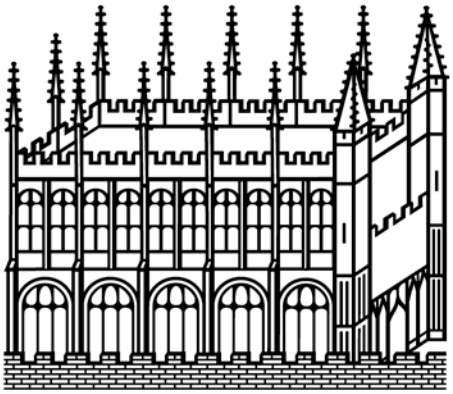

Miss Frances Sharp

from her sincere friend

R. Ryder

June 17 - 1821

Drawing room

Lisson

AN

ANTIDOTE

TO THE

MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE,

IN THE HISTORY OF

THE WIDOW PLACID,

AND

HER DAUGHTER RACHEL.

.....“ Bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deemed evil, is no more.”

THOMSON.

By HARRIET CORP,

Author of A Sequel to the Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life, Talents Improved, Cottage Sketches, Familiar Scenes, &c.

NINTH EDITION.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

THE Author cannot but feel flattered at the favourable reception this little Work has received from both the Literary and Religious World, and knows no better way of expressing gratitude for this early call for a Second and Third Edition, than by endeavouring to improve it. With this view the remarks of friendly criticism have been listened to with attention, and the Author's thanks are particularly due to the kind suggestions of a FRIEND, who chose to be anonymous.

CONTENTS.

Extracts from the Principal Reviews of this Work.

"We wish that the celebrity of Mr. Beresford's publication, ("The Miseries of Human Life,") may tend to procure for the present the wide circulation which it deserves; and that the seasonable improveme t which our fair author has made of human miseries, may prevent an abuse of that ingenious work."—*Eclectic Review.*

"While all the preceding Writers (authors of Miseries, More Miseries, &c.) have prosecuted the subject of "Miseries" with attempts at wit and pleasantry, this author endeavours to give a serious turn to the whole discussion, and to prove in an appropriate tale that practical religion is the only Antidote to "the ideal, minor, and real miseries of life."—The subject is well illustrated in a conversation with the widow Placid (a Quaker) and other passengers in a stage-coach: and the fashionable affectation of calling such incidents as breaking a shoestring, or losing a button, a *misery*, is properly exposed. The moral from the whole is, that true religion will make us all happy in a miserable world, a doctrine as important as it is true, and which cannot be too much enforced. Mr. Beresford, as a clergyman, will probably not be sorry to find his frivolities thus seriously terminated, and his Sensitive and Testy made to yield to the amiably patient, and christianly pious, Mrs. Placid."—*Monthly Review.*

"This defect (the want of just sentiment) in Mr. Beresford's work, probably suggested to the author of this little volume his leading idea, which is to shew that religion is the grand, the only *Antidote* to human *Misery*, calming and sweetening the mind, rendering it superior to all the evils, great and small, which chequer the path of life.—The tale itself is told in a manner sufficiently interesting. We extract the following passage as a fair specimen of the author's manner, and as an inducement to the younger part of our readers to peruse the whole, which we think they cannot do without pleasure and improvement." [Here follows a very long quotation.]
Christian Observer.

" The readers of this performance will find a deal of humour in it, but it is of the most innocent kind: and it would be uncandid not to say, that its leading design is to suggest the most important truths in an inoffensive and inviting manner....We must demur a little on the propriety of making a Quaker Lady so profoundly wise, so truly liberal in her sentiments, or so very communicative, when a scholar and an author are present. Such a character is a *rara avis* indeed; but the other characters are natural enough, and well supported throughout; and we think the author has taken a most agreeable way of convincing his readers, that there is, in vital religion, 'an *antidote* to every *misery* which can fall to the lot of human nature'." *Evan. Mag.*

Page.

AN

ANTIDOTE,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

Introduction. The behaviour of a fine lady, and a country squire's mode of salutation to a fine gentleman. A book-keeper's mistake, and a short dialogue in consequence. Matters accommodated, and Mrs. Placid and her daughter Rachel admitted into the stage-coach, the scene of action for the chief persons concerned in the narrative. A criticism upon new plays and fashionable publications. Mrs. Placid astonished by an observation dropped by Miss Finakin on the subject of Misery.

THE narrator of any history or adventure is usually expected to give some account of himself; for who will credit his tale, unless they have a good opinion of his veracity? or respect his judgment, without some evidence of his understanding? What a disadvantage then do I labour under, who have nothing to say of myself worthy the attention of my reader! My history, like that of many others, after

fifty year's residence in this miserable world, may be comprised in almost as few lines as those of the antediluvian patriarchs. I was born on a small paternal estate, married rather young, lived tolerably happy for twenty years in domestic life, and was left a widower, without son or daughter to cheer me in my declining years. I am still a man of retirement, and, living independent of the world, seek my happiness in my books, my garden, and the society of a small circle of neighbours and acquaintances. As to my opinions, they may be collected from the observations I shall occasionally make; and as to my character, the most distinguishing trait I am aware of, is an extreme taciturnity. In the following scenes, therefore, I shall rather be a spectator than a performer; and if the reader receives any instruction or amusement, it will be derived from the other parties.

Twice in the year I usually visit the metropolis, to receive some rents and dividends, and to inquire after the health of a few old acquaintances. In my journeys I often meet with amusing occurrences; but, till my last return, never thought any of sufficient interest to commit to paper.

It was a fine morning in September, just five o'clock, when I entered the spacious room

of the White-Horse-Cellar, Piccadilly, to await the readiness of a stage-coach, in which I had the day before taken a place, in order to be conveyed about ninety miles to my own habitation. I had not been long seated before a hackney-coach drove up, from which alighted a smart-looking young officer, handing out a lady equally smart in her appearance, who, lightly tripping into the inn, was almost instantly in the apartment with myself. A nearer survey convinced me that the lady, whom, at the first glance, I supposed to be about seventeen, was upwards of thirty, though the marks of maturity were judiciously concealed by a juvenile dress and artificial colouring. The fair lady, without regarding my presence, threw herself into a chair, and exclaimed, "Heavens! that we should be so horridly early! Dear George, desire the coachman to hasten, or I shall absolutely fall asleep in this hideous place, and all the powers on earth will not be able to awaken me!"—"A new misery! A new misery!" replied the youth; "upon my honour, set that down."—"Who talks of misery?" vociferated a coarse voice close to the door; "Who talks of misery in a fine September morning, any where but in London?" Immediately entered a jolly middle-aged man, in boots with a whip in one hand; the

other being unoccupied, he presented to the young officer, and with a loud smack, and a hearty shake, "Good morrow, Captain," said he; "it does me good to see you."

The young soldier looked as though he was not much pleased with this salutation; and, for myself, I congratulated my choice of a plain brown, which secured me from all observation. The coachman now made his appearance, and received a few hard words from the squire for his delay, it being a quarter of an hour after the fixed time for our departure. He said all was ready, but there had been a little mistake about booking a place; and, pointing to a youth who had entered with him, "This gentleman," said he, "ought not to have been booked; but he has, and he says it is of great consequence that he should go; and so your honours," added the man, scratching his head, to assist his contrivance, "I knows not what is to be done about it."

"To be done!" cried out the squire, "why all to get in as fast as we can; possession is nine points of the law, and let those that come battle it out." So saying, he turned to the lady; "Come, Madam," said he, "take the first place, and I'll follow you in a moment." The lady remonstrated against the *misery*, as she termed it, of riding seven in a coach, and

I felt much inclined to second her arguments; but the noisy bustle of the squire would not permit us to be heard. Taking the lady by the elbow, "Come," said he, "you will not be cross and unaccommodating; nothing sits so badly on a lady as ill-humour." He then hurried her to the coach, and all the rest of us followed. The man, as he shut the door, said he made no doubt but that his other two passengers would be brought round, for they were *yeas* and *nays*. "What's that?" said I, not taking his meaning. "Oh! quack, quack, I suppose," replied the squire.

The youth now, in a pleasing style, regretted the inconvenience he had occasioned; and the lady said he ought to have relinquished his place, as it was the last taken. "Had I done so," said he, "I should have caused a sleepless night to an anxious mother, depending upon the sight of me this evening, after an absence of three years."

"Is that your business, Sir?" replied the officer; "ha! ha! a three months' residence in the fashionable world would have lessened in your view its importance. Why, Sir, you might have amused yourself extremely well this evening in London, and your kind mamma would have received you with open arms to-morrow.

In the fashionable world then, thought I, is to be found one of the crying sins of Jerusalem of old, even of those who 'set light by father and mother.'

"Sir," rejoined the youth, "I wish to continue a stranger to the fashionable world, if an acquaintance with it is to be gained at the expense of principle."

"Well said, my boy," answered the squire; "as to fashion, there's no fashion comes up to a good fox-chace, and a hearty dinner of English roast beef and plum pudding."

The coach stopped at a small neat-looking house at the entrance of Kensington. At the door instantly appeared two female Quakers, dressed in the style peculiar to their sect. "Mercy, what a couple of frights!" exclaimed our fine lady, and threw herself back in the coach as if to avoid another glance. The coachman opened the door. The elder Quaker advanced, and was in the act of stepping in, when she drew back, and addressed herself to the man, "Thou hast already," said she, "five persons in thy coach, and it is contrary to thy rules to admit seven."—"There has been a little mistake made, Ma'am," he replied, "in booking a place too many; but the rest of the passengers have agreed not to mind it, so I hopes you wont neither."

The young officer called out, "The damsel shall sit on my knee."—"Friend," said the Quaker, "if she cannot find a seat elsewhere, she must decline entering the coach;" then turning to the coachman, "Thou hast acted very indiscreetly in this matter; thou knowest our places were taken two days since; I do not suppose any of the passengers were so early in their application as ourselves."—"I know nothing about that," replied the man, with a surly aspect; "there's room for one of you, at any rate."—"That will not be to our purpose," rejoined the Quaker; "this young woman must not travel alone; if *both* cannot go, thy coach availeth us nothing,"—"Well, then, you must both go to-morrow," said the ungracious driver: "but mind you have paid the fare"—"Which in that case thou wilt return," meekly observed the fair Friend. "Return!" echoed the man, and then with an oath affirmed he would not. "We must not contend the point with thee," rejoined she; "but thou hast not justice on thy side." The man shut the door. During this dialogue, the officer and the lady sat laughing, and seemed to enjoy the embarrassment of the two Friends. Not so the rest of our party; we all with one voice attacked the surly coachman, but the squire's overpowered the rest. He swore a tremendous oath, and bouncing

open the door, sprang out in an instant. "Let the women in, let 'em in," said he to the man, "I have been used to snuff the morning air:" and so saying, he mounted the coach-box. "We are much obliged to thee for thy accommodation," said the elder Quaker, with a smile, "but are sorry it should prove an occasion for thy swearing."

They took their seats. The three ladies, as usual, were in the front, and the three gentlemen in the back seat. I had now an opportunity of viewing as great a contrast, perhaps, as the female world could easily present in appearance and general deportment. The fine lady reclined her slender form in the corner, her pelisse twisted closely round her, as though she dreaded contamination from the touch of her fair neighbour. The two Friends sat erect, and in each of their hands was a small paper parcel. The elder one appeared about forty years of age, and the younger, who from a strong resemblance, I judged to be her daughter, about sixteen. Their persons were not large; yet I could not help remarking the extent of room they seemed to occupy, in consequence of the unaccommodating texture of their quilted petticoats, which would not admit of that compression which the flimsy apparel of the fine lady allowed. Their faces, though 'passing

fair,' would not have been reckoned beautiful enough for romance; yet they were rendered interesting by the marks of prudence and intelligence in the elder, and of simplicity and innocence in the younger.

I was soon disturbed in my observations by the captain, who, addressing himself to the young damsel, inquired if she liked a silent meeting? The abruptness of the question, added to the impertinent stare with which it was accompanied, raised a vermilion blush on her cheek. She, however, made no reply.

The elder Quaker, for the future, I shall denominate Mrs. Placid, as characteristic of her appearance and deportment. Our fine lady, who, at the same instant, I resolved to call Miss Finakin, now addressed herself to the youth in the opposite corner, and, with a languid air, asked him if he had seen the last new play? He answered in the negative, but added that he had lately read one written by a lady, which for good sense and just discrimination of character surpassed, in his opinion, any modern male author in that department.

"O you mean the 'School for Friends'," replied Miss Finikin; "yes, it is pretty enough, but not half so charming as the 'Honey Moon,' acted with such general applause two winters since."

