she entered, to exculpate herself, and prove that the

other had killed the bird. Mrs. Mason commanded them to be silent; and, at the same time, called an orphan whom she had educated, and desired her to take care of the nest.

The cause of the dispute was easily gathered from what they both let fall. They had contested which had the best right to feed the birds. Mary insisted that she had a right, because she was the eldest; and Caroline, because she took the nest. Snatching it from one side of the room to the other, the bird fell, and was trodden on before they were aware.

When they were a little composed, Mrs. Mason calmly thus addressed them: I perceive that you are ashamed of your behaviour, and sorry for the consequence; I will not therefore severely reprove you, nor add bitterness to the self-reproach you must both feel, because I pity you. You are now inferior to the animals that graze on the common; reason only serves to render your folly more conspicuous and inexcusable. Anger is a little despicable vice: its selfish emotions banish compassion, and undermine every virtue. It is easy to conquer another; but noble to subdue one’s self. Had you, Mary, given way to your sister’s humour, you would have proved that you were not only older, but wiser than her. And you, Caroline, would have saved your charge, if you had, for the time, waved your right.

It is always a proof of superior sense to bear with slight inconveniences, and even trifling injuries, without complaining or contesting about them. The soul reserves its firmness for great occasions, and then it acts a decided part. It is just the contrary mode of thinking, and the conduct produced by it, which occasions all those trivial disputes that slowly corrode domestic peace, and insensibly destroy what great misfortunes could not sweep away.

I will tell you a story, that will take stronger hold on your memory than mere remarks.

Jane Fretful was an only child. Her fond, weak mother would not allow her to be

contradicted on any occasion. The child had some tenderness of heart; but so accustomed was she to see every thing give way to her humour, that she imagined the world was only made for her. If any of her playfellows had toys, that struck her capricious, sickly fancy, she would cry for them; and substitutes were in vain offered to quiet her, she must have the identical ones, or fly into the most violent passion. When she was an infant, if she fell down, her nurse made her beat the floor. She continued the practice afterwards, and when she was angry would kick the chairs and tables, or any senseless piece of furniture, if they came in her way. I have seen her throw her cap into the fire, because some of her acquaintance had a prettier.

Continual passions weakened her constitution; beside, she would not eat the common wholesome food that children, who are subject to the small-pox and worms, ought to eat, and which is necessary when they grow so fast, to make them strong and handsome. Instead of being a comfort to her tender, though mistaken mother, she was her greatest torment. The servants all disliked her; she loved no one but herself; and the consequence was, she never inspired love; even the pity good-natured people felt, was nearly allied to contempt.

A lady, who visited her mother, brought with her one day a pretty little dog. Jane was delighted with it; and the lady, with great reluctance, parted with it to oblige her friend. For some time she fondled, and really felt something like an affection for it: but one day it happened to snatch a cake she was going to eat, and though there were twenty within reach, she flew into a violent passion, and threw a stool at the poor creature, who was big with pup. It fell down—I can scarcely tell the rest—it received so severe a blow, that all the young were killed, and the poor wretch languished two days, suffering the most excruciating torture.

Jane Fretful, who was now angry with herself, sat all the time holding it, and every look the miserable animal gave her, stung her to the heart. After its death she was very unhappy, but did not try to conquer her temper. All the blessings of life were

thrown away on her; and, without any real misfortune, she was continually miserable. If she had planned a party of pleasure, and the weather proved unfavourable, the whole day was spent in fruitless repining, or venting her ill-humour on those who depended on her. If no disappointment of that kind occurred, she could not enjoy the promised pleasure; something always disconcerted her; the horses went too fast, or too slow; the dinner was ill-dressed, or, some of the company contradicted her.

She was, when a child, very beautiful; but anger soon distorted her regular features, and gave a forbidding fierceness to her eyes. But if for a moment she looked pleased, she still resembled a heap of combustible matter, to which an accidental spark might set fire; of course quiet people were afraid to converse with her. And if she ever did a good, or a humane action, her ridiculous anger soon rendered it an intolerable burden, if it did not entirely cancel it.

At last she broke her mother’s heart, or hastened her death, by her want of duty, and her many other faults: all proceeding from violent, unrestrained anger.

The death of her mother, which affected her very much, left her without a friend. She would sometimes say, Ah! my poor mother, if you were now alive, I would not teaze you—I would give the world to let you know that I am sorry for what I have done: you died, thinking me ungrateful; and lamenting that I did not die when you gave me suck. I shall never—oh! never see you more.

This thought, and her peevish temper, preyed on her impaired constitution. She had not, by doing good, prepared her soul for another state, or cherished any hopes that could disarm death of its terrors, or render that last sleep sweet—its approach was dreadful!—and she hastened her end, scolding the physician for not curing her. Her lifeless countenance displayed the marks of convulsive anger; and she left an ample fortune behind her to those who did not regret her loss. They followed her to the grave, on which no one shed a tear. She was soon forgotten; and I only remember

her, to warn you to shun her errors.

## CHAP. V. Lying.—Honour.—Truth.—Small Duties.—History of Lady Sly and Mrs. Trueman.

The little girls were very assiduous to gain Mrs. Mason's good opinion; and, by the mildness of their behavior, to prove to her that they were ashamed of themselves. It was one of Mrs. Mason's rules, when they offended her, that is, behaved improperly, to treat them civilly; but to avoid giving them those marks of affection which they were particularly delighted to receive.

Yesterday, said she to them, I only mentioned to you one fault, though I observed two. You very readily guess, I mean the lie that you both told. Nay, look up, for I wish to see you blush; and the confusion which I perceive in your faces gives me pleasure; because it convinces me that it is not a confirmed habit: and indeed, my children, I should be sorry that such a mean one had taken deep root in your infant minds.

When I speak of falsehood, I mean every kind; whatever tends to deceive, though not said in direct terms. Tones of voice, motions of the hand or head, if they make another believe what they ought not to believe, are lies, and of the worst kind; because the contrivance aggravates the guilt. I would much sooner forgive a lie told directly, when perhaps fear entirely occupied the thoughts, and the presence of God was not felt; for it is His sacred Majesty that you affront by telling an untruth.

How so? enquired Mary.

Because you hope to conceal your falsehood from every human creature: but, if you consider a moment, you must recollect that the Searcher of hearts reads your very thoughts; that nothing is hid from him.

You would blush if I were to discover that you told a lie; yet wantonly forfeit the

favour of Him, from whom you have received life and all its blessings, to screen yourselves from correction or reproof; or, what is still worse, to purchase some trifling gratification, the pleasure of which would last but a moment.

You heard the gentleman who visited me this morning, very frequently use the word Honour. Honour consists in respecting yourself; in doing as you would be done by; and the foundation of Honour is Truth.

When I can depend on the veracity of people, that is to say, am convinced that they adhere to truth, I rely on them; am certain they have courage, because I know they will bear any inconvenience, rather than despise themselves for telling a lie. Besides, it is not necessary to consider what you intend to say, when you have done right. Always determine, on every occasion, to speak the truth, and you will never be at a loss for words. If your character for this scrupulous attention is once fixed, your acquaintance will be courted; and those who are not particularly pleased with you will, at least, respect your honourable principles.

It is impossible to form a friendship without making truth the basis; it is indeed the essence of devotion, the employment of the understanding, and the support of every duty.

I govern my servants, and you, by attending strictly to truth; and this observance keeping my head clear and my heart pure, I am ever ready to pray to the Author of good, the Fountain of truth.

While I am discussing the subject, let me point out to you another branch of this virtue; Sincerity.—And remember that I every day set you an example; for I never, to please for the moment, pay unmeaning compliments, or permit any words to drop from my tongue, that my heart does not dictate. And when I relate any matter of fact, I carefully avoid embellishing it, in order to render it a more entertaining story; not that I think such a practice absolutely criminal; but as it contributes insensibly to wear away a respect for truth, I guard against the vain impulse, lest I should lose the

chief strength, and even ornament, of my mind, and become like a wave of the sea, drifted about by every gust of passion.

You must in life observe the most apparently insignificant duties—the great ones are the pillars of virtue: but the constant concurrence of trifling things makes it necessary that reason and conscience should always preside, to keep the heart steady. Many people make promises and appointments, which they scruple not to break, if a more inviting pleasure occurs, not remembering that the slightest duty should be performed before a mere amusement is pursued—for any neglect of this kind embitters play. Nothing, believe me, can long be pleasant, that is not innocent.

As I usually endeavour to recollect some persons of my acquaintance, who have suffered by the faults, or follies, I wish you to avoid; I will describe two characters, that will, if I mistake not, very strongly enforce what I have been saying.

Last week you saw Lady Sly, who came to pay me a morning visit. Did you ever see such a fine carriage, or such beautiful horses? How they pawed the ground, and displayed their rich harnesses! Her servants wore elegant liveries, and her own clothes suited the equipage. Her house is equal to her carriage; the rooms are lofty, and hung with silk; noble glasses and pictures adorn them: and the pleasure-grounds are large and well laid out; beside the trees and shrubs, they contain a variety of summer-houses and temples, as they are called. Yet, my young friends, this is state, not dignity.

This woman has a little soul, she never attended to truth, and obtaining great part of her fortune by falsehood, it has blighted all her enjoyments. She inhabits that superb house, wears the gayest clothes, and rides in that beautiful carriage, without feeling pleasure. Suspicion, and the cares it has given birth to, have wrinkled her countenance, and banished every trace of beauty, which paint in vain endeavours to repair. Her suspicious temper arises from a knowledge of her own heart, and the want of rational employments.

She imagines that every person she converses with means to deceive her; and when she leaves a company, supposes all the ill they may say of her, because she recollects her own practice. She listens about her house, expecting to discover the designs of her servants, none of whom she can trust; and in consequence of this anxiety her sleep is unsound, and her food tasteless. She walks in her paradise of a garden, and smells not the flowers, nor do the birds inspire her with chearfulness.—These pleasures are true and simple, they lead to the love of God, and all the creatures whom He hath made—and cannot warm a heart which a malicious story can please.

She cannot pray to God—He hates a liar! She is neglected by her husband, whose only motive for marrying her was to clear an incumbered estate. Her son, her only child, is undutiful; the poor never have cause to bless her; nor does she contribute to the happiness of any human being.

To kill time, and drive away the pangs of remorse, she goes from one house to another, collecting and propagating scandalous tales, to bring others on a level with herself. Even those who resemble her are afraid of her; she lives alone in the world, its good things are poisoned by her vices, and neither inspire joy nor gratitude.

Before I tell you how she acquired these vicious habits, and enlarged her fortune by disregarding truth, I must desire you to think of Mrs. Trueman, the curate’s wife, who lives in yonder white house close to the church; it is a small one, yet the woodbines and jessamins that twine about the windows give it a pretty appearance. Her voice is sweet, her manners not only easy, but elegant; and her simple dress makes her person appear to the greatest advantage.

She walks to visit me, and her little ones hang on her hands, and cling to her clothes, they are so fond of her. If any thing terrifies them, they run under her apron, and she looks like the hen taking care of her young brood. The domestic animals play with the children, finding her a mild, attentive mistress; and out of her scanty fortune she

contrives to feed and clothe many a hungry, shivering wretch, who bless her as she passes along.

Though she has not any outward decorations, she appears superior to her neighbours, who call her the Gentlewoman; indeed every gesture shews an accomplished and dignified mind, that relies on itself, when deprived of the fortune which contributed to polish and give it consequence.

Drawings, the amusement of her youth, ornament her neat parlour; some musical instruments stand in one corner; for she plays with taste, and sings sweetly.

All the furniture, not forgetting a bookcase, full of well-chosen books, speak the refinement of the owner, and the pleasures a cultivated mind has within its own grasp, independent of prosperity.

Her husband, a man of taste and learning, reads to her, while she makes clothes for her children, whom she teaches, in the tenderest and most persuasive manner, important truths and elegant accomplishments.

When you have behaved well for some time you shall visit her, and ramble in her little garden; there are several pretty seats in it, and the nightingales warble their sweetest songs, undisturbed, in the shade.

I have now given you an account of the present situation of both, and of their characters; listen to me whilst I relate in what manner these characters were formed, and the consequence of each adhering to a different mode of conduct.