"I must differ from you there, Madam," rejoined the gentleman; "the language and sentiment will not bear comparison; and as to originality of plot the author must yield all pretensions, as it is founded on Shakspeare's 'Taming of a Shrew'," The lady seeming too indolent for argument, did not exert herself to contradict the gentleman's opinion, but addressed him with another question; "Have you seen the first work of the age, 'La Belle Assemblée'?"

He replied, two numbers had met his eye, and that he had been much pleased with a paper in one of them, entitled, 'The Superiority of Principle over Sentiment.' He said he thought the subject was well treated, and well chosen for a work of that nature, which falling, under the notice of many romantic readers, might tend to counteract certain false views entertained by them.

"Really," said Miss Finakin, "I do not recollect the subject, though I have taken the magazines from the first. But there is a charming story of a ghost in one of them"—"Which is to be hoped none will be silly enough to believe," replied the gentleman; "for if they do, they will imbibe the dangerous idea that a deist may be happy in a future state."

"I wonder, my wise aunt," said the officer, "that you should call 'La Belle Assemblée' the first work of the age. The first work of the age is, 'The Miseries of Human Life'."—"Very true," replied his aunt; "but that is of a different nature; I dote on the *Miseries*, and feel at every pore the distresses of Mr. Sensitive."

Mrs. Placid now turned her face toward the fair speaker. "Thou dost astonish me by thy declaration," said she: "if the person thou hast mentioned was distressed, thou didst right to feel a sympathy for him; but how couldest thou delight in reading of miseries?"

Miss Finakin seemed at a loss for a reply to this address; and it most fortunately happened that the coach, just at the moment, stopped at the inn where we were appointed to breakfast; the topic, therefore, was for the present, suspended. I handed Mrs. Placid from the carriage; the young gentleman did the same by Rachel, and Miss Finakin was left to the attention of her nephew. With our ladies under our arms, we entered the inn, where, if my readers please, they may follow us.

CHAP. II.

The eye of a scholar attracted by a new book, and the party interested by its contents. The squire's opinion of Latin quotations. Mrs. Placid makes a sudden transition from a gay to a grave subject. The effect produced. An address to the reader. Mrs. Placid proposes to relate the history of her life, and Miss Finakin composes herself to sleep.

OUR breakfast was dispatched in a great hurry, and, amidst much confusion, we were soon summoned to our vehicle, the captain and the squire agreeing to exchange places. I was not displeased at this new arrangement, notwithstanding the inconvenient elbowing I sometimes experienced from the increased bulk of my neighbour, his simple manners being more agreeable to me than the more fashionable deportment of the captain. But Rachel was a considerable gainer by the alteration; she could now venture to turn her eyes round without the fear of encountering any stare from her companions.

We had not long been seated, when our young collegian (as in the course of the breakfast he had avowed himself to be) discovered what to a scholar is ever an object to excite curiosity, namely, a book in the pocket of the coach-door, which the captain had drawn from

his own, and placed there. " May I be permitted to look at this book, Madam?" said he to Miss Finakin. " Certainly, Sir," she replied; " it is the book we were speaking of before breakfast, extremely entertaining, 'The Miseries of Human Life'."—" An odd title," said the squire, " to expect *entertainment* from; but let us hear a little about it, if you please, Sir, though I sha'nt like it if it's very dismal; I hate dismal ditties as I do a foggy morning in October."—" The author is a scholar, I see," said the student; " here is a great deal of Latin, which I must omit, in compliment to the ladies."—" Aye, aye," returned the squire, " we want no outlandish gibberish; nothing should be put into books, but what every body may understand."—" You would then consign half our libraries to oblivion, Sir," replied the scholar, who now began reading. The squire frequently laughed as he proceeded, then cried out, " Nonsense!" and asked for the next misery. " Are the hounds at a fault just as you think yourself sure of the game?" said he; " I don't recollect that misery," replied Miss Finaken. " Then the greatest remains untold," rejoined the sportsman.

" I already perceive," observed Mrs. Placid, " that the book is designed to burlesque the

petty troubles of life, and I wish the readers may so apply it, as to derive a good moral, and be led from it to see the extreme folly of suffering their tempers to be injured by such ridiculous evils."—" Ridiculous! do you call them?" said Miss Finakin; " I'm sure they are enough to overwhelm any human being." —" Oh! don't talk so vainly," replied Mrs. Placid, " lest God in his providence should see fit to chastise thee with real afflictions. The evils of life may be classed under three kinds: ideal miseries, minor miseries, and afflictions or real miseries. The first of these are what thy favourite book chiefly treats of, which are not worth a serious thought. The next, I will allow, are very irksome to bear, and they are generally worse endured, even by good Christians, than severer trials, and for this simple reason: the assistance of divine grace is not called in; we imagine that we can combat these enemies alone, and in consequence we fail of gaining a victory. But for the last there are remedies appointed of a never-failing nature, to which the sincere Christian repairs, and he is then enabled with an apostle to say, ' Cast down, yet not forsaken; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, and yet possessing all things'."

Reader, does a text of Scripture alarm you?

Does a religious sentiment act like an electrical shock, and suddenly compel you to close my little volume? Alas! then, what shall I do? My fair Quaker will quote Scripture, and we must be serious, because, to use the words of Sir Francis Walsingham, a courtier of whom England may justly boast, "While we laugh, all things are serious around us: God is serious, who exerciseth patience towards us; Christ is serious, who shed his blood for us; the Holy Ghost is serious, who striveth against the obstinacy of our hearts; the holy Scriptures bring to our ears the most serious things in the world; the holy sacraments represent the most serious and awful matters; the whole creation is serious in serving God and us; all that are in heaven and hell are serious."

Why do the gay and thoughtless start at the word *serious?* Because they do not associate with it another word, *happiness:* yes, paradoxical as it may appear, it is a truth built upon authority indisputable, that to be really serious is to be truly happy.

The grave remark of Mrs. Placid had, as is too frequently the case, produced a dead silence in our little party. I felt ashamed of the effect, and rousing myself from my usual taciturnity, "Madam," said I, "I should like to hear more of your sentiments upon religion:"—"Aye,

aye," added our good-tempered country-gentleman, " I dare say you know something of the world, for your sort of people are among the shrewd ones: I mean no offence."—" I believe thee," replied Mrs. Placid, " and am not offended by thy plain speaking. If I thought it would be agreeable to all in the coach, I would discourse a little upon experimental religion, which is the only ' Antidote to the Miseries of human Life'."

" Why as to that," answered the squire, shrugging up his shoulders, " I don't know what to say; we must leave religious talk to the parsons. Religion is very well in its place, in the church and the pulpit. What say you, my youngster?" appealing to the youth at his side. " It ought never to be out of season to me, Sir," he replied, " for I am about entering into church orders, and religion is now my proper study. What say you, Madam?" appealing in his turn, to Miss Finakin. " I think," returned the lady, " people should keep their religious notions to themselves; but it is a perfect matter of indifference to me at present what turn the conversation takes; for I am so miserably fatigued by such abominable early rising, that I can neither keep my eyes nor ears open." So saying, she closed the former, and probably the latter.

"Well then," said the squire, addressing himself to Mrs. Placid, "if you won't preach too long, we'll give you a patient hearing."

"I am sorry, Friend," rejoined Mrs. Placid, "to find thou art prejudiced against the best things; but as most prejudices are founded in ignorance, I hope, when thou art rightly informed as to my principles, thou wilt not disapprove of them."—"I shall never be a Quaker as long as I live," hastily and loudly vociferated the squire. "Nor do I want to make thee one," answered Mrs. Placid. "Thou mayest be a Christian without becoming a *Friend*, for that is the term we use—*Quaker* is a phrase of derision given us by our enemies."

"I like the liberality of your sentiment, Madam," said our young scholar, "in not connecting the essence of Christianity with peculiar modes and opinions; but are all sectarians thus liberal?"—"I fear," replied Mrs. Placid, "there is much bigotry to be found amongst sectarians, and I fear also that this disposition is not confined to sectarians, but extends itself even within the walls of thine own establishment; but I would fain hope that the *generality* of professing Christians in the present day are not disposed to narrow that strait path which leads to eternal life. Brotherly love is a duty strongly inculcated throughout the whole of

the New Testament; an apostle makes it even a *test* of our true adoption into God's family, saying, 'We know that we are passed from death unto life, *because* we love the brethren'."

"You said just now, Madam," returned the student, "that experimental religion was an antidote to the miseries of human life. I should be obliged to you if you would define the term *experimental;* I hardly know how to understand you."

Mrs. Placid paused; but at length replied, "I have been considering what will be the best way of explaining my meaning to thee; and although it is not always seemly nor proper to talk of ourselves, yet I am inclined to give thee, and our other friends, a few particulars of my own life, and what experimental religion has done for me in many trying situations."

We all (except our sleeping lady) united in requesting Mrs. Placid to favour us with the relation: she then began as follows:

"Some of my ancestors were amongst our persecuted people imprisoned in the reign of Charles the Second, for their steady attachment to their religious principles. He was pleased to release them; for amidst all his errors, he was friendly to the rights of conscience.

"My father and mother were both speakers in our assemblies; they had some property, and I was their only child. They were careful to instruct me in every useful accomplishment, (our Society admits of no other) especially in our religious principles, and the worth of my never-dying soul. But I must confess that their religious instructions had little effect upon my youthful mind. I was vain and gay, notwithstanding my plain clothing and strict morality. Before I was quite seventeen, I had an offer of marriage from one of our people, who was five, or, I believe, six years older than myself. We were proposed to the meeting, agreeably to the customary method; and it is some time before a couple can be united by our rules. In this interim my father died, and left, as he supposed, a comfortable provision for his widow and me. Our property was all in the Bank, and my mother employed a friend, as she supposed him, to receive the interest for us, and for that purpose, legal authorities were given into his hands. I do not sufficiently understand the nature of these matters sufficiently to explain, exactly, how it happened; but so it was, our supposed friend turned false and unjust, and my mother was soon informed that he had left England, and taken the whole of our property along with him."

"A rascal! a scoundrel!" exclaimed the squire, clinching his fist. "What! had you no one to send after him? I wish I had known you at the time, I would have followed him all over the world. Well, what did you do?"

"I never," rejoined Mrs. Placid, "shall forget the conduct of my mother on this trying occasion: she called me to her, holding the letter in her hand which contained the melancholy intelligence: "Deborah," said she, "we have lost all our money, which thy father had for many years been collecting together for our maintenance; but we have not lost the favour of God, and the comforts of a good conscience, which are the two greatest blessings in the world; and all we have now to do, is to pray for grace to be enabled to forgive the person who has thus injured us, and to trust in God, who has said by his prophet Isaiah: 'Leave thy fatherless children to me, and let thy widows trust in the name of the 'Lord.' I well remember my surprise at seeing my mother so composed and cheerful under this trial, for I knew not then the power of vital religion. We went to meeting that day, and she was moved to speak at large of the goodness and providence of God, who careth for his faithful servants. The matter was soon made known to the Society, and they (as might be ex-

pected) were not backward in their good offices; they never suffered my mother to want the comforts of life."—" But then," said the collegian, " she was in a dependent situation, the most irksome thing in the world to a person of sensibility."—" I doubt, Friend," replied Mrs. Placid, " whether the word *sensibility*, as thou hast applied it, in most cases ought not to be rendered *pride*. The mind which recoils from a sense of obligation to its fellow-creatures, ought to examine itself very closely; there are very few circumstances which can justify those painful emotions which thou termest *sensibilities*. This is one of the self-created miseries of which we have heard so much this morning."—" Proceed, Madam, if you please," rejoined the youth, " I am half a convert to your sentiment."

" Seeing my mother taken such good care of, and considering my own prospects in regard to marriage, I soon regained my accustomed cheerfulness, when suddenly I observed a coolness in my friend's behaviour, for which I could no ways account; for he was in a good line of business, and I had never supposed he had any view in addressing me but pure regard. The matter, however, proved otherwise, and I soon discovered his wish was to decline the connection. I was not wanting in a proper womanly

spirit on this occasion, though I am conscious there was much pride and resentment intermixed, and I soon gave him to understand I was as willing to dissolve the engagement as himself."—"You did wrong here," said the squire; "you should have brought the matter into court! you might have had large damages, and made the fellow ashamed of himself: Gad! I should like to have seen how Mr. Broadbrim would have looked all the time Garrow was addressing the jury!"—"We must not appeal to law on such occasions," replied Mrs. P. "You *must not?*" rejoined the squire; "but you *ought;* you do wrong to let such——." By the fierceness of his looks, doubtless, Mrs. Placid was fearful of violent words, if not oaths; for she hastily interrupted him, and proceeded with her story. "It now became necessary for me to seek some mode of living, and it was soon agreed by our friends that I should be placed for two years at a childbed linen warehouse. I went with a heavy heart, for it was not yet sufficiently humbled to the will of God; and when that is the case, afflictions are hard to bear. I thought myself unkindly dealt with by Providence."—"And so you were," interrupted our warm-hearted country-gentleman; "poor soul! I feel for your situation!"—

"I thank thee," said Mrs. Placid, "but thy

sentiment is not good—thou forgettest that man, as a sinner, cannot be said to be dealt unkindly with by Providence, since he deserves chastisements; and thou shouldest also consider that afflictions are not always to be considered as judgments, but often as friendly warnings used by God to bring sinners to repentance." The squire made no answer—and Mrs. Placid's remark appeared to have sunk deeper into his mind than he seemed willing to acknowledge.

"At the end of two years, and just as those kind friends which a gracious Providence had raised up for me had agreed to set me up in business, I met with another young man in our Society who offered me marriage. I accepted his proposals; and was, as soon as the rules permitted, united to one who proved himself the kindest husband, the ——— ———." Mrs. Placid suddenly looked out of the coach-window. I looked too—but could see nothing —"What is it, Madam?" said I. "The roads are dirtier than I imagined," she replied; then drew her head into the carriage, and I observed upon her snowy kerchief three crystal drops which unravelled the mystery.

"My husband," continued our fair narrator, "had a flourishing business as a tobacconist, in London, and was much esteemed by our

Society. He was so kind as to permit my mother to reside with us, and our friends took care we should be no losers by her maintenance. Thus we went on very comfortably for some time, I believe I may say six or seven months, and I think I had only one uneasiness upon my mind for the whole of that time—we lived in a narrow street, and I was very fearful of fire: my husband too was so imprudent as not to insure our property, and there was hardly a day passed without my desiring him to do it. His answer was generally, "Deborah, thou dost not trust enough in Providence; I don't fear fire, or any other evil."—"Zacharias," I replied, "thou art right, no doubt, in thy principle, but thou oughtest to remember that the use of means, as well as faith, is commanded. And if thine house is burnt down, while fire-offices for insurance are open to thee, the blame must rest on thine own head." "The only fault this good man had, as far as I know, was a degree of undue obstinacy."—"Aye," said our squire, "that's a fault peculiar to your sect; who ever knew a Quaker without obstinacy?"—"Thou shouldest not be so general in thy censures," replied Mrs. Placid: "obstinacy is a common failing, and thou wilt allow that what is common to the human character, must be expected to prevail in a degree in every sect and

party.—Well, neither my mother nor I could prevail on my husband to insure, and at last we gave over all thoughts of it. When one night, in the eleventh month"—"Mother," interrupted Rachel, "I have heard thee say it was one night in the *tenth* month."—"True," replied Mrs. Placid, "I believe it was in the *tenth* month—I was suddenly awaked by smoke. 'Zacharias! Zacharias!' I called out, 'there! it is as I feared, our house is on fire'!"—"Make thyself easy," said he, "I believe it is only our neighbour's." He was right in his supposition, for it was the next door, and this was an unspeakable mercy for us, as by that means we saved our lives: we got our dear aged mother lodged in a safe place, and I then entreated Zacharias to procure people to endeavour to save our goods; but he was so strongly persuaded that our house would not catch, that it was some time before he would allow any thing to be moved; and then it was such a dangerous undertaking for the people, that I was equally earnest with them to desist from the attempt. I can never be sufficiently thankful that no life was lost on our account, for it would besides have imbittered my husband's days—seeing he might in that case justly have blamed himself."

"I hope, Madam," said the collegian, "this misfortune cured your husband in future of his obstinacy." Mrs. Placid only smiled: and possibly had she not feared to have uttered an untruth, she would have answered in the affirmative.

"We had now," continued Mrs. Placid, "lost our goods, stock in trade, and also some ready money, which I had, as I supposed, saved, but in my fright, as I believe, must have dropped in the street. My poor husband was in great distress—"Take comfort," said I; "thou hast many friends, who will, perhaps, set thee up in business again."—"Thou hast been imprudent," said our mother, "but thou hast not done wickedly, therefore there is no cause for this excess of sorrow." We went to meeting, the next being First-day, and one of our friends was led to speak from those comfortable words in the prophet Isaiah—'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' These words were so suitable to our case, that I was more affected than I had ever been in any of our assemblies—every word our friend spake seemed addressed to me; and I now, for the first time, felt, what I had so

often heard my mother and husband talk of, the preciousness of Scripture applied to the heart. After worship, our friends came around us, and condoled with us on account of our *misfortune*, as worldly people call such events."—"And pray what do you call them?" said the squire. "We don't talk of *good* and *bad fortune*," replied Mrs. Placid, "because there is something heathenish in the phrase—we call them *trying* dispensations, or *chastising* providences.—Our friends, as I expected, told my husband they would assist him again to set up in business; and we returned to the little lodging to which we had taken our mother, and where we engaged another room for ourselves; it happening, most providentially, that the people of the house were our particular friends, and quite willing to accommodate us with ready money; thus are our afflictions frequently alleviated by favourable circumstances attending them. But (said Mrs. Placid) our coach is just drawing up to the inn, where I suppose we are to dine."—"Just so," said the squire, looking out; "well the time has past quickly away—but you have not ended your story; I like to hear you talk, and indeed I always did like to hear women talk to the purpose."—"Then, Sir," said I, "you will have no objection to the lady's resuming her subject after dinner."—"Not in

the least," replied he.—Mrs. Placid promised compliance with our wishes, and as we followed her into the inn, the squire whispered me—"A good sensible woman, notwithstanding her Quakerism!"

CHAP. III.

Miss Finakin awake, and talking of misery. All parties busily engaged. Mrs. Placid's treatment of an insolent coachman. The squire prefers an inside place with the ladies to an outside seat with a smart captain. Mrs. Placid proceeds with her history. The squire's opinion of the doctrine of good works, and the duties of a wife. An interesting point of controversy briefly discussed. A shower of rain; and an addition made to the party in consequence.

Miss Finakin's eyes were scarcely opened, and her senses restored to their usual state of discernment, when she was hurried from the coach into the inn.—She then looked at her watch, and exclaimed, "What a misery! just twelve o'clock—what an hour for dinner!" "The misery of the business," replied our country gentleman, "would be to have no dinner to eat; but truly I think there must be some mistake,

it is not common to dine so early, even in travelling!" Upon inquiry, we found we were only summoned from our vehicle for the purpose of changing it; and most readers know the confusion and anxiety this ceremony occasions "Mind that sword-case in the boot," cried the captain. "If any harm comes to that gun there, I'll blow your brains out, you rascal," vociferated the squire. "Oh! mercy, I shall lose my box!" screamed Miss Finakin. "Why shouldest thou anticipate evil?" said Mrs. Placid; "I make no doubt all our goods will be safe, but we must give an eye whilst they are removing." So saying, she stepped briskly to the inn-yard, and I followed, not wholly regardless of the fate of my portmanteau. At length matters were all adjusted to the satisfaction of each party; and the coachman, with many bows and scrapes, requested to be remembered by our honours. "Friend," said Mrs. Placid, "thou desirest to be remembered; dost thou desire *me* to remember the words which thou madest use of when I entered thy coach this morning?" The man hesitated, and twirled his hat round the top of a short whip he held in his hand; at length—"I hopes, Ma'am," said he, "as how you'll forget and forgive."—"Thou shalt have a convincing proof of it," replied Mrs. Placid, as she put her hand into

her pocket; "but remember, I do not reward thine ill words and rude behaviour, but I give thee this trifle because it is *my* duty to return good for evil, and in the hope that thou wilt for the future consider it as *thy* duty to act with civility to all thy passengers."

Our country gentleman was requested by the captain to partake of his company on the outside of the coach, it being a most delightful day for the accommodation of those who from choice or economy occupy those upper stories; but he replied, "No, no, Captain; I have such good company within, that I won't run the risk of an exchange;" and so saying he stepped into the coach. "Your sleepy fit, Madam," said he to Miss Finakin, "has deprived you of some pleasant conversation; but I hope now you are completely awake, and disposed to listen to what this gentlewoman has further to say. Let me see, you left off just after the fire, I think, Ma'am—did your friends set your husband up again in business?"—"I am aware," said Mrs. Placid, addressing herself to Miss Finakin, "that it is very probable thou mayest form a contemptible opinion of that person's understanding who, in a stage-coach, relates the history of her life; and, generally speaking, it would be highly improper and absurd; but I have been led to do it from the hope of edifica-

tion, and therefore desire thou wilt not ascribe the action either to folly or impertinence." Miss F. made no other answer to this address, than by a bow of her head; and an acute physiognomist might have discovered a look of contempt, which escaped the observation of Mrs. Placid, who now proceeded as follows:

"Providence raised us up many kind friends, and my husband was soon enabled to open another shop in the neighbourhood, and we again enjoyed the blessings of a good trade: he was also prevailed on to insure our property, and my mind was made easy on that subject. We lived in this comfortable manner for five years, in which time our family was increased by one son and two daughters; my mother grew old and infirm, and as our income would not allow us to keep more than one servant, my time was fully occupied from morning to night. I now felt the advantages which arise from constant employment; it is, in my opinion, the recipe to produce health and good humour."

"Three children, an old infirm mother, and the management of a house, with the only assistance of one servant! why, Madam," said I, "a fine lady must have gone mad." Mrs. Placid smiled; "Yes, Friend," she replied, "but I am not a fine lady." She evidently endeavoured to suppress a sigh, and added,

"This was the happiest time of my life; yet why do I say so? my days have been all happy, for 'goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' There was one evil which I must not omit to mention, occasioned by my close attention to the duties of my station; my mind, never much given to serious reflection, was by this means drawn off entirely. I thought my family cares a sufficient excuse; and I know not to what length I might have carried my error, had not divine mercy interposed, and, by sending me fresh trials, humbled, proved me, and shewed me what rebellion there was in my heart. My husband saw my disposition with great concern, for he had learned to be pious and industrious too, and managed his time so well, that the duties of his religion and business never were at variance. 'Ah, Deborah,' he would frequently say, 'thou art like Martha of old; I wish I could see more of Mary about thee'."

"It was a shame in him to find fault," said the squire; "he had got a sober industrious wife, and what did he want more? I will maintain that good works are the sum and substance of all religion, and would not give a fig for any other."—"Mayest thou ever continue in that mind," replied Mrs. Placid, "for thy sentiment is agreeable to truth; but thou must

remember to *act* upon it, or thy good sentiment availeth thee nothing. But do not suppose that my husband ever uttered any unkind words to me, on this or any other occasion; they were only the words of exhortation, and they have sunk deeply into my heart. I believe we had been married just six years, when my dear Zacharias was taken ill of a fever: at first no apprehensions were entertained of his danger; but it soon appeared that it was the will of God to remove him from us. He was delirious most of the time; but when he was not so, the precious moments were spent in prayer, and attempts to soothe and reconcile my mind to his departure. It was in one of these intervals, and while he was commending me and his dear children to the care and guidance of his heavenly Father, that he suddenly breathed his last, and entered into that 'rest which remaineth for the people of God'." Mrs. Placid was now obliged to pause—but there was no tincture of affectation in her deportment; it was the pause of undissembled sensibility, and heartfelt emotion. I cast my eyes on each of our party. The big tears in quick succession were chasing each other down the cheek of the gentle Rachel. The youth who sat opposite her took her hand; "Take comfort," said he;

"remember there is another, and a better world." I glanced at Miss Finakin, and observed that, with the utmost unconcerned aspect, she was gazing out of the window.—Of what materials, thought I, is the heart of a fine lady composed! "Come," said our blustering squire, (squeezing his eyes together, and passing his hand across them, as though a sudden cloud of dust had assailed them,) "let's pass by this dismal part of your story: I hope matters went well with you after your husband's death?"—"Yes," rejoined Mrs. Placid, who now seemed entirely to have recovered her usual composure, "they did indeed go well, for now, I began to know the way of God in truth. I hastened into my mother's chamber, soon after my husband had breathed his last. "Ah, Deborah!" said she, "I see, by thy looks, the news thou hast to communicate!"—"What will become of me!" said I; "what shall I do in this affliction!"—"Fly to thy Bible," she replied, "and there thou wilt read, 'Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name'."—"But alas!" I rejoined, "I have cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God! How then can I look to him for support?"—"By a hand graciously severe, perhaps," she replied, "he will convince thee of 'sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;' and then thou wilt cry out, with

holy David, ' It was good for me, that I was afflicted'."

" In this manner did my kind mother converse, and my spirits by degrees became more composed. I sought the company of our friends who were most spiritual, whom I had used to shun ; and by their means I was much enlightened in religion. I read the Bible with care and attention, which I had never done before, and was astonished to find how many beautiful passages I had overlooked. I prayed constantly for spiritual discernment, holy dispositions, and an obedient heart. Having used all these means of grace, I was not disappointed, but gained the end of my desire; even the conversion of my soul. I was now fully reconciled to these ' light afflictions, (comparatively) but for a moment,' seeing they work out for us 'an eternal weight of glory.' And, in particular, I was reconciled to my husband's death, being convinced that the change was much in his favour; and having a good hope through grace, of being again re-united to him in the mansions of eternal blessedness."