Lady Sly, when she was a child, used to say pert things, which the injudicious people about her laughed at, and called very witty. Finding that her prattle pleased, she talked incessantly, and invented stories, when adding to those that had some foundation was not sufficient to entertain the company. If she stole sweetmeats, or broke any thing, the cat or the dog was blamed, and the poor animals were corrected for her faults; nay, sometimes the servants lost their places in consequence of her assertions. Her parents died and left her a large fortune, and an aunt, who had a still

larger, adopted her.

Mrs. Trueman, her cousin, was, some years after, adopted by the same lady; but her parents could not leave their estate to her, as it descended to the male heir. She had received the most liberal education, and was in every respect the reverse of her cousin; who envied her merit, and could not bear to think of her dividing the fortune which she had long expected to inherit entirely herself. She therefore practised every mean art to prejudice her aunt against her, and succeeded.

A faithful old servant endeavoured to open her mistress's eyes; but the cunning niece contrived to invent the most infamous story of the old domestic, who was in consequence of it dismissed. Mrs. Trueman supported her, when she could not succeed in vindicating her, and suffered for her generosity; for her aunt dying soon after, left only five hundred pounds to this amiable woman, and fifty thousand to Lady Sly.

They both of them married shortly after. One, the profligate Lord Sly, and the other a respectable clergyman, who had been disappointed in his hopes of preferment. This last couple, in spite of their mutual disappointments, are contented with their lot; and are preparing themselves and children for another world, where truth, virtue and happiness dwell together.

For believe me, whatever happiness we attain in this life must faintly resemble what God himself enjoys, whose truth and goodness produce a sublime degree, such as we cannot conceive, it is so far above our limited capacities.

I did not intend to detain you so long, said Mrs. Mason; have you finished Mrs. Trimmer's Fabulous Histories? Indeed we have, answered Caroline mournfully, and I was very sorry to come to the end. I never read such a pretty book; may I read it over again to Mrs. Trueman's little Fanny? Certainly, said Mrs. Mason, if you can make her understand that birds never talk. Go and run about the garden, and remember, the next lie I detect I shall punish; because lying is a vice; and I ought to

punish you if you are guilty of it, to prevent your feeling Lady Sly's misery.

## CHAP. VI. Anger.—Folly produces Self-contempt, and the Neglect of others.

Mrs. Mason had a number of visitors one forenoon, who conversed in the usual thoughtless manner, which people often fall into who do not consider before they speak: they talked of Caroline's beauty, and she gave herself many affected airs to make it appear to the best advantage. But Mary, who had not a face to be proud of, was observing some peculiarities in the dress or manners of the guests; and one very respectable old lady, who had lost her teeth, afforded her more diversion than any of the rest.

The children went to bed without being reproved, though Mrs. Mason, when she dismissed them, said gravely, I give you to-night a kiss of peace, an affectionate one you have not deserved. They therefore discovered by her behaviour that they had done wrong, and waited for an explanation to regain her favour.

She was never in a passion, but her quiet, steady displeasure made them feel so little in their own eyes, they wished her to smile that they might be something; for all their consequence seemed to arise from her approbation. I declare, said Caroline, I do not know what I have done, and yet I am sure I never knew Mrs. Mason find fault, without convincing me that I had done wrong. Did you, Mary, ever see her in a passion? No, said Mary, I do believe that she was never angry in her life; when John threw down all the china, and stood trembling, she was the first to say that the carpet made him stumble. Yes, now I do remember, when we first came to her house, John forgot to bring the cow and her young calf into the cow-house; I heard her bid him do it directly, and the poor calf was almost frozen to death—she spoke then in a hurry, and seemed angry. Now you mention it, I do recollect, replied Caroline, that she was angry, when Betty did not carry the poor sick woman the broth she ordered

her to take to her. But this is not like the passion I used to see nurse in, when any thing vexed her. She would scold us, and beat the girl who waited on her. Poor little Jenny! many a time was she beaten, when we vexed nurse: I would tell her she was to blame now if I saw her, and I would not tease her any more.

I declare I cannot go to sleep, said Mary, I am afraid of Mrs. Mason's eyes—would you think, Caroline, that she who looks so very good-natured sometimes could frighten one so? I wish I were as wise and as good as she is. The poor woman with the six children, whom we met on the common, said she was an angel, and that she had saved her's and her children's lives. My heart is in my mouth, indeed, replied Caroline, when I think of to-morrow morning, and yet I am much happier than I was when we were at home. I cried, I cannot now tell for what, all day; I never wished to be good—nobody told me what it was to be good. I wish to be a woman, said Mary, and to be like Mrs. Mason, or Mrs. Trueman—we are to go to see her if we behave well.

Sleep soon overpowered them, and they forgot their apprehensions. In the morning they awoke refreshed, and took care to learn their lessons, and feed their chickens, before Mrs. Mason left her chamber.

## CHAP. VII. Virtue the Soul of Beauty.—The Tulip and the Rose.—The Nightingale.—External Ornaments.—Characters.

The next morning Mrs. Mason met them first in the garden; and she desired Caroline to look at a bed of tulips, that were then in their highest state of perfection. I, added she, choose to have every kind of flower in my garden, as the succession enables me to vary my daily prospect, and gives it the charm of variety; yet these tulips afford me less pleasure than most of the other sort which I cultivate—and I will tell you

why—they are only beautiful. Listen to my distinction;—good features, and a fine complexion, I term bodily beauty. Like the streaks in the tulip, they please the eye for a moment; but this uniformity soon tires, and the active mind flies off to something else. The soul of beauty, my dear children, consists in the body gracefully exhibiting the emotions and variations of the informing mind. If truth, humanity and knowledge inhabit the breast, the eyes will beam with a mild lustre, modesty will suffuse the cheeks, and smiles of innocent joy play over all the features. At first sight, regularity and colour will attract, and have the advantage, because the hidden springs are not directly set in motion; but when internal goodness is reflected, every other kind of beauty, the shadow of it, withers away before it, as the sun obscures a lamp.

You are certainly handsome, Caroline; I mean, have good features; but you must improve your mind to give them a pleasing expression, or they will only serve to lead your understanding astray. I have seen some foolish people take great pains to decorate the outside of their houses, to attract the notice of strangers, who gazed, and passed on; whilst the inside, where they received their friends, was dark and inconvenient. Apply this observation to mere personal attractions. They may, it is true, for a few years, charm the superficial part of your acquaintance, whose notions of beauty are not built on any principle of utility. Such persons might look at you, as they would glance their eye over these tulips, and feel for a moment the same pleasure that a view of the variegated rays of light would convey to a uninformed mind. The lower class of mankind, and children, are fond of finery; gaudy, dazzling appearances catch their attention; but the discriminating judgment of a person of sense requires, besides colour, order, proportion, grace and usefulness, to render the idea of beauty complete.

Observe that rose, it has all the perfections I speak of; colour, grace, and sweetness—and even when the fine tints fade, the smell is grateful to those who have before contemplated its beauties. I have only one bed of tulips, though my

garden is large, but, in every part of it, roses attract the eye.

You have seen Mrs. Trueman, and think her a very fine woman; yet her skin and complexion have only the clearness that temperance gives; and her features, strictly speaking, are not regular: Betty, the house-maid, has, in both these respects, much the superiority over her. But, though it is not easy to define in what her beauty consists, the eye follows her whenever she moves; and every person of taste listens for the modulated sounds which proceed out of her mouth, to be improved and pleased. It is conscious worth, truth, that gives dignity to her walk, and simple elegance to her conversation. She has, indeed, a most excellent understanding, and a feeling heart; sagacity and tenderness, the result of both, are happily blended in her countenance; and taste is the polish, which makes them appear to the best advantage. She is more than beautiful; and you see her varied excellencies again and again, with increasing pleasure. They are not obtruded on you, for knowledge has taught her true humility: she is not like the flaunting tulip, that forces itself forward into notice; but resembles the modest rose, you see yonder, retiring under its elegant foliage.

I have mentioned flowers—the same order is observed in the higher departments of nature. Think of the birds; those that sing best have not the finest plumage; indeed just the contrary; God divides his gifts, and amongst the feathered race, the nightingale (sweetest of warblers, who pours forth her varied strain when sober eye comes on) you would seek in vain in the morning, if you expected that beautiful feathers should point out the songstress: many who incessantly twitter, and are only tolerable in the general concert, would surpass her, and attract your attention.

I knew, some time before you were born, a very fine, a very handsome girl; I saw she had abilities, and I saw with pain that she attended to the most obvious, but least valuable gift of Heaven. Her ingenuity slept, whilst she tried to render her person more alluring. At last she caught the small-pox—her beauty vanished, and she was for a time miserable; but the natural vivacity of youth overcame her unpleasant

feelings. In consequence of the disorder, her eyes became so weak that she was obliged to sit in a dark room. To beguile the tedious day she applied to music, and made a surprising proficiency. She even began to think in her retirement, and when she recovered her sight grew fond of reading.

Large companies did not now amuse her, she was no longer the object of admiration, or if she was taken notice of, it was to be pitied, to hear her former self praised, and to hear them lament the depredation that dreadful disease had made in a fine face. Not expecting or wishing to be observed, she lost her affected airs, and attended to the conversation, in which she was soon able to bear a part. In short, the desire of pleasing took a different turn, and as she improved her mind, she discovered that virtue, internal beauty, was valuable on its own account, and not like that of the person, which resembles a toy, that pleases the observer, but does not render the possessor happy.

She found that, in acquiring knowledge, her mind grew tranquil, and the noble desire of acting conformably to the will of God succeeded, and drove out the immoderate vanity which before actuated her, when her equals were the objects she thought most of, and whose approbation she sought with such eagerness. And what had she sought? To be stared at and called handsome. Her beauty, the mere sight of it, did not make others good, or comfort the afflicted; but after she had lost it, she was comfortable herself, and set her friends the most useful example.

The money that she had formerly appropriated to ornament her person, now clothed the naked; yet she really appeared better dressed, as she had acquired the habit of employing her time to the best advantage, and could make many things herself. Besides, she did not implicitly follow the reigning fashion, for she had learned to distinguish, and in the most trivial matters acted according to the dictates of good sense.

The children made some comments on this story, but the entrance of a visitor

interrupted the conversation, and they ran about the garden, comparing the roses and tulips.

CHAP. VIII. Summer Evening's Amusement.—The Arrival of a Family of Haymakers.—Ridicule of personal Defects censured.—A Storm.—The Fear of Death.—The Cottage of honest Jack, the shipwrecked Sailor.—The History of Jack, and his faithful Dog Pompey.

The evening was pleasant; Mrs. Mason and the children walked out; and many rustic noises struck their ears. Some bells in a neighbouring village, softened by the distance, sounded pleasingly; the beetles hummed, and the children pursued them, not to destroy them, but to observe their form, and ask questions concerning their mode of living. Sheep were bleating and cattle lowing, the rivulet near them babbled along, while the sound of the distant ocean died away on the ear—or they forgot it, listening to the whistling of the haymakers, who were returning from the field. They met a whole family, who came every year from another county where they could not find constant employment, and Mrs. Mason allowed them to sleep in her barn. The little ones knew their benefactress, and tried to catch a smile; and she was ever ready to smile on those whom she obliged; for she loved all her fellow-creatures, and love lightens obligations. Besides, she thought that the poor who are willing to work, had a right to the comforts of life.

A few moments after, they met a deformed woman; the children stared her almost out of countenance; but Mrs. Mason turned her head another way, and when the poor object was out of hearing, said to Mary, I intended to reprove you this morning for a fault which I have frequently seen you commit; and this moment and the other evening it was particularly conspicuous. When that deformed woman passed us, I involuntarily looked at something else, and would not let her perceive that she was a disgusting figure, and attracted notice on that account. I say, I did it involuntarily, for I have accustomed myself to think of others, and what they will suffer on all

occasions: and this lothness to offend, or even to hurt the feelings of another, is an instantaneous spring which actuates my conduct, and makes me kindly affected to every thing that breathes. If I then am so careful not to wound a stranger, what shall I think of your behaviour, Mary, when you laughed at a respectable old woman, who, beside her virtues and her age, had been particularly civil to you. I have always seen persons of the weakest understandings, and whose hearts benevolence seldom touched, ridicule bodily infirmities, and accidental defects. They could only relish the inferior kind of beauty, which I described this morning, and a silly joy has elated their empty souls, on finding, by comparison, that they were superior to others in that respect, though the conclusion was erroneous, for merit, mental acquirements, can only give a just claim to superiority. Had you possessed the smallest portion of discernment, you would soon have forgotten the tones, loss of teeth made drawling, in listening to the chearful good sense which that worthy woman's words conveyed. You laughed, because you were ignorant, and I now excuse you; but some years hence, if I were to see you in company, with such a propensity, I should still think you a child; an overgrown one, whose mind did not expand as the body grew.

The sky began to thicken, and the lowing of the cattle to have a melancholy cadence; the nightingale forgot her song, and fled to her nest; and the sea roared and lashed the rocks. During the calm which portended an approaching storm, every creature was running for shelter.—We must, if possible, said Mrs. Mason, reach yon cottage on the cliff, for we shall soon have a violent thunder-storm. They quickened their pace, but the hurricane overtook them. The hail-stones fell, the clouds seemed to open and disclose the lightning, while loud peals of thunder shook the ground; the wind also in violent gusts rushed among the trees, tore off the slender branches and loosened the roots.

The children were terrified; but Mrs. Mason gave them each a hand, and chatted with them to dispel their fears. She informed them that storms were necessary to dissipate noxious vapours, and to answer many other purposes, which were not,

perhaps, obvious to our weak understandings. But are you not afraid? cried the trembling Caroline. No, certainly, I am not afraid.—I walk with the same security as when the sun enlivened the prospect—God is still present, and we are safe. Should the flash that passes by us strike me dead, it cannot hurt me, I fear not death!—I only fear that Being who can render death terrible, on whose providence I calmly rest; and my confidence earthly sorrows cannot destroy. A mind is never truly great, till the love of virtue overcomes the fear of death.

By this time they had mounted the cliff, and saw the tumultuous deep. The angry billows rose, and dashed against the shore, and the loud noise of the raging sea resounded from rock to rock.

They ran into the cottage; the poor woman who lived in it sent her children for wood, and soon made a good fire to dry them.

The father of the family soon after came in, leaning on crutches; and over one eye there was a large patch. I am glad to see you honest Jack, said Mrs. Mason; come and take your seat by the fire, and tell the children the story of your shipwreck.

He instantly complied. I was very young, my dear ladies, said Jack, when I went to sea, and endured many hardships,—however I made a shift to weather them all; and whether the wind was fair or foul, I ran up the shrouds and sung at the helm. I had always a good heart, no lad fore or aft had a better; when we were at sea, I never was the first to flinch; and on shore I was as merry as the best of them. I married she you see yonder, (lifting his crutch to point to his wife) and her work and my wages did together, till I was shipwrecked on these rocks. Oh! it was a dreadful night; this is nothing to it; but I am getting to the end of my story before I begin it.

During the war, I went once or twice to New York. The last was a good voyage, and we were all returning with joy to dear England, when the storm rose; the vessel was like a bird, it flew up and down, and several of our best hands were washed clean overboard—My poor captain! a better never plowed the ocean, he fell overboard

too, and it was some time before we missed him, for it was quite dark, except that flashes of lightning now and then gave us light. I was at the helm, lashing it to the side of the ship—a dreadful flash came across me, and I lost one of my precious eyes.—But thank God I have one left.

The weather cleared up next day, and, though we had been finely mauled, I began to hope, for I hate to be faint-hearted, and certainly we should have got into the channel very soon, if we had not fell in with a French man of war, which took us; for we could not make any resistance.

I had a dog, poor Pompey! with me. Pompey would not leave me, he was as fond of me as if he had been a christian. I had lost one eye by the lightning, the other had been sore, so that I could hardly call it a peep-hole. Somehow I fell down the hatchway, and bruised one of my legs; but I did not mind it, do ye see, till we arrived at Brest and were thrown into a French Prison.

There I was worse off than ever; the room we were all stowed in was full of vermin, and our food very bad; mouldy biscuits, and salt fish. The prison was choke full, and many a morning did we find some honest fellow with his chops fallen—he was not to be waked any more!—he was gone to the other country, do ye see.

Yet the French have not such hard hearts as people say they have! Several women brought us broth and wine; and one gave me some rags to wrap round my leg, it was very painful, I could not clean it, nor had I any plaister. One day I was looking sorrowfully at it, thinking for certain I should lose my precious limb; when, would you believe it? Pompey saw what I was thinking about, and began to lick it.—And, I never knew such a surprizing thing, it grew better and better every day, and at last was healed without any plaister.

After that I was very sick, and the same tender-hearted creature who gave me the rags, took me to her house; and fresh air soon recovered me. I for certain ought to speak well of the French; but for their kindness I should have been in another port

by this time. Mayhap I might have gone with a fair wind, yet I should have been sorry to have left my poor wife and her children. But I am letting all my line run out! Well, by-and-by, there was an exchange of prisoners, and we were once more in an English vessel, and I made sure of seeing my family again; but the weather was still foul. Three days and nights we were in the greatest distress; and the fourth the ship was dashed against these rocks. Oh! if you had heard the crash! The water rushed in—the men screamed, Lord have mercy on us! There was a woman in the ship, and, as I could swim, I tried to save her, and Pompey followed me; but I lost him—poor fellow! I declare I cried like a child when I saw his dead body. However I brought the woman to shore; and assisted some more of my mess-mates; but, standing in the water so long, I lost the use of my limbs—yet Heaven was good to me; Madam, there, sent a cart for us all, and took care of us; but I never recovered the use of my limbs. So she asked me all about my misfortunes, and sent for wife, who came directly, and we have lived here ever since. We catch fish for Madam, and I watch for a storm, hoping some time or other to be as kind to a poor perishing soul as she has been to me. Indeed we are very happy—I might now have been begging about the streets, but for Madam, God bless her!

A tear strayed down Mrs. Mason's cheek, while a smile of benevolence lighted up her countenance—the little girls caught each hand—They were all silent a few minutes, when she, willing to turn the discourse, enquired whether they had any fish in the house? Some were produced, they were quickly dressed, and they all eat together. They had a chearful meal, and honest Jack sung some of his seafaring songs, and did all he could to divert them and express his gratitude. Getting up to reach the brown loaf, he limped very awkwardly, Mary was just beginning to laugh, when she restrained herself; for she recollected that his awkwardness made him truly respectable, because he had lost the use of his limbs when he was doing good, saving the lives of his fellow-creatures.

The weather cleared up, and they returned home. The children conversed gaily with

each other all the way home, talking of the poor sailor, and his faithful dog.

## CHAP. IX. The Inconveniences of immoderate Indulgence.

The children were allowed to help themselves to fruit, when it made a part of their meal; and Caroline always took care to pick out the best, or swallow what she took in a hurry, lest she should not get as much as she wished for. Indeed she generally eat more than her share. She had several times eaten more than a person ought to eat at one time, without feeling any ill effects; but one afternoon she complained of a pain in her stomach in consequence of it, and her pale face and languid eyes plainly shewed her indisposition. Mrs. Mason gave her an emetic, and after the operation she was obliged to go to bed, though she had promised herself a pleasant walk that evening. She was left alone, for Mary was not permitted to stay at home with her, as she offered to do. Had her sickness been accidental, we would both have tried to amuse her, said Mrs. Mason; but her greediness now receiving its natural and just punishment, she must endure it without the alleviation which pity affords; only tell her from me, that the pleasure was but momentary, while the pain and confinement it produced has already lasted some hours.

The next morning, though scarcely recovered, she got up, as usual, to have a walk before breakfast. During these walks, Mrs. Mason told them stories, pointed out the wisdom of God in the creation, and took them to visit her poor tenants. These visits not only enabled her to form a judgment of their wants, but made them very industrious; for they were all anxious that she might find their houses and persons clean. And returning through the farmyard, Mrs. Mason stopped according to custom, to see whether the poor animals were taken care of—this she called earning her breakfast. The servant was just feeding the pigs, and though she poured a great quantity into the trough, the greedy creatures tried to gobble it up from one another. Caroline blushed, she saw this sight was meant for her, and she felt ashamed of her

gluttony. But Mrs. Mason, willing to impress her still more strongly, thus addressed her.

Providence, my child, has given us passions and appetites for various purposes—two are generally obvious; I will point them out to you. First to render our present life more comfortable, and then to prepare us for another, by making us sociable beings; as in society virtue is acquired, and self-denial practised. A moderate quantity of proper food recruits our exhausted spirits, and invigorates the animal functions; but, if we exceed moderation, the mind will be oppressed, and soon become the slave of the body, or both grow listless and inactive. Employed various ways, families meet at meals, and there giving up to each other, learn in the most easy, pleasant way to govern their appetites. Pigs, you see, devour what they can get; but men, if they have any affections, love their fellow-creatures, and wish for a return; nor will they, for the sake of a brutish gratification, lose the esteem of those they value. Besides, no one can be reckoned virtuous who has not learned to bear poverty: yet those who think much of gratifying their appetites, will at last act meanly in order to indulge them. But when any employment of the understanding, or strong affection occupies the mind, eating is seldom thought a matter of greater importance than it ought to be. Let the idle think of their meals; but do you employ the intermediate time in a different manner, and only enjoy them when you join the social circle. I like to see children, and even men, eat chearfully, and gratefully receive the blessings sent by Heaven; yet I would not have them abuse those blessings, or ever let the care necessary to support the body injure the immortal spirit: many think of the sustenance the former craves, and entirely neglect the latter.

I remarked to you before, that in the most apparently trivial concerns, we are to do as we would be done by. This duty must be practised constantly; at meals there are frequent opportunities, and I hope, Caroline, I shall never again see you eager to secure dainties for yourself. If such a disposition were to grow up with you, you ought to live alone, for no one should enjoy the advantages and pleasures which

arise from social intercourse, who is unwilling to give way to the inclinations of others, and allow each their share of the good things of this life.

You experienced yesterday, that pain follows immoderate indulgence; it is always the case, though sometimes not felt so immediately; but the constitution is insensibly destroyed, and old age will come on, loaded with infirmities. You also lost a very pleasant walk, and some fine fruit. We visited Mrs. Goodwin's garden, and as Mary had before convinced me that she could regulate her appetites, I gave her leave to pluck as much fruit as she wished; and she did not abuse my indulgence. On the contrary, she spent most part of the time in gathering some for me, and her attention made it taste sweeter.

Coming home I called her my friend, and she deserved the name, for she was no longer a child; a reasonable affection had conquered an appetite; her understanding took the lead, and she had practised a virtue.

The subject was now dropped; but Caroline determined to copy in future her sister's temperance and self-denial.

## CHAP. X. The Danger of Delay.—Description of a Mansion-house in Ruins.—The History of Charles Townley.

Mrs. Mason, who always regulated her own time, and never loitered her hours irresolutely away, had very frequently to wait for the children, when she wished to walk, though she had desired them to be ready at a precise time. Mary in particular had a trick of putting every thing off till the last moment, and then she did but half do it, or left it undone. This indolent way of delaying made her miss many opportunities of obliging and doing good; and whole hours were lost in thoughtless idleness, which she afterwards wished had been better employed.

This was the case one day, when she had a letter to write to her father; and though it was mentioned to her early in the morning, the finest part of the evening slipped away whilst she was finishing it; and her haste made her forget the principal thing which she intended to have said.

Out of breath she joined them; and after they had crossed several fields, Mrs. Mason turning down a long avenue, bade them look at a large old mansion-house. It was now in ruins. Ivy grew over the substantial walls, that still refitted the depredations of time, and almost concealed a noble arch, on which maimed lions couched; and vultures and eagles, who had lost their wings, seemed to rest for ever there. Near it was a rookery, and the rooks lived safe in the high trees, whose trunks were all covered with ivy or moss, and a number of fungusses grew about their large roots. The grass was long, and remaining undisturbed, save when the wind swept across it, was of course pathless. Here the mower never whet his scythe, nor did the haymakers mix their songs with the hoarse croaking of the rooks. A spacious bason, on the margin of which water plants grew with wild luxuriance, was overspread with slime; and afforded a shelter for toads and adders. In many places were heaped the ruins of ornamental buildings, whilst sun-dials rested in the shade; and pedestals, that had crushed the figures they before supported. Making their way through the grass, they would frequently stumble over a headless statue, or the head would impede their progress. When they spoke, the sound seemed to return again, as if unable to penetrate the thick stagnated air. The sun could not dart its purifying rays through the thick gloom, and the fallen leaves contributed to choke up the way, and render the air more noxious.