I wished to dwell a little upon this last sentiment entertained by the fair Quaker, because I thought of my own beloved partner, removed as I trusted, to the same abodes of eternal blessedness—" Madam," said I, " you then

are of opinion that we shall know each other in heaven?"—"Certainly I am," she replied, "or else how could David, speaking of his departed child, say, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me;' which was evidently a comfortable reflection to him, for he dried np his tears immediately: but if he had not been convinced that he should be able to distinguish him from amongst the myriads of others he should meet there, how would that have been any particular ground of consolation? But what our Lord has said is still more to the purpose, in those awful words which he addresses to the workers of iniquity—'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.' If the workers of iniquity are thus permitted to know the *persons* of those mentioned, surely the saints in glory with them shall be favoured with the same knowledge; and if so, I think 'tis most reasonable to suppose we shall know our dear friends and relatives, in whose persons we are still more interested."—"Unless," replied I, "those fine feelings we enjoy on earth are to be annihilated in heaven."—"Which no part of Scripture, that I know of, warrants us to suppose," replied Mrs. P. "and it is not to be imagined that we should be commanded to

abound in love to each other whilst in this imperfect state, if in a state of perfection the principle was to be annihilated."—" I think," said Miss Finakin " 'tis time enough to talk of what we shall meet with in heaven when we get there."—" Dost thou not anticipate the pleasures which thou expectest to meet with at the play-house and the ball-room?" asked Mrs. Placid. Miss F. was compelled to answer in the affirmative. " But that," added she, " is a very different case."—" Yes, indeed," rejoined Mrs. Placid, " the case is widely different; for one pleasure is vain and transitory, the other substantial and everlasting; but the argument is good for both, and whilst thy party hold it reasonable to enjoy by anticipation the pleasures they pursue, they must allow it to be equally so for our's."—" Excellent logic! Madam," cried the scholar; " no student in our college would attempt a confutation."

Our vehicle now made a sudden stop, in consequence, as we found, of a shower of rain, and our gay captain petitioned to be admitted, as he had not a great coat; and indeed if he had been provided with that necessary article, he appeared one of that puny race " who suffered not the wind of heaven to visit his face too roughly."—" Squeezing work," said the squire, " but if the ladies will accommodate, we'll see

what can be done."—"Certainly," replied Mrs. P. "we ought to accommodate our fellow travellers, if possible; some of us are slender—Rachel, sit as close to me as thou art able." She did so, and matters were rendered more comfortable than I expected.—We had now an addition to our company, but how far we enjoyed it, the reader shall judge for himself, if he pleases, in the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

A dissertation on the art of conversation. The squire makes an offer to the widow Placid, who gives her opinion upon scandal. The captain discovers a new misery, and utters a groan on the occasion. The scholar offers a hint upon education, which rouses the captain's poetical genius. Mrs. Placid decides the controversy. A frolic in high style from the captain concludes the chapter.

"WELL, Captain," said our country gentleman, (who if the reader pleases, we will for the future distinguish by the name of Bustle,) "I hope you have no objection to good conversation; this gentlewoman here (looking at Mrs. Placid) has entertained us for the last twenty miles with

such, and I dare say will proceed."—" Excuse me, friend, at present," returned Mrs. P.; " perhaps before we part, I may conclude the subject on which we have been discoursing; but other topics may now be more interesting." The captain very politely protested he should be sorry to interrupt them—" But upon my honour," added he, " conversation, is a *bore*, as 'tis generally managed; it either takes the air of a debating society, a party of geographers assembled to discuss winds, weather, and climates, or a criticism on the characters, persons, and fortunes of our neighbours."—" There is a good deal of truth in your observation, I think, Sir," replied the collegian; " but those who see the defects, may perhaps improve the art, of conversation: I therefore hope you will take the subject into serious consideration."—" I like cheerful entertaining conversation, as well as any one," observed Miss Finakin; " but when it cannot be made so, we have an excellent substitute in cards—they are ever at command to relieve an insipid visit; and even in a moral point of view, as the serious people would say, they are useful, and act as a check to scandal in many instances."—" If," replied the student, " the *absence* of cards necessarily produces the *presence* of scandal, I should heartily unite in your last sentiment, Madam; but this you must

allow is far from being the case, and, indeed, I fear that many a reputation has been wounded between the deals of a card-table."—" I wonder," said Mr. Bustle, " how people can take delight in talking scandal; for my part, I hate it worse than a lame horse."—" Most persons," observed Mrs. Placid, " have some sin which most easily besets them. It happens, I suppose, that this is not thine, and therefore thou wonderest. I wish thou wouldest examine thy heart diligently, and try to discover what error thou indulgest, at which other people in their turn might wonder. Thou wilt excuse my plain speaking."—" Yes, yes," rejoined Mr. Bustle, " I have no objection to plain speaking: do you ever speak in public?" Mrs. P. answered in the affirmative. " Then," said the squire, " you shall have my barn whenever you please, and I'll come and hear you."—" I wish," resumed Mrs. Placid, " there were more persons to be found in the world, who, as the poet Watts says,

> " Will scarce believe an ill report,
> Nor vent it to their neighbour's hurt."

But I am far from thinking that all who speak ill of their neighbours, are actuated by a settled principle of ill-will and malice in their hearts. It is often done inadvertently, and for want of due

reflection. 'The tongue is,' as *James* says, 'an unruly member which cannot be tamed;' and he seems to intimate, that if it could, so that we never offended by it, we should be arrived at perfection. This being the case, we must make due allowance for faults of this nature, though certainly the fault itself cannot be too severely censured and guarded against; and it is every Christian's duty to 'set a watch on the door of his lips, that he offend not with his tongue'."—No one interrupting Mrs. P. she went on: "I have been reflecting on what has dropped respecting conversation, and I cannot imagine why reasonable beings should ever be at a loss for rational discourse. Thou sayest," addressing Miss Finakin, "that an insipid visit is relieved by the card-table; but why should there be insipid visits?" This was a pointed question, and I felt my curiosity excited to hear Miss Finakin's reply. "Why should there be insipid visits?" replied the lady—"dear! who is always in the humour for talking? We go fatigued to death from a dinner party one day to a rout the next, meet the same people a thousand times, and are obliged to say the same thing a thousand times over."—"Oh! the miseries of a fashionable life!" added the Captain, with a deep groan; "yet yon would not be without them, dear aunt? Nor would I, upon

my honour:—set that down—the misery of saying the same thing a thousand times!"—" It should seem, then," said Mrs. Placid, " that it is the multiplicity of visits paid by the gay world, which makes them so insipid; and indeed it is reasonable to suppose that may be one reason, for the human powers have their limits, and the faculty of speech, like every other, will not admit of constant exercise: but I am inclined to fear there is another reason, namely, that the minds of our fashionable people are not generally well stored with information, and that sort of useful ideas, without which, it is impossible they should converse to any good purpose."—" You would then change their system of education, I suppose, Madam," said the collegian, " for youth's the season to gain information, and"——" Nonsense," interrupted the Captain; " none of your pedantry:—youth's the season made for pleasure—leave study to old age and leisure.—There, I have made a ryhme for you, without designing it; so it is to be poetical by nature." Miss Finakin laughed, and looked as though she really thought her nephew had said a witty thing.

" Peace and esteem is all that age can hope;
Nothing but wisdom gives the first, the last,
Nothing but the repute of being wise."

" There, Sir," said the student, is a borrowed poetical flight for your impromptu."—" Would we could persuade our young friends," said Mrs. Placid, " to lay a foundation of true wisdom for the support of their declining years! They would then be in possession of an *Antidote* for one of the miseries of human life."—" I have heard the system of education adopted by your sect much commended, Madam," said I. " We pay great attention to this matter," replied Mrs. P. " and I believe most unprejudiced persons will allow that our youth are in general well informed upon history, morals, and, I trust I may add, religion. I must say, that I ascribe this in a great degree to our exclusion of cards."—" O! pray Ma'am, no lecture against cards," said Miss F.; " I know all the arguments on that subject; I had them from an old maiden aunt, who delighted to rail at all amusements and innocent recreations."—" Then I must despair of convincing thy judgment on this point," replied Mrs. P.: " but I fear thou *heardest* only thy aunt's arguments; for if thou hadst impartially considered and weighed them, I believe thou wouldest not have been an advocate for an amusement which wastes the time, spoils the temper, and injures the morals, of thousands. But when I say our young people owe part of their information to the exclusion

of cards, I mean in respect of what they gain from social intercourse. The young persons we take with us to our social meetings, or visiting parties, as thou wouldest call them, are attentive to the conversation which passes, and it is hard, indeed, if some one or other in the company does not talk to the purpose; whereas the young persons which thou takest with thee have their eyes and ears engrossed by "bits of painted paper," as one calls them: or what is still worse, are made to engage in the diversion at a very early age themselves."

How long Mrs. Placid might have continued her harangue, it is impossible to say, had not each person's attention been suddenly arrested by the increased motion of the coach, the 'winged steeds' flying off with it in a most unaccountable manner. The captain thrust his head out of the window, and exclaimed, "That's your sort! keep moving—keep moving!"—"Oh, pray," said Mrs. Placid, "desire them not to keep moving in this manner!" Miss Finakin screamed, either with real or affected terror; she called upon the name of Him, who has commanded his name to be reverenced; not used by his creatures to express merely their surprise, their alarms, or their affirmations. She then entreated her nephew to desire the coachmen to stop his horses, protesting

that we should all be overset, and killed upon the spot. Mrs. Placid and her daughter were pale with fear, but no violent exclamations were uttered ; in the mildest terms, they united their petition to Miss Finakin's, but our captain was deaf to all entreaty; he still kept his head extended out of the window, crying out, " That's your sort! a guinea for the race!— quiz him, quiz him!" and several other phrases to me equally unintelligible. Another stage now rushed by us, which developed the mystery of our alarming speed, and justly added to the apprehensions of danger entertained by our ladies. " How canst thou be so uncivil and so indiscreet?" said Mrs. Placid, in a most earnest, though not angry tone of voice: " thy office should lead thee to protect the women, and thou hast no feeling in thus permitting us to be so terrified." The squire and the collegian now interfered; the latter protested he could see neither wit nor gallantry in the action; and the former, with most violent execration on the driver, kept his head out of the opposite window, and commanded him to stop. " I thank thee, most heartily," said Mrs. P. " but pray refrain thyself from those evil words; they should never proceed from the mouth of a Christian." The squire paid as little regard to her exhortation, as the captain had done to her

remonstrances. He continued his rough address to the driver, without effect; for the captain's guinea offer had entered his heart, whereas the squire's words dwelt only on his ear. Thus we proceeded for about two miles, our wise captain exclaiming every five minutes, "Oh, the misery of a stage-coach gallop!" his aunt screaming, and protesting she would never forgive him; the squire storming, now in the coach, and then out; and the rest of the party sitting sad and silent, in despair of effecting any change of measures. But how was even the inconsiderate captain appalled, when he beheld the opponent coach dashed to the ground, and the frolic completely ended! "This is the misery, indeed, of a stage-coach gallop," said Mrs. Placid; "surely the man will now stop, that we may render assistance to the poor passengers." He did so, and we all alighted to see the effect of the accident. We were soon happily relieved from our apprehensions of fatal consequences; for although every person, both inside and outside of the coach, had sustained some slight injury, there appeared none of a very serious aspect. We were not far from a market-town, and it was agreed we should hasten on to send assistance for the repair of the coach, harness, &c. which was much needed, the passengers all walking. The mischief-

making captain once more made his exit, and took possession of the box, the rain having ceased, and he, as I imagined, being not willing to encounter the reproaches which he certainly would have heard from each of our company.

"How many evils," said our moralizing Mrs. Placid, "do we bring upon ourselves, as if we were desirous of multiplying the miseries of human life, of which we are ever complaining! If we trace events of a disastrous nature to their real source, I am persuaded they will much oftener be found to originate in our own folly and misconduct, than in the dispensations of that Providence we are so prone to arraign."

"You are right in the remark," replied Mr. Bustle; "I have met with many disagreeables in my time, but truly I have nobody more to blame than myself. I set my eldest son up in business when I ought to have known he was too young for it, and he failed, as might have been expected. I married my daughter to a man she told me she did not like, and 'tis now the grief of my heart to see her unhappy. I once broke my leg by attempting a leap in a fox-chace, which none of the party but myself would adventure; and I am constantly lamenting the loss of much property, by engaging in

a law-suit, which every sensible friend I had in the world advised me to decline."

When I was admiring the candour which had drawn from our squire this honest confession of his imprudence, the coach stopped at the inn, which we now supposed was really destined for our dinner refreshment. "Thou must not say another word about *obstinacy*," said Mrs. Placid, as she gave her hand to the country gentleman assisting her to alight.

CHAP. V.

Mrs. Placid evinces her attachment to one of King Charles's rules. The captain declares the motive of his actions, and Miss Finakin whispers her sentiments. Mrs. Placid makes some of the company smile, and her daughter meets with an embarrassment. The scholar talks of amiable weaknesses, and Mrs. Placid explains their nature. A pointed question addressed to Miss Finakin. A few compliments between the widow and the country gentleman.

PERHAPS there are few readers who have not experienced that unpleasant sensation in their minds, occasioned by the tiresome repetition of a jest or a story;—such then can sympathize with those of our party, who were compelled

to hear the word *misery* dinned in their ears continually, by the captain or Miss Finakin. Every little accident which happened at table was pronounced a *misery*, and, in short, to talk of *misery* seemed the height of the fashion. "If," said Mrs. Placid to the captain, "I was not attached to that rule, 'Repeat no grievances,' I would remind thee of the late miseries which thine indiscretion occasioned; but I spare thee: thou art young, and I hope years will improve thy deportment. I should, however, much like to know on what principle it is that thou delightest thus to dwell upon one theme, and harass us with it, when if thou makest thine observations, thou mayest discover *we* (looking at all the party except Miss Finakin) are not interested in thy discourse."—"Oh, you are for principles and motives, are you?" replied the captain; "why then you must know I am actuated by the powers of sympathy, and I am continually guided by *feeling*, and the impulses of the moment."—"I believe thee," replied Mrs. Placid, "and thou hast in a few words revealed the cause of thy indiscretions. As to the sympathetic emotions, thou dost well to encourage them, provided thou art careful to distinguish the proper grounds of sympathy, for in many cases sympathy would be less suitable than reasoning or exhortation; and

though we are commanded to 'weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that rejoice,' we are not injoined to humour ridiculous fancies, and feel for imaginary evils with which our friends are often perplexed." Miss Finakin, who sat close to her nephew, whispered something which reached the ear of Mrs. Placid, whose every faculty was alive and active; a faint colour passed over her cheek, which convinced me that whatever it might be, it had somewhat affected the mind of the fair Quaker. Mr. Bustle noticed the whisper, and possibly the effect, for he instantly said "I hate whispering in company, and should have thought a lady of your fashion would have known politeness better:—if what you said was worth hearing, let all the company hear it." Miss F. looked confused, and protested she had only made a remark to her neighbour respecting something at table. "Nay," said Mrs. Placid, "I entreat thou will not utter an untruth upon the occasion. I heard what thou saidst; thy words were—'Who talks of feeling and sympathy to plebeian minds?' I perfectly understood their meaning—thou art of opinion that the widow of a tobacconist knows nothing of sensibilities."—"Oh! the miseries of an overheard whisper!" cried our young collegian; and Mr. Bustle burst forth into a laugh, in which, though

not possessed of very risible features, I could not help joining. Mrs. Placid seemed by no means desirous of enjoying the lady's confusion, and now suffered her attention to be entirely engrossed by her dinner. This being necessarily soon dispatched, we were summoned by our coachman; and as some difficulty arose respecting silver to discharge our little account, Mrs. P. applied to Rachel, who, as she said, had a few shillings in her pocket. Rachel, however, informed us she had not one; and with a look of confusion, added repeated attestations of her poverty. "Folly, child!" said Mrs. P. "to repeat thy words:—thou hast *said* thou hast no money." Matters were soon adjusted, and we once more ascended our vehicle. The captain again took an outside place, though the young student very politely offered to take his turn: his refusal, I suspected, arose from his want of liking to our party, which certainly could not be very congenial to the feelings of so fine a gentleman.

After we had been seated a few minutes, I discovered an air of reflection in Mrs. Placid's countenance, and a slight movement of her lips, as though she were enumerating figures; she soon turned to Rachel, and in a low voice said, "Why, child, how is it that thou hast no money? Thy aunt Hester gave thee a new shilling on

Third-day, and thou at that time shewed me two sixpences, beside the half-crown which thy uncle Jeremiah made thee a present of, for knitting his garters." Rachel blushed deeply, but made no reply. "Hast thou a hole in thy pocket?" rejoined her mother, who now seemed resolved to dive into the bottom of the mystery: "Not that I know of," replied Rachel. "Besides," said Mrs. Placid, "I recollect now, thy money was in a little green bag; thou must have thrown it out with thy pocket-handkerchief; how couldest thou be so careless?"—"In a little green bag" repeated Miss Finakin; "dear! I saw a dirty child pick up something that looked like a bag, just as we came out of the inn after breakfast. I dare say it was your's, and you drew it out of your pocket just then."—"Very likely," replied Rachel. "*Very likely!*" echoed Mrs. Placid; "and art thou so unconcerned in the business? I do not wish thee to be a money-lover, but thou must learn to know its proper value, and not lose it so carelessly; four-and-sixpence is worth thy consideration. I hope thou art sorry for thy loss."—Rachel was silent—"Why dost thou not answer me! Art thou not concerned at the loss of thy money?" Rachel was still silent: Mrs. Placid's face now bore some expression of displeasure, and again addressing herself to

Rachel, "Thou art in an unusual humour,"—said she; "there is some mystery in this loss of the money, and I insist on thy telling me the truth."—"If," replied Rachel, "I had dared to have told a falsehood, I would have said I was sorry for the loss of the money, and then thou wouldest have ceased from more inquiries: but as thou commandest me to tell the truth, I must say that as we came out of the inn, after breakfast, an old blind man asked charity—oh! mother, if thou hadst seen him, thou wouldest never have forgotten him—his head shook, and his hands too, just like poor Obadiah who stands at the meeting door, but then *he* is not blind. He had scarcely any clothes to cover him, and a ragged little girl only to lead him about. I *did* drop the green bag on purpose for her to pick up, and I saw her do it."—"Heaven applaud the action!" exclaimed our youth, whilst his eyes beamed a look of pleasure on Rachel. —Mrs. Placid smiled—"Well," said she, "I am glad thou canst give so good an account of thy green bag."—"But," said Miss Finakin, "four-and-sixpence is too much to give a common beggar; why did you part with *all* your treasure?"—"I don't discommend thee," said her mother; "but, as our friends say, we must act prudently, even in our alms-giving, and proportion our charities to the occasion."—"I

only wish thou hadst seen him," replied Rachel. " An observation dropped from you, Madam, at dinner," said the collegian, " implying that feelings and impulses were improper guides for actions—now surely this conduct of your daughter must be made an exception."—" By no means" returned Mrs. Placid; " I hope, when she is advanced in years and judgment, she will not permit even her benevolent feelings to misguide her. The great art in morals is discrimination, and the person who acts with generosity is only to be commended when it is not done at the expence of other virtues."—" It is then, I suppose, to be termed 'an amiable weakness,' as the novelists say," replied the youth. " I believe," said Mrs. P. " those amiable weaknesses have done much harm to society; they *seem* to have a claim, I will allow, even to our *love;* but when they are properly viewed, in all their just bearings and connexions, they have only a claim upon our pity and our candour."—" Would not this be termed rigid morality by the world in general!" rejoined the scholar. " Possibly it might," replied Mrs. P. " but there is only one kind of moralist in the world, who is qualified to decide upon the argument, and that is the *Christian* moralist. *He* has a standard to appeal to, whereas the philosophical and worldly moralist takes his system

from the taste and fashion of the times in which he lives, and consequently frequently calls 'evil good, and good evil'."—"Away then with impulses and feelings, you will say, Madam, I suppose," rejoined the student, who seemed resolved to pursue the debate. "I should say a very silly thing then," returned Mrs. P. "for we must ever possess feelings and impulses from the constitution of our own natures; they are doubtless implanted there for wise and good purposes. All we have to do, is to regulate them by the rules of reason and christianity: let every impulse and feeling be brought to the test of Scripture: if they can be proved agreeable to that, we may yield to their suggestions; but if not, we must strive against them, and seek by prayer the effectual grace to overcome them. I make no doubt but the indiscretions of the young man on the outside originate, in a great degree, from his compliances with the impulses of the moment, as I hinted to him at dinner."

"Bless me!" cried Miss Finakin, "who can set old heads upon young shoulders?"—"No one," returned Mrs. P. "with certainty of *success;* but it becomes the old heads to make the *attempt.*"—"I do not wish," rejoined Miss Finakin, "to see my nephew that spiritless creature called the *sober youth.*"—"I am

shocked at thy observation," said Mrs. Placid. "What! dost you desire thy nephew's health, morals, and fortune to be ruined? which will certainly be the case if he is *not* a sober youth." Miss F. hesitated, as if unwilling to avow the conclusion Mrs. P. had fairly drawn from her remark; yet loth to yield up her sentiment, at length she observed, "There is a medium in all things, a person may be lively and fashionable, without being immoral."—"I am happy," returned Mrs. Placid, "to see there is not a sentence in scripture which forbids innocent gaiety, and habitual cheerfulness, both which qualities are as opposite to *levity* as light is to darkness. But I doubt how far *fashion* and morality may agree. I hear strange things of fashionable people. I hear they break the sabbath, and take God's holy name in vain; that they compliment at the expense of truth and sincerity; that they misapply terms, calling profusion generosity, justice scrupulosity, and tenderness of conscience cowardice. I say, I hear these things of the fashionable world—thou art from thence; am I rightly informed in this matter?"

A smile played on the features of our collegian, in which might be read the thought which shot across his mind—"O! the misery of a pointed question which we are unable to

answer!" but he said nothing, only glanced his eyes on Miss Finakin, as waiting for her reply. "Really," said she, "I do not make such critical remarks as yon, Madam, seem disposed to. I make no doubt there are many *little errors* amongst us, but in general there is, I believe, as much goodness of heart in the fashionable part of society, as in any other."—"Very likely," returned her fair antagonist; "I, who believe the doctrine of the universality of human depravity, cannot dispute about goodness of hearts."—"I don't understand you," said Miss Finakin. "I will explain my meaning," returned Mrs. Placid. "Thou talkest of little errors, which thou art willing to allow exist in the fashionable world, and yet speakest of their possessing goodness of heart; from whence then proceed their errors?" Miss Finakin was silent for a few minutes, and then replied, that there was no conversation she hated so much as argument, and very quietly yielded the palm of victory to Mrs. P. The young student however, not being satisfied with the conclusion of the debate, took up the cause Miss Finakin had relinquished. "Madam," said he, "you surely do not ascribe every error which we poor mortals commit, to depravity of heart?"—"I should commit a great one myself," replied the Quaker, "if I did do so. No, there are errors in the

head, as well as the heart; there are errors in judgment proceeding from misconception of truth, from wrong education, from particular situations in life, and various other causes: and their effects have often proved injurious to society. But every individual is in the hands of an all-seeing Being, who is intimately acquainted with the cause of his errors, and who will doubtless proportion his condemnation to the faults of his creatures. We must not, in speaking on the subject, soften terms: *sin* of every kind proceeds from innate depravity, though error may not; and thou wilt recollect, I spoke of *sins* in the report I had heard of the fashionable world—that is, particularly, contempt of the sabbath, and the name of God —both which are transgressions of his law."

"I am satisfied with your explanation," replied the collegian. "This doctrine of universal depravity is extremely grating to one's feelings, and humiliating to one's pride;—but I must not, as a candidate for church-orders, dispute it."—"I am glad to hear thee say so," said Mrs. P.

"Hey! what! how! what are you all saying?" said Mr. Bustle, rousing himself from a nap, into which he had fallen as soon as the coach had drove from the inn. "Ladies, I beg pardon, I'm so used to my nap after dinner, that I

can't do without it."—" A bad custom, Friend," said Mrs. Placid; " thou art not old enough for the indulgence; it wastes thy time, and may injure thy health." Mr. Bustle took the reproof in good part; indeed, he looked as though the former clause of the widow's observation had more than reconciled him to the latter. He rubbed his eyes, shook his head, and advanced forward on his seat—" I recollect," said he, " that you promised us a little more of your history before we parted; now if you will have the goodness to begin, I will promise to keep awake; indeed I almost wonder how I could fall asleep while *you* were talking."

No mark of displeasure appeared in the countenance of the fair widow on account of the peculiar emphasis which the squire had laid on the word *you*. She instantly complied with the request, as may be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP. VI.

Mrs. Placid resumes her history. Her account of a beloved mother. The squire's plan of education for a tradesman. Mrs. Placid's plan for ditto. The scholar's illiberality, and the widow's candour, on a question of character. The sort of cheat which the country-gentleman would not prosecute. Miss Finakin much disturbed in mind, and oppressed in body, by a very common incident in travelling. The feelings of the gentle Rachel exercised in no common degree. She declares herself miserable.