I brought you to this place on purpose this evening, said Mrs. Mason to the children, who clung about her, to tell you the history of the last inhabitant; but, as this part is unwholesome, we will sit on the broken stones of the drawbridge.

Charles Townley was a boy of uncommon abilities, and strong feelings; but he ever

permitted those feelings to direct his conduct, without submitting to the direction of reason; I mean, the present emotion governed him. He had not any strength or consistency of character; one moment he enjoyed a pleasure, and the next felt the pangs of remorse, on account of some duty which he had neglected. He always indeed intended to act right in every particular to-morrow; but to-day he followed the prevailing whim.

He heard by chance of a man in great distress, he determined to relieve him, and left his house in order to follow the humane impulse; but meeting an acquaintance, he was persuaded to go to the play, and to-morrow, he thought, he would do the act of charity. The next morning some company came to breakfast with him, and took him with them to view some fine pictures. In the evening he went to a concert; the day following he was tired, and laid in bed till noon; then read a pathetic story, well wrought up, wept over it—fell asleep—and forgot to act humanely. An accident reminded him of his intention; he sent to the man, and found that he had too long delayed—the relief was useless.

In this thoughtless manner he spent his time and fortune; never applying to any profession, though formed to shine in any one he should have chosen. His friends were offended, and at last allowed him to languish in a gaol; and as there appeared no probability of reforming or fixing him, they left him to struggle with adversity.

Severely did he reproach himself—He was almost lost in despair, when a friend visited him. This friend loved the latent sparks of virtue which he imagined would some time or other light up, and animate his conduct. He paid his debts, and gave him a sum of money sufficient to enable him to prepare for a voyage to the East Indies, where Charles wished to go, to try to regain his lost fortune. Through the intercession of this kind, considerate friend, his relations were reconciled to him, and his spirits raised.

He sailed with a fair wind, and fortune favouring his most romantic wishes, in the

space of fifteen years, he acquired a much larger fortune than he had even hoped for, and thought of visiting, nay, settling in his native country for the remainder of his life.

Though impressed by the most lively sense of gratitude, he had dropped his friend's correspondence; yet, as he knew that he had a daughter, his first determination was to reserve for her the greater part of his property, as the most substantial proof which he could give of his gratitude.—The thought pleased him, and that was sufficient to divert him for some months; but accidentally hearing that his friend had been very unsuccessful in trade, this information made him wish to hasten his return to his native country. Still a procrastinating spirit possessed him, and he delayed from time to time the arduous task of settling his affairs, previous to his departure: he wrote, however, to England, and transmitted a considerable sum to a correspondent, desiring that this house might be prepared for him, and the mortgage cleared.

I can scarcely enumerate the various delays that prevented his embarking; and when he arrived in England, he came here, and was so childishly eager to have his house fitted up with taste, that he actually trifled away a month, before he went to seek for his friend.

But his negligence was now severely punished. He learned that he had been reduced to great distress, and thrown into the very gaol, out of which he took Townley, who, hastening to it, only found his dead body there; for he died the day before. On the table was lying, amidst some other scraps of paper, a letter, directed in an unsteady hand to Charles Townley. He tore it open. Few were the scarcely legible lines; but they smote his heart. He read as follows:

"I have been reduced by unforeseen misfortunes; yet when I heard of your arrival, a gleam of joy cheered my heart—I thought I knew your's, and that my latter days might still have been made comfortable in your society, for I loved you; I even expected pleasure; but I was mistaken; death is my only friend."

He read it over and over again; and cried out, Gracious God, had I arrived but one day sooner I should have seen him, and he would not have died thinking me the most ungrateful wretch that ever burdened the earth! He then knocked his clinched fist against his forehead, looked wildly round the dreary apartment, and exclaimed in a choked, though impatient tone, You sat here yesterday, thinking of my ingratitude—Where are you now? Oh! that I had seen you! Oh! that my repenting sighs could reach you!—

He ordered the body to be interred, and returned home a prey to grief and despondency. Indulging it to excess, he neglected to enquire after his friend's daughter; he intended to provide amply for her, but now he could only grieve.

Some time elapsed, then he sent, and the intelligence which he procured aggravated his distress, and gave it a severe additional sting.

The poor gentle girl had, during her father's life, being engaged to a worthy young man; but, some time after his death, the relations of her lover had sent him to sea to prevent the match taking place. She was helpless, and had not sufficient courage to combat with poverty; to escape from it, she married an old rake whom she detested. He was ill-humoured, and his vicious habits rendered him a most dreadful companion. She tried in vain to please him, and banish the sorrow that bent her down, and made wealth and all the pleasures it could procure tasteless. Her tender father was dead—she had lost her lover—without a friend or confident, silent grief consumed her. I have told you friendship is only to be found amongst the virtuous; her husband was vicious.

Ah! why did she marry? said Mary.

Because she was timid; but I have not told you all; the grief that did not break her heart, disturbed her reason; and her husband confined her in a mad-house.

Charles heard of this last circumstance; he visited her. Fanny, said he, do you recollect your old friend? Fanny looked at him, and reason for a moment resumed

her seat, and informed her countenance to trace anguish on it—the trembling light soon disappeared—wild fancy fitted in her eyes, and animated her incessant rant. She sung several verses of different songs, talked of her husband's ill-usage—enquired if he had lately been to sea; and frequently addressed her father as if he were behind her chair, or sitting by her.

Charles could not bear this scene—If I could lose like her a sense of woe, he cried, this intolerable anguish would not tear my heart! The fortune which he had intended for her could not restore her reason; but, had he sent for her soon after her father's death, he might have saved her and comforted himself.

The last stroke was worse than the first; he retired to this abode; melancholy creeping on him, he let his beard grow, and the garden run wild. One room in the house the poor lunatic inhabited; and he had a proper person to attend her, and guard her from the dangers she wished to encounter. Every day he visited her, the fight of her would almost have unhinged a sound mind—How could he bear it, when his conscience reproached him, and whispered that he had neglected to do good, to live to any rational purpose—The sweets of friendship were denied, and he every day contemplated the saddest of all sights—the wreck of a human understanding.

He died without a will. The estate was litigated, and as the title to this part could not be proved, the house was let fall into its present state.

But the night will overtake us, we must make haste home—Give me your hand, Mary, you tremble; surely I need not desire you to remember this story—Be calm, my child, and remember that you must attend to trifles; do all the good you can the present day, nay hour, if you would keep your conscience clear. This circumspection may not produce dazzling actions, nor will your silent virtue be supported by human applause; but your Father, who seeth in secret, will reward you.

## CHAP. XI. Dress.—A Character.—Remarks on Mrs.

## Trueman’s Manner of dressing.—Trifling Omissions undermine Affection.

Mary’s procrastinating temper produced many other ill consequences; she would lie in bed till the last moment, and then appear without washing her face or cleaning her teeth. Mrs. Mason had often observed it, and hinted her dislike; but, unwilling to burden her with precepts, she waited for a glaring example. One was soon accidentally thrown in her way, and she determined that it should not pass unobserved.

A lady, who was remarkable for her negligence in this respect, spent a week with them; and, during that time, very frequently disconcerted the œconomy of the family. She was seldom fit to be seen, and if any company came by chance to dinner, she would make them wait till it was quite cold, whilst she huddled on some ill-chosen finery. In the same style, if a little party of pleasure was proposed, she had to dress herself, and the hurry discomposed her, and tired those, who did not like to lose time in anticipating a trifling amusement.

A few hours after she had left them, Mrs. Mason enquired of Mary, what effect this week’s experience had had on her mind? You are fond of ridicule, child, but seldom in the right place; real cause for it you let slip, and heed not the silent reproof that points at your own faults:—do not mistake me, I would not have you laugh at—yet I wish you to feel, what is ridiculous, and learn to distinguish folly. Mrs. Dowdy’s negligence arises from indolence; her mind is not employed about matters of importance; and, if it were, it would not be a sufficient excuse for her habitually neglecting an essential part of a man’s as well as a woman’s duty. I said habitually; grief will often make those careless, who, at other times, pay a proper attention to their person; and this neglect is a sure indication that the canker-worm is at work; and we ought to pity rather than blame the unfortunate. Indeed when painful activity of mind occasions this inattention, it will not last long; the soul struggles to free

itself, and return to its usual tone and old habits. The lady we have been speaking of ever appears a sloven, though she is sometimes a disgusting figure, and, at others, a very taudry flirt.

I continually caution Caroline not to spend much time in adorning her person; but I never desired you to neglect yours. Wisdom consists in avoiding extremes—immoderate fondness for dress, I term vanity; but a proper attention to avoid singularity does not deserve that name. Never waste much time about trifles; but the time that is necessary, employ properly. Exercise your understanding, taste flows from it, and will in a moment direct you, if you are not too solicitous to conform to the changing fashions; and loiter away in laborious idleness the precious moments when the imagination is most lively, and should be allowed to fix virtuous affections in the tender youthful heart.

Of all the women whom I have ever met with, Mrs. Trueman seems the freest from vanity, and those frivolous views which degrade the female character. Her virtues claim respect, and the practice of them engrosses her thoughts; yet her clothes are apparently well chosen, and you always see her in the same attire. Not like many women who are eager to set off their persons to the best advantage, when they are only going to take a walk, and are careless, nay slovenly, when forced to stay at home. Mrs. Trueman’s conduct is just the reverse; she tries to avoid singularity, for she does not wish to disgust the generality; but it is her family, her friends, whom she studies to please.

In dress it is not little minute things, but the whole that should be attended to, and that every day; and this attention gives an ease to the person because the clothes appear unstudily graceful. Never, continued Mrs. Mason, desire to excel in trifles, if you do, there is an end to virtuous emulation, the mind cannot attend to both; for when the main pursuit is trivial, the character will of course become insignificant. Habitual neatness is laudable; but if you wish to be reckoned a well, an elegantly

dressed girl, and feel that praise on account of it gives you pleasure, you are vain; and a laudable ambition cannot dwell with vanity.

Servants, and those women whose minds have had a very limited range, place all their happiness in ornaments, and frequently neglect the only essential part in dress—neatness.

I have not the least objection to your dressing according to your age; I rather encourage it, by allowing you to wear the gayest colours; yet I insist on some degree of uniformity: and think you treat me disrespectfully when you appear before me, and have forgotten to do, what should never be neglected, and what you could have done in less than a quarter of an hour.

I always dress myself before breakfast, and expect you to follow my example, if there is not a sufficient and obvious excuse. You, Mary, missed a pleasant airing yesterday; for if you had not forgotten the respect which is due to me, and hurried down to breakfast in a slovenly manner, I should have taken you out with me; but I did not choose to wait till you were ready, as your not being so was entirely your own fault.

Fathers, and men in general, complain of this inattention; they have always to wait for females. Learn to avoid this fault, however insignificant it may appear in your eyes, for that habit cannot be of little consequence that sometimes weakens esteem. When we frequently make allowance for another in trifling matters, notions of inferiority take root in the mind, and too often produce contempt. Respect for the understanding must be the basis of constancy; the tenderness which flows from pity is liable to perish insensibly, to consume itself—even the virtues of the heart, when they degenerate into weakness, sink a character in our estimation. Besides, a kind of gross familiarity takes place of decent affection; and the respect, which alone can render domestic intimacy a lasting comfort, is lost before we are aware of it.

# CHAP. XII. Behaviour to Servants.—True Dignity of Character.

The children not coming down to breakfast one morning at the usual time, Mrs. Mason went herself to enquire the reason; and as she entered the apartment, heard Mary say to the maid who assisted her, I wonder at your impertinence, to talk thus to me—do you know who you are speaking to?—she was going on, but Mrs. Mason interrupted her, and answered the question—to a little girl, who is only assisted because she is weak. Mary shrunk back abashed, and Mrs. Mason continued: as you have treated Betty, who is ten years older than yourself, improperly, you must now do every thing for yourself; and, as you will be some time about it, Caroline and I will eat our breakfast, and visit Mrs. Trueman. By the time we return, you may perhaps have recollected that children are inferior to servants, who act from the dictates of reason, and whose understandings are arrived at some degree of maturity, while children must be governed and directed till their's gains strength to work by itself: for it is the proper exercise of our reason that makes us in any degree independent.