"My affliction," said Mrs. Placid, "for the loss of my husband was much alleviated, in a temporal point of view, by my being enabled, with the assistance of a steady youth, an apprentice, to carry on our business; and I have already mentioned the sources I enjoyed, in a spiritual one, of consolation, from his pious character, and prospects as to eternity. The plain path of duty now lay before me, which was to cease from unavailing grief, and exert all my energies for the good of my family."

"*Energies!*" repeated I; "it has been much of the fashion of late to *talk* of energies; you, Madam, seem to have acquired the happy art of *practising* them."—"I *have* beem enabled to do so," replied Mrs. P. "thanks to him who gave me my energetic powers, and the

disposition to exert them. The greatest difficulty I had now to struggle with, was the increasing weakness and infirmities of my dear mother. Soon after the death of my husband she became so weak in her limbs, as to be confined almost entirely to her bed: every moment I could spare from my other concerns was devoted to her, and yet all were insufficient to alleviate, in the manner I wished, her calamity, and soothe her aged sorrows. But here Providence was gracious to both of us, in preserving, in a wonderful degree, her precious intellects, so that her society was still a source of happiness, and her counsel of inexpressible service. Excuse me, my friends, if I dwell a little upon the memory of one so dear to me: my mother was no common character; she possessed intellectual and moral endowments, rarely centering in one person. The former were highly cultivated by an excellent education, and the latter received a double lustre in being united to evangelical holiness of heart and life. Oh! what care did she take to instil into my mind those principles she so consistently acted upon, and to inform me all in which she was herself informed! Surely a good and sensible mother is the greatest blessing Heaven can bestow!—Rachel, dost thou remember much of thy grandmother?"—"Yes,

mother," replied Rachel, "I well remember how she used to sit up in her bed, with her spectacles on, reading to us; then she would take them off, and talk to us, explaining what she had been reading, though I forget what it was now: but I remember how I used to like to hear her."—"Yes," said Mrs. Placid, "I know she used to do thus; and thy brother and sister, who were older, understood all she said: she read in this manner to them the History of England, and that more important history, the History of the Bible; and by her means I was much relieved in the care of instructing their young minds. In this manner we went on for seven years, in which time our apprentice had served his term, and I took him as partner in the business. Our business procured us all the necessaries, though none of the superfluities of life. My son was now twelve years of age, and I indulged the hope of placing him in the business when he should be fifteen."—"Too young," interrupted the squire; "I will venture a wager you repented of this; I found *my* son too young for business at eighteen."—"There can be no certain rule laid down for this matter," returned Mrs. Placid: "every thing depends on the disposition of the youth, and the mode of education."—"As to education," rejoined Mr. Bustle,

" my mistake did not lie there; for I gave him as good an education as any youth within fifty miles, the *Parson's* son not excepted; and though I never learnt a sentence of Latin or Greek myself, I took care that he should. I sent him to the first *classical* school, as it was called, in the county, and he took to his learning at a fine rate; the master assured me that he was the cleverest lad in the school. I let him stay there till he was seventeen, that he might have enough of it, and then placed him one year with a friend in the wholesale linen-drapery business; but I found at the end of that time, when I hoped to see him succeed in the business for himself, that he was too young. I was silly enough though to set him up, and he failed in less than two years."—" Perhaps he was wild and dissipated, Sir," replied the collegian. " The farthest from it in the world," rejoined Mr. Bustle; " he was only too young to know the value of money and a good business. Why, I was told by persons who I knew would not deceive me, that many a time when he should have been in the warehouse to have seen how matters were going on, he was found up stairs poring over his school-books, one of the coldest days in winter, with his fire quite out, and one foot of his chair withinside of the fender."—" Friend," said Mrs. Placid,

" thou hast certainly mistaken the *cause* of thy son's failure in business; it was not his *youth*, but his *disposition* which occasioned it; and I wonder thou hadst not penetration enongh to see that a young man who delighted so much in study and books was unfit for a linen-draper. Thou didst not educate him for trade."—" Truly," replied Mr. Bustle, " there is some truth in your remark, which never struck me before." I was anxious to know the pursuits of the squire's son at present, therefore made inquiry. " Studying the law," said he, " in the Temple; the *law*, which *I* hate as I do the ——I won't say who before the ladies; but nothing would do but he must ' *study the law*,' as he called it."—" Let no father then," returned I, " who hates either of the learned professions, venture to send his son to a classical school." Mrs. Placid now proceeded in her narration: " I instructed my son in the best manner I was able, till he was ten years of age, and then sent him to a school in our connexion, which was more immediately calculated for youths designed for trade; the improvements he made in that particular branch of information were surprising; and as he was remarkably steady and diligent, I entertained no fears respecting the propriety of admitting him into the business at fifteen; but anticipated with

pleasure the time when I might with prudence withdraw myself from the concern; for I disliked business extremely, being somewhat of the disposition of thy son (looking at the squire), fond of books and reflection. I was frequently cheated by my more wary connections, and I believe, had not my partner been in this respect a perfect contrast to myself, I should have been in the *condition* of thy son also, at the end of two years. What an insight may the *tradesman* gain of human nature! It appears to me almost impossible for such to be ignorant of their own hearts, or the hearts of others. *Money* transactions seem to call forth every lurking depravity, and unfold the secrets of character."

"I have heard it remarked," said the student, "that an honest tradesman is a sort of phœnix, and really I'm inclined to be of that opinion."—"Don't yield to such uncharitable surmises, Friend," returned Mrs. P. "an honest man is no phœnix; I have known many: but remember, thou must never look for a *consistent* course of fairness in dealing to any but the *Christian tradesman.* The temptations to evasion and chicanery which continually assail the tradesman are innumerable, and scarcely to be imagined by any who have not experienced them. Exercise thy candour, my young friend,

toward those who fall by trials, of which thou hast no idea, and never expect to stand thine own ground in any situation in life, but on the firm foundation of *religious principles.*"

"If," said Mr. Bustle, "you were cheated, I believe you are the first of your sect who ever was so.—By King George, I would forgive any man who cheated a Quaker!"

"The general characteristic of our people is prudence and circumspection," replied Mrs. Placid; "it is therefore not surprising that they should not be very open to imposition."—"But they are good bargain-makers," rejoined the squire; "I never heard of one yet, who did not come pretty close upon us in *that* way."—"Which doubtless (if there is any truth in thy observation) arises from the characteristic trait just mentioned," returned Mrs. P. "Some moralists have said that the extremes of virtue verge on the borders of vice; and in respect of these two, I am inclined to be of that opinion; and it behoves those remarkable for their *prudence* and *circumspection*, to beware of *deceit* and *unjust suspicion.*"—"Go on, Madam, if you please," said Mr. Bustle, "I ask pardon for interrupting you so often."

Mrs. Placid was about to proceed, when Miss Finakin declared she was almost dead with the horrid roughness of the road, and

expressed her surprise at what could have occasioned it. "We have gone on so smoothly within," observed the squire, "that I have felt nothing of the roughness without. Oh!" said he, looking out of the window, "'tis only the road mended with large stones, which want a little rubbing down."—"Pray, then, request the man to drive a little slower," said Miss F. "or I shall absolutely die with fatigue."—"I wish," observed Mrs. Placid, "thou wouldest not accustom thyself to such strong expressions; they are very unseemly, as well as improper: reflect a moment on the absurdity of saying thou must die with fatigue in passing over a few rough stones."—"The lady," remarked the collegian, "has thought so much of miseries, that 'tis no wonder she should imagine one in a few rough stones:" then looking out, he called to the coachman, and desired him to drive slowly, as he regarded the *life* of one of his passengers. The man obeyed the injunction, but Miss F. did not look very well pleased at the banter; she muttered something about not being accustomed to stage-coaches, and that those who were might disregard their inconveniencies.

Mrs. Placid once more seemed inclined to proceed in her narrative when another interruption was occasioned by her daughter's

screaming out, "Oh! the pig! the pig! he will be run over, I'm sure he will." We were instantly convinced, by the cries of the poor animal, that Rachel's fears were not groundless: she looked out, and then, in an agony of distress, threw herself back on her seat. "O mother!" said she, "the wheels are gone over him; I saw them he is in the road: oh dear! what can be done?"—"Don't agitate thyself so much, child," replied Mrs. P. "I'll call to the man." She did so. "Friend, thou hast been so heedless as to suffer thy wheels to run over a pig; wilt thou be so kind as to stop, that we may examine the hurt?"—"I stop for a pig!" returned the man; "no, though I had run over a hundred!"—"A sad unfeeling driver," said Mrs. P. as she drew her head back into the coach; "perhaps he may heed an expostulation from thee (looking at the squire) more than from me." Mr. Bustle, who seemed ever willing to comply with the wishes of his fair friend, now presented his face to the coach-box, and with an halloo, which made every ear tingle, demanded why the lady's request was not attended to?

The man returned an insolent answer, which irritated the squire to such a degree, that he uttered the most improper words, and vented sad execrations on the coachman. The interest

of the poor pig was entirely lost in the warmth of the debate, which was carried on for some minutes, and would have lasted much longer, had not Mrs. Placid with entreaties, and tugs at the coat of Mr. Bustle, at length prevailed on him to return his head into the machine: "Alas!" said she, "how is every little incident made an occasion for sin! I wish I had uot requested thy interference." Rachel burst into tears: "Thou art going to be as silly," said her mother, "as thou wast about thy dog. Every thing has been done in the matter that can be done; make thyself easy." A coach now met us, which occasioned a stop, the two drivers having something to say to each other. "Perhaps that man," said Rachel eagerly, "may not be so hard-hearted?" then looking at the collegian with an expression which spoke 'I wish thou wouldest try,' he understood her: "Hark ye, master," said he to the coachman, "we have had the misfortune to drive over a pig a little above, I wish you would give an eye as you pass."—"And what then, Sir?" replied the man; "if he's dead I can't bring him to life again."—"True," rejoined the scholar; "but you may make some inquiry amongst the cottagers, and if he belongs to any of them, they will see about him, and put him out of his misery if he is *not* dead."—"Do so," added

Rachel, "we shall be so *obliged* to thee." And then looked at the youth with an air which spoke, 'Thou hast rendered me a most important service.'

"I do not wish," said Mrs. Placid to her daughter, "to discourage thy tender feelings towards the brute creation; for I am somewhat of the opinion of the poet Cowper, and would not enter on my list of friends,

"(Though grac'd with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

It is thy weak side, thou hast often made thyself miserable at these kinds of accidents."—"I feel so at this moment," returned Rachel, "and would give any thing to know what will become of the poor pig."—"Folly!" returned her mother, "to make no distinction in thy sensibilities! thou couldest not say more had we run over a human being!"

Happy for thee, Rachel, thought I, that thou hast a mother to control the weakness of thy character, and watch over thy sensibilities. Thou seemest to have every requisite to form an heroine for romance, and such qualities might become fatal to thy peace in youth, and destroy the usefulness of thy riper years.

Rachel's face still wore an air of sadness, but her mother ceased from further reproof, and proceeded with her narrative for some time without more interruption as follows.

CHAP. VII.

Mrs. Placid's history continued. Miss Finakin repairs to her salts in consequence of the weakness of her nerves. She receives an affront, and an apology. Mrs. Placid gives her opinion on christian experiences at the hour of death. She declares herself to be no stoic. The squire pronounces upon the proper time and place for ladies to speak. The scholar makes a pointed appeal on the same subject to Mrs. Placid. She is seized with a mysterious deafness; but, we are happy to say, recovers sufficiently to proceed with her narrative.

"I PERCEIVED," said Mrs. Placid, "with great concern, that my beloved mother declined daily; and at the close of the seventh year after her confinement to her chamber, I had reason to conclude the hour of her dissolution drew near. About this time a distant relation of my husband left me 300*l.* which seemed most providential,

for my expences increased in consequence of my mother's illness, and a little more capital in my business was very desirable.

" My partner was out upon a journey when I received my legacy, and I waited his return to consult on the best plan of employing it. I put it in the private drawer of a writing desk in my mother's chamber, whose increasing illness now engaged almost the whole of my attention. Her nurse had sat up with her for a fortnight, and I thought it necessary she should have some repose, and relaxation from her fatigue. I therefore resolved to take her place for a night or two, by the dying-bed of my dear parent. It was a dark and dismal evening when I first entered upon the painful office; my spirits, as may be imagined, were much depressed; and though never superstitious, I could scarcely refrain from the dread of some supernatural power, which, if ever at work to terrify us poor mortals, I conceived must at such a time be exercised. I read a psalm to her of her own choosing, and afterwards prayed, as I had been moved to do frequently, at her bed-side. I then gave her a composing draught; and I took up a serious book, which was written in a style of entertainment as well as instruction.