When Mrs. Mason returned, she mildly addressed Mary. I have often told you that every dispensation of Providence tended to our improvement, if we do not perversely act contrary to our interest. One being is made dependent on another, that love and forbearance may soften the human heart, and that linked together by necessity, and the exercise of the social affections, the whole family on earth might have a fellow-feeling for each other. By these means we improve one another; but there is no real inferiority.

You have read the fable of the head supposing itself superior to the rest of the members, though all are equally necessary to the support of life. If I behave improperly to servants, I am really their inferior, as I abuse a trust, and imitate not the Being, whose servant I am, without a shadow of equality. Children are helpless. I

order my servants to wait on you, because you are so; but I have not as much respect for you as for them; you may possibly become a virtuous character.—Many of my servants are really so already; they have done their duty, filled an humble station, as they ought to fill it, conscientiously. And do you dare to despise those whom your Creator approves?

Before the greatest earthly beings I should not be awed, they are my fellow servants; and, though superior in rank, which, like personal beauty, only dazzles the vulgar; yet I may possess more knowledge and virtue. The same feeling actuates me when I am in company with the poor; we are creatures of the same nature, and I may be their inferior in those graces which should adorn my soul, and render me truly great.

How often must I repeat to you, that a child is inferior to a man; because reason is in its infancy, and it is reason which exalts a man above a brute; and the cultivation of it raises the wise man above the ignorant; for wisdom is only another name for virtue.

This morning, when I entered your apartment, I heard you insult a worthy servant. You had just said your prayers; but they must have been only the gabble of the tongue; your heart was not engaged in the sacred employment, or you could not so soon have forgotten that you were a weak, dependent being, and that you were to receive mercy and kindness only on the condition of your practising the same.

I advise you to ask Betty to pardon your impertinence; till you do so, she shall not assist you; you would find yourself very helpless without the assistance of men and women—unable to cook your meat, bake your bread, wash your clothes, or even put them on—such a helpless creature is a child—I know what you are, you perceive.

Mary submitted; and in future, after she said her prayers, remembered that she was to endeavour to curb her temper.

CHAP. XIII. Employment.—Idleness produces Misery.—The Cultivation of the Fancy raises us above the Vulgar, extends our Happiness, and leads to Virtue.

One afternoon, Mrs. Mason gave the children leave to amuse themselves; but a kind of listlessness hung over them, and at a loss what to do, they seemed fatigued with doing nothing. They eat cakes though they had just dined, and did many foolish things merely because they were idle. Their friend seeing that they were irresolute, and could not fix on any employment, requested Caroline to assist her to make some clothes, that a poor woman was in want of, and while we are at work, she added, Mary will read us an entertaining tale, which I will point out.

The tale interested the children, who chearfully attended, and after it was finished, Mrs. Mason told them, that as she had some letters to write, she could not take her accustomed walk; but that she would allow them to represent her, and act for once like women. They received their commission, it was to take the clothes to the poor woman, whom they were intended for; learn her present wants; exercise their own judgment with respect to the immediate relief she stood in need of, and act accordingly.

They returned home delighted, eager to tell what they had done, and how thankful and happy they had left the poor woman.

Observe now, said Mrs. Mason, the advantages arising from employment; three hours ago you were uncomfortable, without being sensible of the cause, and knew not what to do with yourselves. Nay, you actually committed a sin; for you devoured cakes without feeling hunger, merely to kill time, whilst many poor people have not the means of satisfying their natural wants. When I desired you to read to me, you were amused; and now you have been useful you are delighted. Recollect this in future when you are at a loss what to do with yourselves; and remember that idleness must always be intolerable, because it is only an irksome consciousness of existence.

Every gift of Heaven is lent to us for our improvement; fancy is one of the first of the inferior ones; in cultivating it, we acquire what is called taste, or a relish for

particular employments, which occupy our leisure hours, and raise us above the vulgar in our conversations. Those who have not any taste talk always of their own affairs or of their neighbours; every trivial matter that occurs within their knowledge they canvass and conjecture about—not so much out of ill-nature as idleness: just as you eat the cakes without the impulse of hunger. In the same style people talk of eating and dress, and long for their meals merely to divide the day, because the intermediate time is not employed in a more interesting manner. Every new branch of taste that we cultivate affords us a refuge from idleness, a fortress in which we may resist the assaults of vice; and the more noble our employments, the more exalted will our minds become.

Music, drawing, works of usefulness and fancy, all amuse and refine the mind, sharpen the ingenuity, and form insensibly the dawning judgment. As the judgment gains strength, so do the passions also; we have actions to weigh, and need that taste in conduct, that delicate sense of propriety, which gives grace to virtue. The highest branch of solitary amusement is reading; but even in the choice of books the fancy is first employed; for in reading, the heart is touched, till its feelings are examined by the understanding, and the ripenings of reason regulate the imagination. This is the work of years, and the most important of all employments. When life advances, if the heart has been capable of receiving early impressions, and the head of reasoning and retaining the conclusions which were drawn from them; we have acquired a stock of knowledge, a gold mine which we can occasionally recur to, independent of outward circumstances.

The Supreme Being has every thing in himself; we proceed from Him, and our knowledge and affections must return to Him for employment suited to them. And those who most resemble Him ought, next to Him, to be the objects of our love; and the beings whom we should try to associate with, that we may receive an inferior degree of satisfaction from their society. But be assured, our chief comfort must ever arise from the mind’s reviewing its own operations—and the whispers of an

approving conscience, to convince us that life has not slipped away unemployed.

CHAP. XIV. Innocent Amusements.—Description of a Welsh Castle.—History of a Welsh Harper.—A tyrannical Landlord.—Family Pride.

As it was now harvest time, the new scene, and the fine weather delighted the children, who ran continually out to view the reapers. Indeed every thing seemed to wear a face of festivity, and the ripe corn bent under its own weight, or, more erect, shewed the laughing appearance of plenty.

Mrs. Mason always allowing the gleaners to have a sufficient quantity, a great number of poor came to gather a little harvest; and she was pleased to see the feeble hands of childhood and age collecting the scattered ears.

Honest Jack came with his family; and when the labours of the day were over, would play on a fiddle, that frequently had but three strings. But it served to set the feet in motion, and the lads and lasses dancing on the green sod, suffered every care to sleep.

An old Welsh harper generally came to the house about this time of the year, and staid a month or more; for Mrs. Mason was particularly fond of this instrument, and interested in the fate of the player; as is almost always the case, when we have rescued a person out of any distress.

She informed the children, that once travelling through Wales, her carriage was overturned near the ruins of an old castle. And as she had escaped unhurt, she determined to wander amongst them, whilst the driver took care of his horses, and her servant hastened to the neighbouring village for assistance.

It was almost dark, and the lights began to twinkle in the scattered cottages. The scene pleased me, continued Mrs. Mason; I thought of the various customs which the lapse of time unfolds; and dwelt on the state of the Welsh, when this castle, now so desolate, was the hospitable abode of the chief of a noble family. These reflections entirely engrossed my mind, when the sound of a harp reached my ears.

Never was any thing more opportune, the national music seemed to give reality to the pictures which my imagination had been drawing. I listened awhile, and then trying to trace the pleasing sound, discovered, after a short search, a little hut, rudely built. The walls of an old tower supported part of the thatch, which scarcely kept out the rain, and the two other sides were stones cemented, or rather plaistered together, by mud and clay.

I entered, and beheld an old man, sitting by a few loose sticks, which blazed on the hearth; and a young woman, with one child at her breast, sucking, and another on her knee: near them stood a cow and her calf. The man had been playing on the harp; he rose when he saw me, and offered his chair, the only one in the room, and sat down on a large chest in the chimney-corner. When the door was shut, all the light that was admitted came through the hole, called a chimney, and did not much enliven the dwelling. I mentioned my accident to account for my intrusion, and requested the harper again to touch the instrument that had attracted me. A partition of twigs and dried leaves divided this apartment from another, in which I perceived a light: I enquired about it, and the woman, in an artless manner, informed me, that she had let it to a young gentlewoman lately married, who was related to a very good family, and would not lodge any where, or with any body. This intelligence made me smile, to think that family pride should be a solace in such extreme poverty.

I sat there some time, and then the harper accompanied me to see whether the carriage was repaired; I found it waiting for me; and as the inn I was to sleep at was only about two miles further, the harper offered to come and play to me whilst I was eating my supper. This was just what I wished for; his appearance had roused my compassion as well as my curiosity, and I took him and his harp in the chaise.

After supper he informed me, that he had once a very good farm; but he had been so unfortunate as to displease the justice, who never forgave him, nor rested till he had

ruined him. This tyrant always expected his tenants to assist him to bring in his harvest before they had got in their own. The poor harper was once in the midst of his; when an order was sent to him to bring his carts and servants, the next day, to the fields of this petty king. He foolishly refused; and this refusal was the foundation of that settled hatred which produced such fatal consequences. Ah, Madam, said the sufferer, your heart would ache, if you heard of all his cruelties to me, and the rest of his poor tenants. He employs many labourers, and will not give them as much wages as they could get from the common farmers, yet they dare not go any-where else to work when he sends for them. The fish that they catch they must bring first to him, or they would not be allowed to walk over his grounds to catch them; and he will give just what he pleases for the most valuable part of their pannier.

But there would be no end to my story were I to tell you of all his oppressions. I was obliged to leave my farm; and my daughter, whom you saw this evening, having married an industrious young man, I came to live with them. When—would you believe it? this same man threw my son into jail, on account of his killing a hare, which all the country folks do when they can catch them in their grounds. We were again in great distress, and my daughter and I built the hut you saw in the waste, that the poor babes might have a shelter. I maintain them by playing on the harp—the master of this inn allows me to play to the gentry who travel this way; so that I pick up a few pence, just enough to keep life and soul together, and to enable me to send a little bread to my poor son John Thomas.

He then began one of the most dismal of his Welsh ditties, and, in the midst of it cried out—He is an upstart, a mere mushroom!—His grandfather was cow-boy to mine!—So I told him once, and he never forgot it.

The old man then informed me that the castle in which he now was sheltered formerly belonged to his family—such are the changes and chances of this mortal life—said he, and hastily struck up a lively tune.

While he was striking the strings, I thought too of the changes in life which an age had produced. The descendant of those who had made the hall ring with social mirth now mourned in its ruins, and hung his harp on the mouldering battlements. Such is the fate of buildings and of families!

After I had dismissed my guest, I sent for the landlord, to make some farther enquiries, and found that I had not been deceived; I then determined to assist him, and thought my accident providential. I knew a man of consequence in the neighbourhood; I visited him, and exerted myself to procure the enlargement of the young man. I succeeded; and not only restored him to his family, but prevailed on my friend to let him rent a small farm on his estate, and I gave him money to buy stock for it, and the implements of husbandry.

The old harper's gratitude was unbounded; the summer after he walked to visit me; and ever since he has contrived to come every year to enliven our harvest-home. This evening it is to be celebrated.

The evening came; the joyous party footed it away merrily, and the sound of their shoes was heard on the barn-floor. It was not the light fantastic toe, that fashion taught to move, but honest heart-felt mirth, and the loud laugh, if it spoke the vacant head, said audibly that the heart was guileless.

Mrs. Mason always gave them some trifling presents at this time, to render the approach of winter more comfortable. To the men, she generally presented warm clothing, and to the women flax and worsted for knitting and spinning; and those who were the most industrious received a reward when the new year commenced. The children had books given to them, and little ornaments.—All were anxious for the day; and received their old acquaintance, the harper, with the most cordial smiles.

## CHAP. XV. Prayer.—A Moon-light Scene.—Resignation.

The harper would frequently sit under a larger elm, a few paces from the house, and play some of the most plaintive Welsh tunes. While the people were eating their supper, Mrs. Mason desired him to play her some favourite airs; and she and the children walked round the tree under which he sat, on the stump of another.

The moon rose in cloudless majesty, and a number of stars twinkled near her. The softened landscape inspired tranquillity, while the strain of rustic melody gave a pleasing melancholy to the whole, and made the tear start, whose source could scarcely be traced. The pleasure the sight of harmless mirth gave rise to in Mrs. Mason's bosom roused every tender feeling, and set in motion her spirits. She laughed with the poor whom she had made happy, and wept when she recollected her own sorrows; the illusions of youth—the gay expectations that had formerly clipped the wings of time. She turned to the girls—I have been very unfortunate, my young friends; but my griefs are now of a placid kind. Heavy misfortunes have obscured the sun I gazed at when first I entered life; early attachments have been broken; the death of friends I loved has so clouded my days; that neither the beams of prosperity, nor even those of benevolence, can dissipate the gloom; but I am not lost in a thick fog. My state of mind rather resembles the scene before you, it is quiet: I am weaned from the world, but not disgusted; for I can still do good, and in futurity a sun will rise to chear my heart. Beyond the night of death, I hail the dawn of an eternal day! I mention my state of mind to you, that I may tell you what supports me.

The festivity within, and the placidity without, led my thoughts naturally to the source from whence my comfort springs—to the Great Bestower of every blessing. Prayer, my children, is the dearest privilege of man, and the support of a feeling heart. Mine has too often been wounded by ingratitude; my fellow-creatures, whom I have fondly loved, have neglected me—I have heard their last sigh, and thrown my eyes round an empty world; but then more particularly feeling the presence of my Creator, I poured out my soul before him, and was no longer alone! I now daily

contemplate His wonderful goodness; and, though at an awful distance, try to imitate Him. This view of things is a spur to activity, and a consolation in disappointment.

There is in fact a constant intercourse kept up with the Creator, when we learn to consider Him as the fountain of truth, which our understanding naturally thirsts after. But His Goodness brings Him still more on a level with our bounded capacities, for we trace it in every work of mercy, and feel, in sorrow particularly, His fatherly care. Every blessing is doubled when we suppose it comes from Him, and afflictions almost lose their name when we believe they are sent to correct, not crush us. Whilst we are alive to gratitude and admiration, we must adore God.

The human soul is so framed, that goodness and truth must fill it with ineffable pleasure, and the nearer it approaches to perfection, the more earnestly will it pursue those virtues, discerning more clearly their beauty.

The Supreme Being dwells in the universe. He is as essentially present to the wicked as to the good; but the latter delight in His presence, and try to please Him, whilst the former shrink from a Judge, who is of too pure a nature to behold iniquity. The wicked wish for the rocks to cover them, mountains, or the angry sea, which we the other day surveyed, to hide them from the presence of that Being, in whose presence only they could find joy. You feel emotions that incite you to do good; and painful ones disturb you when you have resisted the faithful internal monitor. The wiser, and the better you grow, the more visible, if I may use the expression, will God become: for wisdom consists in searching Him out, and goodness in endeavouring to copy his attributes.

To attain any thing great, a model must be held up to exercise our understanding, and engage our affections. A view of the disinterested goodness of God is therefore calculated to touch us more than can be conceived by a depraved mind. When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, true courage will animate our conduct; for nothing can hurt those who trust in Him. If the desire of acting right is ever present

with us, if admiration of goodness fills our souls, we may be said to pray constantly. And if we try to do justice to all our fellow-creatures, and even to the brute creation, and assist them as far as we can, we prove whose servants we are, and whose laws we transcribe in our lives.

Never be very anxious, when you pray, what words to use; regulate your thoughts; and recollect that virtue calms the passions, gives clearness to the understanding, and opens it to pleasures that the thoughtless and vicious have not a glimpse of. You must, believe me, be acquainted with God to find peace, to rise superior to worldly temptations. Habitual devotion is of the utmost consequence to our happiness, as what oftenest occupies the thoughts will influence our actions. But observe what I say—that devotion is mockery and selfishness, which does not improve our moral character.

Men, of old, prayed to the devil, sacrificed their children to him; and committed every kind of barbarity and impurity. But we who serve a long-suffering God should pity the weakness of our fellow creatures; we must not beg for mercy and not shew it; we must not acknowledge that we have offended, without trying to avoid doing so in future. We are to deal with our fellow-creatures as we expect to be dealt with. This is practical prayer!—Those who practice it feel frequently sublime pleasures, and lively hopes animate them in this vale of tears; that seem a foretaste of the felicity they will enjoy, when the understanding is more enlightened, and the affections properly regulated. To-morrow I will take you to visit the school-mistress of the village, and relate her story, to enforce what I have been saying.

Now you may go and dance one or two dances; and I will join you after I have taken a walk, which I wish to enjoy alone.

CHAP. XVI. The Benefits arising from Devotion.—The History of the Village School-mistress.—Fatal Effects of Inattention to Expences, in the History of Mr. Lofty.

The next morning Mrs. Mason desired the children to get their work, and draw near the table whilst she related the promised history; and in the afternoon, if the weather be fine, they were to visit the village school-mistress.

Her father, the honourable Mr. Lofty, was the youngest son of a noble family; his education had been liberal, though his fortune was small. His relations, however, seemed determined to push him forward in life, before he disobliged them by marrying the daughter of a country clergyman, an accomplished, sensible woman.

Some time after the birth of his daughter Anna, his elder brother, the Earl of Caermarthen, was reconciled to him; but this reconciliation only led him into expences, which his limited fortune could not bear. Mr. Lofty had a high sense of honour, and rather a profuse turn; he was beside a very humane man, and gave away much more than he could afford to give, when his compassion was excited. He never did a mean action; but sometimes an ostentatious pride tarnished the lustre of very splendid ones, and made them appear to judicious eyes more like tinsel than gold. I will account for it. His first impulse arose from sensibility, and the second from an immoderate desire of human applause: for he seemed not to be alive to devotional feelings, or to have that rock to rest on, which will support a frail being, and give true dignity to a character, though all nature combined to crush it.

Mrs. Lofty was not a shining character—but I will read you a part of a letter, which her daughter, the lady we are to visit, wrote to me.

“This being the anniversary of the day on which an ever loved, and much revered parent was released from the bondage of mortality, I observe it with particular seriousness, and with gratitude; for her sorrows were great, her trials severe—but her conduct was blameless: yet the world admired her not; her silent, modest virtues, were not formed to attract the notice of the injudicious crowd, and her understanding was not brilliant enough to excite admiration. But she was regardless of the opinion of the world; she sought her reward in the source from whence her virtue was

derived—and she found it. He who, for wise and merciful purposes, suffered her to be afflicted, supported her under her trials; thereby calling forth the exercise of those virtues with which He had adorned her gentle soul; and imparting to her a degree of heart-felt comfort, which no earthly blessing could afford."

This amiable parent died when Anna was near eighteen, and left her to the care of her father, whose high spirit she had imbibed. However, the religious principles which her mother had instilled regulated her notions of honour, and so elevated her character, that her heart was regulated by her understanding.

Her father, who had insensibly involved himself in debt after her mother's death, tried many different schemes of life, all of which at first wore a promising aspect; but wanting that suppleness of temper, that enables people to rise in the world, his struggles, instead of extricating, sunk him still deeper. Wanting also the support of religion, he became sour, easily irritated, and almost hated a world whose applause he had once eagerly courted. His affairs were at last in such a desperate state, that he was obliged, reluctantly, to accept of an invitation from his brother, who with his wife, a weak fine lady, intended to spend some time on the continent; his daughter was, of course, to be of the party.

The restraint of obligations did not suit his temper, and feeling himself dependent, he imagined every one meant to insult him.

Some sarcasms were thrown out one day by a gentleman, in a large company; they were not personal, yet he took fire. His sore mind was easily hurt, he resented them; and heated by wine, they both said more than their cool reason would have suggested. Mr. Lofty imagined his honour was wounded, and the next morning sent him a challenge. They met—and he killed his antagonist, who, dying, pardoned him, and declared that the sentiments which had given him so much offence fell from him by accident, and were not levelled at any person.

The dying man lamented, that the thread of a thoughtless life had been so suddenly

snapped—the name of his wife and children he could not articulate, when something like a prayer for them escaped his livid lips, and shook his exhausted frame—The blood flowed in a copious stream—vainly did Mr. Lofty endeavour to staunch it—the heart lost its vital nourishment, and the soul escaped as he pressed the hand of his destroyer, who, when he found him breathless, ran home, and rushed in a hurry into his own chamber. The dead man's image haunted his imagination—he started—imagined that he was at his elbow, and shook the hand that had received the dying grasp; yet still it was pressed, and the pressure entered into his very soul. On the table lay two pistols, he caught up one—and shot himself. The report alarmed the family: the servants and his daughter, for his brother was not at home, broke open the door, and she saw the dreadful sight! As there was still some appearance of life, a trembling ray, she supported the body, and sent for assistance: but he soon died in her arms without speaking, before the servant returned with a surgeon.

Horror seized her; another pistol lay charged on the table; she caught it up, but religion held her hand; she knelt down by a dead father, and prayed to a superior one. Her mind grew calmer, yet still she passionately wished she had but heard him speak, or that she had conveyed comfort to his departing spirit—where, where would it find comfort? again she was obliged to have recourse to prayer.

After the death of her father, her aunt treated her as if she were a mere dependent on her bounty; and expected her to be an humble companion in every sense of the word. The visitors took the tone from her ladyship, and numberless were the mortifications she had to bear.

The entrance of a person about business interrupted the narration; but Mrs. Mason promised to resume it after dinner.

## CHAP. XVII. The Benefits arising from Devotion.—The

## History of the Village School-mistress concluded.

As soon as the cloth was removed, Mrs. Mason concluded the narration; and the girls forgot their fruit whilst they were listening to the sequel.

Anna endured this treatment some years, and had an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the world and her own heart. She visited her mother's father, and would have remained with him; but she determined not to lessen the small pittance which he had anxiously saved out of a scanty income for two other grandchildren. She thought continually of her situation, and found, on examining her understanding, that the fashionable circle in which she moved could not at any rate have afforded her much satisfaction, or even amusement; though the neglect and contempt that she met with rendered her very uncomfortable. She had her father's spirit of independence, and determined to shake off the galling yoke which she had long struggled with, and try to earn her own subsistence. Her acquaintance expostulated with her, and represented the miseries of poverty, and the mortifications and difficulties that she would have to encounter. Let it be so, she replied, it is much preferable to swelling the train of the proud or vicious great, and despising myself for bearing their impertinence, for eating their bitter bread; better, indeed, is a dinner of herbs with contentment. My wants are few. When I am my own mistress, the crust I earn will be sweet, and the water that moistens it will not be mingled with tears of sorrow or indignation.

To shorten my story; she came to me, after she had attempted several plans, and requested my advice. She would not accept of any considerable favour, and declared that the greatest would be, to put her in a way of supporting herself, without forfeiting her highly valued independence. I knew not what to advise; but whilst I was debating the matter with myself, I happened to mention that we were in want of a school-mistress. She eagerly adopted the plan, and persevering in it these last ten years, I find her a most valuable acquisition to our society.

She was formed to shine in the most brilliant circle—yet she relinquished it, and patiently labours to improve the children consigned to her management, and tranquillize her own mind. She succeeds in both.

She lives indeed alone, and has all day only the society of children; yet she enjoys many true pleasures; dependence on God is her support, and devotion her comfort. Her lively affections are therefore changed into a love of virtue and truth: and these exalted speculations have given an uncommon dignity to her manners; for she seems above the world, and its trifling commotions. At her meals, gratitude to Heaven supplies the place of society. She has a tender, social heart, and, as she cannot sweeten her solitary draught, by expressing her good wishes to her fellow creatures, an ejaculation to Heaven for the welfare of her friends is the substitute. This circumstance I heard her mention to her grandfather, who sometimes visits her.

I will now make some alteration in my dress, for when I visit those who have been reduced from their original place in society by misfortunes, I always attend a little to ceremony; lest too much familiarity should appear like disrespect.

## CHAP. XVIII. Visit to the School-mistress.—True and false Pride.

Their dress was soon adjusted, and the girls plucked flowers to adorn themselves, and a nosegay to present to the school-mistress, whose garden was but small.