" I counted the clock, as I believe is usual with persons in my situation, with anxious wishes

that time could be more rapid in its flight. Just as it had finished the stroke of two, I imagined I heard a gentle step moving across the passage, which was under the chamber."

"Gracious powers!" exclaimed Miss Finakin, "you terrify me to death by your descriptions; I beg you will not dwell upon this horrid story."

"I am not conscious of making a very terrifying description," returned Mrs. Placid, "thou seest I am alive to tell the story, so that thou needest not to be so alarmed." Miss F. took out her salts from a little bag she had placed in the pocket of the coach, disdaining the convenience of one at her side, and Mrs. Placid proceeded.

"I attentively listened to hear if the sound was repeated, but all was silent for some time. I reproached myself for my timidity, and began to reason myself out of it, when I again heard another footstep, which I was convinced was upon the stairs. I sprung forward to fasten the chamber door, but before I could reach it, it was opened by a tall man with a mask on his face, and he was followed by another."

Miss Finakin screamed, and again applied her salts. "Do you fine ladies," said the squire, "always make this uproar when you hear a dismal story?"—"Those who have any nerves,

most certainly," replied the lady—" Astonishing then," observed the collegian, " that they should encourage so much the modern publications, which treat chiefly of horrors a thousand times more terrific than what is now relating! But pray, Madam," to Mrs. P. " proceed, for I wish to know what you did in this situation."—" Nothing," replied Mrs. P. " could be done but to glance an eye upwards, and address myself to my Maker and Preserver, which I instantly did, and am convinced my prayer was as instantly answered.—" Prayer, indeed, in such circumstances!" said Miss Finakin; " who in the name of wonder, besides yourself, could think of praying at the moment two ruffians entered their chamber!"—" All," returned Mrs. P. " who are acquainted with the nature and true spirit of prayer. Our's is a God ever near, and we are *permitted*, nay even *commanded*, to call upon him in the moment of distress and difficulty."—" I hope," rejoined Miss Finakin, " you have not forgotten your prayer on this occasion, for it might be useful to others; as you say it was immediately answered." I saw clearly this speech of Miss Finakin was intended for an attempt at irony, and not expressive of any wish to hear the Quaker's prayer—but Mrs. Placid, not so understanding it, gravely answered, " I marvel thou shouldest suppose any

thing so unnatural as my using a form of words at such a juncture. My prayer was entirely mental, and wholly unconnected; it is therefore out of my power to repeat it. The support which I was afforded was presence of mind and fortitude. I was enabled to address the men in nearly these terms:—'Ye have both entered my house at this time, doubtless with an intention of robbery—be kind-hearted on the occasion—and especially consider the poor old woman who is in that bed in a dying state, for if she awakes and sees you, it may hasten her end.'—'We will do you no harm,' replied one of the men, softened, no doubt, by my words, 'unless you make a disturbance—but you must give us all your money and plate.'—'As to plate,' replied I, 'I have not an ounce in my possession beside the silver spoons which are below, and which, perhaps, ye have secured already; there are a few guineas in that writing-desk, with which I hope ye will be content, and depart instantly.' One of the men sat down by me, and the other demanded the key of the desk. I was standing, but he obliged me to sit down, and said, if I stirred a foot I should repent it—I said I *must* stir if my mother awaked, otherwise I would be still. My greatest fear was the effect their appearance might have on

her; and my greatest hope was that they would not discover a drawer in the writing-desk most artfully contrived, where I had deposited my £.300. but, alas! my hopes were abortive; for in a few minutes the desk was completely rummaged, and I saw the bank notes all secured in the pocket of the man who opened it."—"But, mother," interrupted Rachel, "Uncle Jeremiah says, they never would have found out that drawer if thou hadst not told them." "What dost thine uncle Jeremiah know of the matter?" replied Mrs. P. "was it likely I should tell them of the drawer?" She was then proceeding, but Rachel was resolved the business should be thoroughly sifted—"Uncle," said she, "was telling the story a few weeks ago to some of our friends, and he said he knew all about it—that the robbers asked thee over and over, whether there was not a private drawer in the desk, and thou kept silence because thou wast afraid of an untruth; so then they went on searching till they found it. And"——"Well, well, child," said Mrs. Placid, "thou hast no occasion to say so much on the business, and interrupt my discourse—*thou* wast in bed and fast asleep when it happened. I was fearful," continued Mrs. Placid, "that the men would have taken my household linen, and wearing apparel; but they were not permitted to go such lengths.

When they had taken all the money and bills, they proposed to each other to go—I looked at them with a steady countenance: 'Remember,' said I, 'the eye of God is upon you, and that ye have robbed the fatherless and the widow.' The one who had taken the treasure, instantly put his hand into his pocket."—"Never, sure," interrupted Miss Finakin, "was any thing so imprudent as to make such a speech—I should have expected to have had my brains blown out; I make no doubt but he drew a pistol from his pocket after you had thus affronted him." "I expected no such thing," replied Mrs. Placid; "I considered it as my duty to say a word or two calculated to strike their minds, in the hope that some good effect might at some future time arise from it. I took care that it should not be spoken in an offensive manner; and I am always assured that the path of duty is the path of safety. What good effect my words may take upon either of them cannot be known; but they drew down an instant blessing on my own head: for to my great surprise the man put two of the bills into my hand, and without either of them saying another word, they departed. The bills were each twenty pounds, a sum which exactly reimbursed me in the additional expences of my mother's illness. As soon as I had heard them

leave the house, I alarmed my maid-servant and the shop-boy, that we might go down and secure the doors. Had I been disposed on this occasion to murmur at the dispensation of Providence, my murmurs would have been silenced, as in this matter, like many others, the blame was due only to myself. I had neglected to see a window fastened, and I felt conscious that I had been guilty of the same neglect before; so that my just punishment had been delayed beyond what I had any right to have expected. When we returned up stairs, I had the happiness to find my mother just awaked, wholly unconscious of what had happened, nor was it necessary that she should be informed."—"Surprising," said Miss Finakin, "that she should sleep during such a disturbance! but I suppose this miracle was wrought for the occasion." Mrs. Placid, taking no notice of the sneer this speech conveyed, replied, "Miracles have long since ceased, and we talk of nothing now but over-ruling providences, which make second causes subservient to particular ends:—but in this sleep of my mother, there was nothing miraculous or surprising, for if thou recollectest, I said she had taken a composing draught."—"It is a *miserable* thing to be dull of apprehension," said our scholar, who seemed unwilling that the lady should escape without a retort in

kind; "do you wish, Madam, for a more particular explanation?" "Not from you, Sir," returned Miss F. with an angry warmth. "Sharp's the word," said Mr. Bustle; "but mind the old proverb," to Miss Finakin, "They who can't take a joke should never give one."—"Let us mind a higher authority," added Mrs. Placid, even that of an apostle, who has left us the precept—'Be ye courteous.' Now this injunction implies, that we avoid every species of satirical acrimony in our conversation, as being contrary to the mild and peaceable disposition becoming Christians."—"Madam," returned the collegian, "I see the force of your application, and ask the lady's pardon," bowing to Miss F. "*Excuse* rather," said Mrs. P. who now went on once more with her narrative.

"I will not dwell upon a death-bed scene, which, though extremely interesting to me, had nothing peculiarly striking in it, to render it so to others. My mother died as she had lived, in the full possession of all the enjoyments of religion. Her hopes of heaven were strong, and rarely obscured by a cloud of doubt or fear. And this I ascribe to that course of consistent piety she had pursued. She had scriptural evidence that she was 'accepted in the Beloved:' and the last sentence I heard her utter

was—' He hath loved *me*, and given himself for me'."

"Excuse an interruption, Madam," said our young student—"Do I understand you right if I imagine you mean to say that *all* who practice a life of piety will thus die triumphantly?"—"No," returned Mrs. Placid, "thou must not draw that conclusion. All the servants of God are not thus favoured, which frequently arises from the frame and constitution of their nature, as well as from the sovereign pleasure of God himself. My mother was of a remarkably cheerful and animated temper, which is highly favourable to religious joys and hopes. But although an holy walk and conversation may not in all cases be followed by a triumphant death, it has a natural tendency towards it; and no expectation ought to be formed by any that they shall be thus blessed, unless they are careful to maintain such an one. Nothing very particular happened in my affairs till three years after my mother's death, when"——"Thou hast forgotten breaking thine arm, and that bad fever which thou wast afflicted with," interrupted Rachel.——"Really, Madam," said I, "your life seems to consist of a series of disastrous events, and it is surprising that you were not overwhelmed by their pressure."

"The only reason to be assigned why I was not," returned Mrs. P. "was my being in possession of the *Antidote* for the miseries of Human Life. Under every fresh trial I was enabled to look upwards, and the supports I received in consequence, it is utterly impossible for me to express."—"I have seen religious professors," said I, "under great depression, in consequence of afflictive dispensations."—"When they are so," returned Mrs. Placid, "it is a proof they live below their privileges; the fault is not in their religion, but in their want of application."

"I much question," said our scholar, "if you would not, Madam, have become a disciple of *Zeno*, if you had lived in his days."

"I should then," answered Mrs. Placid, with a smile, "have proved myself an unworthy one; for I should certainly have exclaimed with a fellow disciple, under a fit of the tooth-ache—'Pain is an evil.' I am far from supposing that we ought to be *insensible* to afflictions, for in that case the virtues of patience and resignation would not have been enjoined upon us. Our Divine Master, when he was upon earth, gave evident marks of his feeling and sympathy, and he has 'left us an example that we should follow his steps'." Finding

we all continued silent, Mrs. Placid proceeded: "After I had recovered from my fever, in which I experienced those words of the Psalmist fulfilled, 'He maketh all my bed in my sickness,' I was disposed in my mind to address our assemblies."

"Very strange to me," exclaimed Mr. Bustle, "how your sect can get over St. Paul's objections to this practice; why, he says expressly, 'I suffer not a woman to speak in the church'."

"Paul," rejoined Mrs. Placid, "acknowledges that he does not *always* speak by inspiration, and some of us conclude he does not in that sentence; I could produce many parts of Scripture to prove the propriety of our sex's speaking in public, particularly a text from Joel;—but perhaps thou art not very anxious to have thine objections removed on this point."

"Why, I cannot say I am," replied Mr. Bustle; "I never can be persuaded but that it is best for our women to sit quiet in the church, and only hold forth to us at home, and then with proper restrictions."

"Well," said Mrs. Placid, "enjoy thy opinion; I will not attempt to argue thee out of it, seeing thy eternal interest is not at all connected with it."

"Pardon me, Madam," said the collegian to Mrs. Placid, "but I must observe, that in places where the apostle Paul does not profess to speak by divine appointment, he says, 'But I speak this by permission.' I think this distinction should be attended to, lest errors of a more important nature than the one in question should arise from denying his authority in all cases."

Whether a sudden deafness seized Mrs. Placid at the moment the scholar was speaking, or whether the rough grating of a broad-wheeled waggon, which passed us in the interim, really occasioned the student's voice to be lost in the air before it could reach the further corner in which she sat, I cannot determine; but certain it was that she made no attempt at a reply, but instantly proceeded in her narrative—"I was," said she, "the more concerned to exercise my speaking talents, because of certain false teachers having unawares crept into our assemblies. I feared the error would gain ground amongst us, and I felt it my duty to lend a helping hand to prevent it.

"My son being now come from school, I was in consequence enabled to relax my attention to business, and to spend more time in reading and meditation, which was always my taste and delight. I visited, in the capacity of

a speaker, most parts of England, and resolved upon a journey to Ireland, just when my son had attained his seventeenth year. He expressed a wish to accompany me, to which I had no objection."

I thought Mrs. Placid's voice faltered as she pronounced the last sentence, which heightened my curiosity: if it has the same effect upon my readers, they will have no objection to enter upon my next chapter, and follow the widow and her son to Ireland.

CHAP. VIII.

Mrs. Placid's zeal for the doctrines of the Gospel draws some controversial observations from the squire. The young scholar, a divine elect, appealed to. He answers in character. A good-tempered man affronted. The dispute adjusted, and good-humour again restored. The squire's attention diverted from the widow's story by the only circumstance which could have effected it. New means of quieting the remonstrances of conscience. The interest of the brute creation pleaded for by the ladies. A mysterious death, with the comments of a loquacious landlord.

"WHEN we arrived in Ireland," continued Mrs. Placid, "I was agreeably surprised at

the kind reception I met with, from all the different denominations of Christians to whom I was introduced. I had hitherto mixed but little with any religious sect beside our own, and I had acquired somewhat of a bigoted spirit, arising entirely from ignorance and misconception of the characters and principles of my Christian brethren. As my mind became better informed, my bigotry decreased, and I was soon convinced, that the 'kingdom of God consisteth not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' I was led at this time to speak in public more particularly upon Gospel doctrines than our people are accustomed to do, for their discourses in general are confined to practical subjects; and in consequence, I was informed certain rumours had been raised against them, as though they despised the good old way of faith in a crucified Redeemer, and vainly imagined that good works were the ground of their acceptance."