They met the children just released from confinement; the swarm came humming round Mrs. Mason, endeavouring to catch her eye, and obtain the notice they were so proud of. The girls made their best curtsies, blushing; and the boys hung down their heads, and kicked up the dust, in scraping a bow of respect.

They found their mistress preparing to drink tea, to refresh herself after the toils of the day; and, with the ease peculiar to well-bred people, she quickly enabled them to

partake of it, by giving the tea-board a more sociable appearance.

The harvest-home was soon the subject of conversation, and the harper was mentioned. The family pride of the Welsh, said Anna, has often diverted me; I have frequently heard the inhabitants of a little hut, that could scarcely be distinguished from the pig-sty, which stood in the front of it, boast of their ancestors and despise trade. They have informed me, that one branch of their family built the middle aisle of the church; that another beautified the chancel, and gave the ten commandments, which blaze there in letters of gold. Some rejoice that their forefathers sleep in the most conspicuous tombs, and that their ashes have an inscription to point out where they are returning to their mother earth. And those graves, which only a little stone at the head gives consequence to, are adorned every Sunday with flowers or ever-greens. We perceive, in all the various customs of men, a desire to live in the past and in the future, if I may be allowed the expression.

Mrs. Mason then observed, that of all the species of pride which carry a man out of himself, family pride was the most beneficial to society. Pride of wealth produces vanity and ostentation; but that of blood seems to inspire high notions of honour, and to banish meanness. Yet it is productive of many ill consequences, the most obvious is, that it renders individuals respectable to the generality, whose merit is only reflected: and sometimes the want of this accidental advantage throws the most shining personal virtues and abilities into obscurity. In weak minds this pride degenerates into the most despicable folly; and the wise will not condescend to accept of fame at second-hand, replied Anna. We ought to be proud of our original, but we should trace it to our Heavenly Father, who breathed into us the breath of life.—We are his children when we try to resemble Him, when we are convinced that truth and goodness must constitute the very essence of the soul; and that the pursuit of them will produce happiness, when the vain distinctions of mortals will fade away, and their pompous escutcheons moulder with more vulgar dust! But remember, my young friends, virtue is immortal; and goodness arises from a quick

perception of truth, and actions conformable to the conviction.

Different subjects beguiled the time, till the closing evening admonished them to return home; and they departed reluctantly, filled with respect.

## CHAP. XIX. Charity.—The History of Peggy and her Family.—The Sailor's Widow.

I have often remarked to you, said Mrs. Mason one morning to her pupils, that we are all dependent on each other; and this dependence is wisely ordered by our Heavenly Father, to call forth many virtues, to exercise the best affections of the human heart, and fix them into habits. While we impart pleasure we receive it, and feel the grandeur of our immortal soul, as it is constantly struggling to spread itself into futurity.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure I have ever received has arisen from the habitual exercise of charity, in its various branches: the view of a distressed object has made me now think of conversing about one branch of it, that of giving alms.

You know Peggy, the young girl whom I wish to have most about my person; I mean, I wish it for her own sake, that I may have an opportunity of improving her mind, and cultivating a good capacity. As to attendance, I never give much trouble to any fellow-creature; for I choose to be independent of caprice and artificial wants, unless indeed when I am sick; then, I thankfully receive the assistance I would willingly give to others in the same situation. I believe I have not in the world a more faithful friend than Peggy; and her earnest desire to please me gratifies my benevolence, for I always observe with delight the workings of a grateful heart.

I lost a darling child, said Mrs. Mason, smothering a sigh, in the depth of winter: death had before deprived me of her father, and when I lost my child, he died again.

The wintery prospects suiting the temper of my soul, I have sat looking at a wide

waste of trackless snow for hours; and the heavy, sullen fog, that the feeble rays of the sun could not pierce, gave me back an image of my mind. I was unhappy, and the sight of dead nature accorded with my feelings—for all was dead to me.

As the snow began to melt, I took a walk, and observed the birds hopping about with drooping wings, or mute on the leafless boughs. The mountain, whose sides had lost the snow, looked black; yet still some remained on the summit, and formed a contrast to diversify the dreary prospect.

I walked thoughtfully along, when the appearance of a poor man, who did not beg, struck me very forcibly. His shivering limbs were scarcely sheltered from the cold by the tattered garments that covered him; and he had a sharp, famished look. I stretched out my hand with some relief in it—I would not enquire into the particulars of such obvious distress. The poor wretch caught my hand, and hastily dropping on his knees, thanked me in an extacy, as if he had almost lost sight of hope, and was overcome by the sudden relief. His attitude, for I cannot bear to see a fellow-creature kneel, and eager thanks, oppressed my weak spirits, so that I could not for a moment ask him any more questions; but as soon as I recollected myself, I learned from him the misfortunes that had reduced him to such extreme distress, and he hinted, that I could not easily guess the good I had done. I imagined from this hint that he was meditating his own destruction when I saw him, to spare himself the misery of seeing his infant perish—starved to death, in every sense of the word.

I will now hasten to the sequel of the account. His wife had lately had a child, she was very ill at the time, and want of proper food, and a defence against the inclemency of the weather, hurried her out of the world. The poor child, Peggy, had sucked in disease and nourishment together, and now even that wretched source had failed—the breast was cold that had afforded the scanty support; and the little innocent smiled unconscious of its misery. I sent for her, added Mrs. Mason, and her father dying a few years after, she has ever been a favourite charge of mine, and

nursing of her, in some measure, dispelled the gloom in which I had been almost lost. Ah! my children, you know not how many “houseless heads bide the pitiless storm!”

I received soon after a lesson of resignation from a poor woman, who was a practical philosopher.

She had lost her husband, a sailor, and lost his wages also, as she could not prove his death. She came to me to beg some pieces of silk, to make some pin-cushions for the boarders of a neighbouring school. Her lower weeds were patched with different coloured rags; but they spoke not variety of wretchedness; on the contrary, they shewed a mind so content, that want, and bodily pain, did not prevent her thinking of the opinion of casual observers. This woman lost a husband and a child suddenly, and her daily bread was precarious.—I cheered the widow’s heart, and my own was not quite solitary.

But I am growing melancholy, whilst I am only desirous of pointing out to you how very beneficial charity is; because it enables us to find comfort when all our worldly comforts are blighted: besides, when our bowels yearn to our fellow-creatures, we feel that the love of God dwelleth in us—and then we cannot always go on our way sorrowing.

## CHAP. XX. Visit to Mrs. Trueman.—The Use of Accomplishments.—Virtue the Soul of all.

In the afternoon they visited Mrs. Trueman unexpectedly, and found her sitting in the garden playing to her children, who danced on the green sod. She approached to receive them, and laid aside her guitar; but, after some conversation, Mrs. Mason desired her to take it up again, and the girls joined in the request. While she was singing Mary whispered Mrs. Mason, that she would give the world to be able to sing as well. The whisper was not so low but a part of it reached Mrs. Trueman’s

ears, who said to her, smiling, My young friend, you value accomplishments much too highly—they may give grace to virtue, but are nothing without solid worth. Indeed, I may say more, for any thing like perfection in the arts cannot be attained, where a relish, nay a delight in what is true and noble is wanting. A superficial observer may be pleased with a picture in which fine colours predominate; and quick movements in music may tickle the ear, though they never reach the heart: but it is the simple strain which affection animates, that we listen to with interest and delight. Mr. Trueman has a taste for the fine arts; and I wish in every thing to be his companion. His conversation has improved my judgment, and the affection an intimate knowledge of his virtues has inspired, increases the love which I feel for the whole human race. He lives retired from the world; to amuse him after the business of the day is over, and my babes asleep, I sing to him. A desire to please, and the pleasure I read in his eyes, give to my music energy and tenderness. When he is ruffled by worldly cares, I try to smooth his wrinkled brow, and think mine a voice of melody, when it has had that effect.

Very true, replied Mrs. Mason, accomplishments should be cultivated to render us pleasing to our domestic friends; virtue is necessary; it must ever be the foundation of our peace and usefulness; but when we are capable of affection, we wish to have something peculiar to ourselves. We study the taste of our friends, and endeavour to conform to it; but, in doing so, we ought rather to improve our own abilities than servilely to copy theirs. Observe, my dear girls, Mrs. Trueman’s distinction, her accomplishments are for her friends, her virtues for the world in general.

I should think myself vain, and my soul little, answered Mrs. Trueman, if the applause of the whole world, on the score of abilities, which did not add any real lustre to my character, could afford me matter of exultation. The approbation of my own heart, the humble hope of pleasing the Most High, elevates my soul; and I feel, that in a future state, I may enjoy an unspeakable degree of happiness, though I now only experience a faint foretaste. Next to these sublime emotions, which I cannot

describe, and the joy resulting from doing good, I am happy when I can amuse those I love; it is not then vanity, but tenderness, that spurs me on, and my songs, my drawings, my every action, has something of my heart in it. When I can add to the innocent enjoyments of my children, and improve them at the same time, are not my accomplishments of use? In the same style, when I vary the pleasures of my fire-side, I make my husband forget that it is a lonely one; and he returns to look for elegance at home, elegance that he himself gave the polish to; and which is only affected, when it does not flow from virtuous affections.

I beg your pardon, I expatiate too long on my favorite topic; my desire to rectify your notions must plead my excuse.

Mr. Trueman now joined them, and brought with him some of his finest fruit. After tea Mrs. Trueman shewed them some of her drawings; and, to comply with their repeated request, played on the harpsichord, and Mr. Trueman took his violin to accompany her. Then the children were indulged with a dance, and each had her favourite tune played in turn.

As they returned home, the girls were eagerly lavishing praises on Mrs. Trueman; and Mary said, I cannot tell why, but I feel so glad when she takes notice of me. I never saw any one look so good-natured, cried Caroline. Mrs. Mason joined in the conversation. You justly remarked that she is good-natured; you remember her history, she loves truth, and she is ever exercising benevolence and love. From the insect, that she avoids treading on, her affection may be traced to that Being who lives for ever. And it is from her goodness her agreeable qualities spring.

## CHAP. XXI. The Benefit of bodily Pain.—Fortitude the Basis of Virtue.—The Folly of Irresolution.

The children had been playing in the garden for some time, whilst Mrs. Mason was reading alone. But she was suddenly alarmed by the cries of Caroline, who ran into

the room in great distress. Mary quickly followed, and explaining the matter said, that her sitter had accidentally disturbed some wasps, who were terrified, and of course stung her. Remedies were applied to assuage the pain; yet all the time she uttered the loudest and most silly complaints, regardless of the uneasiness she gave those who were exerting themselves to relieve her.

In a short time the smart abated, and then her friend thus addressed her, with more than usual gravity. I am sorry to see a girl of your age weep on account of bodily pain; it is a proof of a weak mind, a proof that you cannot employ yourself about things of consequence. How often must I tell you, that the Most High is educating us for eternity?

“The term virtue comes from a word signifying strength. Fortitude of mind is, therefore, the basis of every virtue, and virtue belongs to a being, that is weak in its nature, and strong only in will and resolution.”

Children early feel bodily pain, to habituate them to bear the conflicts of the soul, when they become reasonable creatures. This, I say, is the first trial, and I like to see that proper pride which drives to conceal its sufferings. Those who, when young, weep if the least trifle annoys them, will never, I fear, have sufficient strength of mind to encounter all the miseries that can afflict the body, rather than act meanly to avoid them. Indeed, this seems to be the essential difference between a great and a little mind: the former knows how to endure—whilst the latter suffers an immortal soul to be depressed, lost in its abode; suffers the inconveniences which attack the one to overwhelm the other. The soul would always support the body, if its superiority was felt, and invigorated by exercise. The Almighty, who never afflicts but to produce some good end, first sends diseases to children to teach them patience and fortitude; and when by degrees they have learned to bear them, they have acquired some virtue.

In the same manner, cold or hunger, when accidentally encountered, are not evils;

they make us feel what wretches feel, and teach us to be tender-hearted. Many of your fellow-creatures daily bear what you cannot for a moment endure without complaint. Besides, another advantage arises from it; after you have felt hunger, you will not be very anxious to choose the particular kind of food that is to satisfy it. You will then be freed from a frivolous care.

When it is necessary to take a nauseous draught, swallow it at once, and do not make others sick whilst you are hesitating, though you know that you ought to take it. If a tooth is to be drawn, or any other disagreeable operation to be performed, determine resolutely that it shall be done, immediately; and debate not, when you clearly see the step that you ought to take. If I see a child act in this way, I am ready to embrace it, my soul yearns for it—I perceive the dawning of a character that will be useful to society, as it prepares its soul for a nobler field of action.

Believe me, it is the patient endurance of pain, that will enable you to refill your passions; after you have borne bodily pain, you will have firmness enough to sustain the still more excruciating agonies of the mind. You will not, to banish momentary cares, plunge into dissipation; nor, to escape a present inconvenience, forget that you should hold fast virtue as the only substantial good.

I should not value the affection of a person who would not bear pain and hunger to serve me; nor is that benevolence warm, which shrinks from encountering difficulties, when it is necessary, in order to be useful to any fellow-creature.

There is a just pride, a noble ambition in some minds, that I greatly admire. I have seen a little of it in Mary! for whilst she pities others, she imagines that she could bear their inconveniences herself; and she seems to feel more uneasiness, when she observes the sufferings of others, than I could ever trace on her countenance under the immediate pressure of pain.

Remember you are to bear patiently the infirmities of the weakest of your fellow-creatures; but to yourselves you are not to be equally indulgent.

## CHAP. XXII. Journey to London.

The girls were visibly improved; an air of intelligence began to animate Caroline's fine features; and benevolence gave her eyes the humid sparkle which is so beautiful and engaging. The interest that we take in the fate of others attaches them to ourselves; thus Caroline's goodness inspired more affection than her beauty.

Mary's judgment grew every day clearer; or, more properly speaking, she acquired experience; and her lively feelings fixed the conclusions of reason in her mind. Whilst Mrs. Mason was rejoicing in their apparent improvement, she received a letter from their father, requesting her to allow his daughters to spend the winter in town, as he wished to procure them the best masters, an advantage that the country did not afford. With reluctance she consented, determining to remain with them a short time; and preparations were quickly made for the journey.

The wished-for morning arrived, and they set off in a tumult of spirits; sorry to leave the country, yet delighted with the prospect of visiting the metropolis. This hope soon dried the tears which had bedewed their cheeks; for the parting with Mrs. Mason was not anticipated. The autumnal views were new to them; they saw the hedges exhibit various colours, and the trees stripped of their leaves; but they were not disposed to moralize.

For some time after their arrival, every thing they saw excited wonder and admiration; and not till they were a little familiarized with the new objects, did they ask reasonable questions.

Several presents recruited their purses; and they requested Mrs. Mason to allow them to buy some trifles they were in want of. The request was modest, and she complied.

## CHAP. XXIII. Charity.—Shopping.—The distressed

## Stationer.—Mischievous Consequences of delaying Payment.

As they walked in search of a shop, they both determined to purchase pocket-books; but their friend desired them not to spend all their money at once, as they would meet many objects of charity in the numerous streets of the metropolis. I do not wish you, she continued, to relieve every beggar that you casually meet; yet should any one attract your attention, obey the impulse of your heart, which will lead you to pay them for exercising your compassion, and do not suffer the whispers of selfishness, that they may be impostors, to deter you. However, I would have you give but a trifle when you are not certain the distress is real, and reckon it given for pleasure. I for my part would rather be deceived five hundred times, than doubt once without reason.

They stopped at a small shop, Mrs. Mason always sought out such; for, said she, I may help those who perhaps want assistance; bargains I never seek, for I wish every one to receive the just value for their goods.

In the shop which they chanced to enter, they did not find the kind of pocket-book that they had previously fixed on, and therefore wished precipitately to leave it; but were detained by their more considerate friend. While they had been turning over the trinkets, the countenance of the woman who served them caught her eye, and she observed her eager manner of recommending the books. You have given much unnecessary trouble, said she, to the mistress of the shop; the books are better, and more expensive than you intended to purchase, but I will make up the deficiency. A beam of pleasure enlivened the woman’s swollen eyes; and Mrs. Mason, in the mild accents of compassion, said, if it is not an impertinent question, will you tell me from what cause your visible distress arises? perhaps I may have it in my power to relieve you.—The woman burst into tears.—Indeed, Madam, you have already relieved me; for the money you have laid out will enable me to procure some food

for my poor little grandchildren, and to send a meal to their poor father, who is now confined for debt, though a more honest man never breathed. Ah! Madam, I little thought I should come to this—Yesterday his wife died, poor soul! I really believe things going so cross broke her heart. He has been in jail these five months; I could not manage the shop, or buy what was proper to keep up the credit of it, so business has been continually falling off; yet, if his debts were paid, he would now be here, and we should have money in our pockets. And what renders it more provoking, the people who owe us most are very rich. It is true, they live in such a very high style, and keep such a number of horses and servants, that they are often in want of money; and when they have it, they mostly have some freak in their heads, and do not think of paying poor trades-people. At first we were afraid to ask for payment lest we should lose their custom, and so it proved; when we did venture, forced by necessity, they sent to other shops, without discharging our demand.

And, my dear Madam, this is not all my grief; my son, before his misfortunes, was one of the most sober, industrious young men in London; but now he is not like the same man. He had nothing to do in the jail, and to drive away care he learned to drink; he said it was a comfort to forget himself, and he would add an oath—I never heard him swear till then. I took pains when he was a child to teach him his prayers, and he rewarded me by being a dutiful son. The case is quite altered now; he seems to have lost all natural affection—he heeds not his mother's tears.—Her sobs almost suffocated her, as she strove to go on—He will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave—and yet I pity my poor boy, he is shut up with such a number of profligate wretches, who laugh at what is right. Every farthing I send him he spends in liquor, and used to make his poor wife pawn her clothes to buy him drink—she was happy to die; it was well for her not to live to hear the babe she gave suck to despise her!

A passion of tears relieved the sufferer, and she called her grandchildren—These innocent babes, said she, I shall not be able to keep them, they must go to the

workhouse. If the quality did but know what they make us poor industrious people suffer, surely they would be more considerate.

Mrs. Mason gave her something to supply her present wants, and promised to call on her again before she left town.

They walked silently down two or three streets—I hope you have learned to think, my dear girls, said Mrs. Mason, and that your hearts have felt the emotions of compassion; need I make any comments on the situation of the poor woman we have just left. You perceive that those who neglect to pay their debts do more harm than they imagine; perhaps, indeed, some of these very people do, what is called, a noble action, give away a large sum, and are termed generous; nay, very probably, weep at a tragedy, or when reading an affecting tale. They then boast of their sensibility—when, alas! neglecting the foundation of all virtue, justice, they have occasioned exquisite distress; led a poor wretch into vice; heaped misery on helpless infancy, and drawn tears from the aged widow.

CHAP. XXIV. Visit to a poor Family in London.—Idleness the Parent of Vice.—Prodigality and Generosity incompatible.—The Pleasures of Benevolence.—True and false Motives for saving.

After the impression which the story, and the sight of the family had made, was a little worn off, Caroline begged leave to buy one toy, and then another, till her money was quite gone. When Mrs. Mason found it was all expended, she looked round for an object in distress; a poor woman soon presented herself, and her meagre countenance gave weight to her tale.—A babe, as meagre, hung at her breast, which did not seem to contain sufficient moisture to wet its parched lips.

On enquiry they found that she lodged in a neighbouring garret. Her husband had been out of employment a long time, and was now sick. The master who had formerly given him work lost gradually great part of his business; for his best customers were grown so fond of foreign articles, that his goods grew old in the

warehouse. Consequently a number of hands were dismissed, who not immediately finding employment elsewhere, were reduced to the most extreme distress. The truth of this account a reputable shopkeeper attested; and he added that many of the unhappy creatures, who die unpitied at the gallows, were first led into vice by accidental idleness.

They ascended the dark stairs, scarcely able to bear the bad smells that flew from every part of a small house, that contained in each room a family, occupied in such an anxious manner to obtain the necessaries of life, that its comforts never engaged their thoughts. The precarious meal was snatched, and the stomach did not turn, though, the cloth, on which it was laid, was dyed in dirt. When to-morrow's bread is uncertain, who thinks of cleanliness? Thus does despair encrease the misery, and consequent disease aggravate the horrors of poverty!

They followed the woman into a low garret, that was never visited by the chearful rays of the son. A man, with a sallow complexion, and long beard, sat shivering over a few cinders in the bottom of a broken grate, and two more children were on the ground, half naked, near him, breathing the same noxious air. The gaiety natural to their age did not animate their eyes, half sunk in their sockets; and, instead of smiles, premature wrinkles had found a place in their lengthened visages. Life was nipped in the bud; shut up just as it began to unfold itself. "A frost, a killing frost," had destroyed the parent's hopes: they seemed to come into the world only to crawl half formed—to suffer, and to die.

Mrs. Mason desired the girls to relieve the family; Caroline hung down her head abashed—wishing the paltry ornaments, which she had thoughtlessly bought, at the bottom of the sea. Mary, meanwhile, proud of the new privilege, emptied her purse; and Caroline, in a supplicating tone, entreated Mrs. Mason to allow her to give her neck handkerchief to the little infant.

Mrs. Mason desired the woman to call on her the next day; and they left the family

cheered by their bounty.

Caroline expected the reproof that soon proceeded from the mouth of her true friend. I am glad that this accident has occurred, to prove to you that prodigality and generosity are incompatible. Œconomy and self-denial are necessary in every station, to enable us to be generous, and to act conformably to the rules of justice.

Mary may this night enjoy peaceful slumbers; idle fancies, foolishly indulged, will not float in her brain; she may, before she closes her eyes, thank God, for allowing her to be His instrument of mercy. Will the trifles that you have purchased afford you such heart-felt delight, Caroline?

Selfish people save, to gratify their own caprices and appetites; the benevolent curb both, to give scope to the nobler feelings of the human heart. When we squander money idly, we defraud the poor, and deprive our own souls of their most exalted food. If you wish to be useful, govern your desires, and wait not till distress obtrudes itself—search it out. In the country it is not always attended with such shocking circumstances as at present; but in large cities, many garrets contain families, similar to those we have seen this afternoon. The money spent in indulging the vain wishes of idleness, and a childish fondness for pretty things not regulated by reason, would relieve the misery that my soul shrinks back from contemplating.

## CHAP. XXV. Mrs. Mason’s farewell Advice to her young Friends.

The day before Mrs. Mason was to leave her pupils, she took a hand of each, and pressing them tenderly in her own, tears started into her eyes—I tremble for you, my dear girls, for you must now practise by yourselves some of the virtues which I have been endeavouring to inculcate: and I shall anxiously wait for the summer, to see what progress you have made by yourselves.

We have conversed on several very important subjects; pray do not forget the conclusions I have drawn.

I now, as my last present, give you a book, in which I have written the subjects that we have discussed. Recur frequently to it, for the stories illustrating the instruction it contains, you will not feel in such a great degree the want of my personal advice. Some of the reasoning you may not thoroughly comprehend, but, as your understandings ripen, you will feel its full force.

Avoid anger; exercise compassion; and love truth. Recollect, that from religion your chief comfort must spring, and never neglect the duty of prayer. Learn from experience the comfort that arises from making known your wants and sorrows to the wisest and best of Beings, in whose hands are the issues, not only of this life, but of that which is to come.

Your father will allow you a certain stipend; you have already felt the pleasure of doing good; ever recollect that the wild pursuits of fancy must be conquered, to enable you to gratify benevolent wishes, and that you must practise œconomy in trifles to have it in your power to be generous on great occasions. And the good you intend to do, do quickly; for know, that a trifling duty neglected is a great fault, and the present time only is at your command.

You are now candidates for my friendship, and on your advancement in virtue my regard will in future depend. Write often to me, I will punctually answer your letters; but let me have the genuine sentiments of your hearts. In expressions of affection and respect, do not deviate from truth to gain what you wish for, or to turn a period prettily.

Adieu! when you think of your friend, observe her precepts; and let the recollection of my affection give additional weight to the truths which I have endeavoured to instill; and, to reward my care, let me hear that you love and practise virtue.

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