"And what should be the ground of acceptance, if good works are not?" asked the squire. "By which of thy good works wouldest thou be willing to be tried at the day of judgment?" returned Mrs. Placid. Mr. Bustle paused, as though endeavouring to recollect; but most probably finding himself unable, he

evaded the question, and turning short round to the young student, "You are a divine elect," said he, "what have you to say about good works?"

"I will answer your question in character, Sir," replied the collegian, "that is, in the words of that church of which I hope shortly to become a minister: 'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By faith, and not by our own works or deservings. Good works are the *fruits* of faith, but cannot put away our sins. Yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God, and spring *necessarily* out of a true and lively faith; so that by them a lively faith is known, as a tree by its fruits'."

"I don't remember," said Mr. Bustle, "that I ever read those words in the Church Prayer-book."—"Perhaps not," returned the student; "for it is too much the custom to omit the Articles, where they should be found: but, Sir, if you will take the trouble to examine, you will find the prayers and the liturgy in unison with this sentiment."

Mr. Bustle seemed loth to drop the argument: "Why," said he, "how do you then understand the doctrine of *rewards* which the Bible, our parsons say, promises to all who do good works?"—"The rewards promised in

Scripture to the righteous," replied the scholar, "must not be understood as *payments* on the side of Deity, but as *gracious recompenses* for poor imperfect services."—"In the same manner," added Mrs. Placid, "as thou wouldest reward thy faithful servant; though, strictly speaking, it was no more than his *duty* to be faithful, and had he been otherwise thou mightest justly have recompensed him evil instead of good."

I was unwilling to be left quite out in this controversy—"I have often been surprised," said I, "at the opposition the doctrine of faith has met with from unholy men; for I have frequently heard the sabbath-breaker, the swearer, and the worldly-minded, gravely assert that heaven was to be gained by good works. Surely it might be reasonably expected that all those who were of that opinion would abound in them."

I saw the colour heighten in the face of our country gentleman, which for a moment surprised me, till I recollected I had undesignedly made a personal reflection in my mention of *swearers*. He turned round, and with rather a displeased air, said, "Sir, if I do swear sometimes, I don't mean any harm by it."—"Nor did I, Sir, by my observation, I assure you," I replied; "I had forgotten your habit."—"It

is a pity," said our kind-hearted Quaker, addressing herself to me, that as thou speakest so seldom, thou shouldest ever speak unadvisedly; and truly I do not wonder that our friend should suppose thou meant a reflection, which might have been conveyed in a less offensive manner."—"I don't mind being told of my faults," said Mr. Bustle, "but then I like to be told *direct*, and not in a round-about way; I like to be *to*, not *at*."—"I have," observed Mrs. Placid, "studied that difficult art, the art of reproving, and have generally found persons of thy mind; and I assure thee it was my full intention, before we parted, to talk to thee very seriously about thy swearing, and also on another of thy faults."—"I had rather be talked to by you," returned Mr. Bustle, "on that subject, than by any one else in the coach."

I again repeated my assurance, that I meant no personal reflection; the squire's countenance again shone with good-humour, and matters being amicably adjusted, Mrs. P. went on with her narrative.

"We staid in Ireland about three weeks. I spoke either in public or private, most days, on the interesting truths of religion, and have reason to hope I spoke not in vain. I was the means of removing prejudices from the minds

of many, which they had imbibed against our sect, originating in ignorance of our principles. Ignorance is generally the mother of prejudice. It must, however, be confessed, that our own peculiar expressions have, in part, occasioned these misconceptions on the side of our adversaries. For instance: our scruples in not joining with other Christians in calling the Scriptures 'the word of God,' as supposing the term only applicable to the eternal Word, even Christ himself, have led them to imagine that we deny the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, than which nothing can be more erroneous. And our objection to the word *Trinity*, and to all scholastic explanations of that doctrine, has naturally induced them to suppose we do not believe the union of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the one true God of Christians."

"These are just the sentiments I have heard advanced against your sect," observed the young scholar, "and I believed them."—"And that is the way erroneous judgments are formed, by giving credit to *assertions* instead of proofs," returned Mrs. Placid. "The writings of *Penn* and *Barclay* contain our religious sentiments taken as a *body;* and we must not be charged with errors in faith, which are only attached to a few individuals found amongst us."

"God forbid that we should any of us be thus unfairly dealt with, for then our national church itself would become a victim to misrepresentation," replied the collegian. "But pray, Madam, proceed in your history."

"I had reason to suppose," said Mrs. Placid, "that my visit to Ireland would be productive of temporal as well as spiritual good; for my trade connections were increased, and my son, by his amiable disposition, gained the favourable opinion of many persons likely to be useful to him throughout life.

"We set sail from Ireland in a vessel belonging to a Friend, of which he was captain; all was calm and pleasant for the first two days; but in the night of the third, there arose a heavy gale of wind, and, in consequence, some danger was apprehended."—"Aye, then," interrupted the squire, "you heard plenty of swearing; nothing I have said to-day comes up to it."—"Thou art mistaken," replied Mrs. Placid; "dost thou not recollect that I said our captain was a *Friend?*"—"Friend or foe," rejoined Mr. Bustle, "he could not manage sailors by *yeas* and *nays*."—"He had managed them, I assure thee," returned Mrs. Placid, "for twenty years without an oath; and I have been informed by persons who had seen much of a sea-life, that *his* sailors were more

manageable than any other they ever met with. Thou canst not surely for a moment seriously imagine, that the Divine Lawgiver has imposed a sort of necessity on his creatures in any circumstances to break his laws!" A self-evident proposition will never be controverted but by the incorrigibly obstinate. Mr. Bustle was not of that number, he therefore made no reply to the widow, who went on with her adventures.

"All was alarm and activity on board our vessel at this interesting period. We shipped much water in the cabin, which the females were useful to remove, though some of us yielded so much to fear as to be incapable of usefulness. My son went upon deck to assist the captain and sailors. He frequently returned to me to comfort and animate my spirits; his own were undaunted, and his courage and usefulness on board so great, (as the captain assured me) that I did not yield to the strong desire I felt to retain him with me in the cabin. I urged him to attempt nothing to which his strength and skill were unequal; and with prayers and tears commended him to Providence, as supposing him in the path of duty, and consequently of safety. In about four hours the violence of the storm abated, and we were assured that all danger was over: I

wondered that my son was not the welcome bearer of this intelligence, and anxiously inquired after him. The inquiry was made at my request throughout the vessel: I endured for half an hour a suspense which it is out of the power of language to describe, and then the captain announced, in the tenderest manner he was able, the sad tidings that my son was no where to be found; and that the only probable conjecture was, that he had, by some heavy sea, of which there had been several on deck, been washed overboard."

"Don't say another word about it, don't say another word about it," cried out Mr. Bustle, with evident marks of feeling in his countenance. "Had my life," continued Mrs. Placid, "been made up of common trials, it would not have been worth a relation; I have been induced to relate these incidents, my friends, from the sole motive of impressing on your minds this important truth—That there is in vital religion an *Antidote* to every misery which can fall to the lot of human nature. On this trying occasion, I experienced the fulfilment of that promise, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be;' and I was enabled to reflect on several sources of consolation, even under this great calamity. I had every reason to hope that my dear son was prepared for his

sudden and awful change, for a deep sense of divine things appeared to have taken possession of his heart. I considered how much worse my affliction would have been, had he lived a disgrace to society, and a despiser of his God, which affliction so many mothers are called upon to endure; and I reflected also on the great deliverance so many persons had experienced, at the moment when the deep had only been permitted to swallow up one. I am sensible that the highest source of consolation to the Christian, *ought* to, and *does*, arise from an acquiescence in the *will of God* considered absolutely; but I imagine it is lawful to call in also such secondary sources of consolation as I have mentioned."

Notwithstanding the deep interest which Mr. Bustle took in the widow's history, a circumstance now occurred which completely diverted his attention. Just as she had finished her last sentence, he started from his seat, reached his body half out of the coach, and exclaimed, "By George! there's a covey of partridges sprung up this moment! the first covey I've clapt my eyes on this season;—to be boxed up in a coach, confounded unlucky!" He then continued gazing on the winged fugitives, till his sharp-sighted organs failed to descry their progress, and then reseating himself, again

lamented his unfortunate situation, and declared that all the lawyers in both inns of court should never tempt him again from the country in the charming month of September.

"I enjoy the happy escape of the poor birds too much," returned the young student, "to sympathize with you, Sir, in this sporting misery."—"Aye, aye," rejoined the squire, "I wish I may live to see you in the pulpit with your pocket empty of your sermon, just discovered at the moment you were expected to hold forth."—"You would be amply revenged, truly, Sir," said the collegian. "For fear of such accidents, I will endeavour always to know the subject thoroughly on which I mean to hold forth, that my memory in one case may rectify my carelessness in the other."

"Thou appearest," said Mrs. Placid, addressing herself to Mr. Bustle, "to possess humane feelings, exercise them, I beseech thee, towards the poor animals whom thou delightest to persecute. This was the fault on which I hinted my wish to speak to thee upon before we parted."

"Why, as to that matter," replied Mr. Bustle, "I do love hunting and shooting, I must own; yet sometimes, I must own too, I have had a qualm of conscience about it, when I have seen an unlucky puss of a hare, just as

the hounds have come up with her; and have found a lame starved partridge in one of my fields. But then I have said to myself, If *I* don't take a pop at them, *another* will."

"The very argument," returned Mrs. P. "which I yesterday heard advanced in favour of smuggling. A text of scripture will answer it. 'Be ye not partakers with them'."

"If you bring up scripture," replied Mr. Bustle, with an air of satisfaction, "I can match you here in argument. What say you to Nimrod, who was 'a mighty hunter,' particularly mentioned?"

"I have nothing to say against Nimrod, or his hunting," replied Mrs. Placid. "He lived in a part of the world, and at a time when animal food could only be procured by that method; but he is not proposed as an *example*, nor can it be ascertained that, had he lived in our times, he would, for *diversion* merely, have practised what he was compelled to do from *necessity*."

The squire promised to take the subject into consideration, before the next season; for the present, he said he must go on his old plan, having purchased a new gun, and made several hunting engagements. Mrs. Placid shook her head. Miss Finakin spoke a few words in favour of humanity to birds and beasts; they were more to the purpose than any she had before

uttered: and methought she looked agreeable when she conversed on this subject. We now drew near a town, where we found a change of horses was to take place. The ladies were very desirous of procuring the refreshment of tea, and for this purpose we all alighted. The inn was in great confusion, occasioned by a coroner's inquest then taking on the body of a poor man, found the day before in a neighbouring river. The landlord, however, gave us his personal attendance, and in nearly the following words related the particulars of the melancholy event, without permitting either of us to interrupt him by a single observation in return. "John Turnround," said our landlord, "who now lies dead aloft, was as good a lad as ever smoked a pipe, or took a can at the George, till about five years ago, when he took to religion, and following such melancholy ways. I told him how it would be; instead of coming here and making merry, he'd be running to chapel after preaching and praying. I told him how it would be; and sure as I said, they have turned his head amongst 'em. 'Twas impossible that he could fall into the water by chance: he threw himself in, there's no doubt on't. And 'tis proved he was at chapel that same night he was missing. He went by here, and I thought where he was going. 'John Turnround,' said

I, (I was sitting smoking in the porch,) 'there's a main good tap and good company too in the tap-room,' but he turned away his head, and looked so sadly!—Aye, this all comes of running after parsons. I hates to have one put in at the George. Poor fellow, I little thought when he would not walk in of his own accord, that he would be brought in a corpse so soon."

The bell now ringing violently, our host could proceed no further, but ended his intelligence by "A coming, Sir, coming, Sir," and disappeared in a moment, leaving us to comment upon his discourse when we entered our vehicle, which we did in a few minutes.

CHAP. IX.

The squire supposes Mrs. Placid mistaken in a most important opinion. He grows captious, and finds fault with her *conduct* as well as sentiments. She condescends to explain. The motto of a maiden aunt, and a short exhortation addressed to Rachel. Mrs. Placid pleads for an important branch of practical Chritianity. The squire avows his attachment to the Church of England. A Prayer-book produced, to the surprise of Miss Finakin. The widow appeals to Scripture, and talks a little about creeds and articles; but attention is diverted to a more interesting theme. A point of visiting etiquette determined at the conclusion of the chapter.

"I THINK, Madam," said Mr. Bustle, addressing himself to Mrs. Placid, "that the circumstance we have just met with makes a little against your argument, that religion is an Antidote to the miseries of life, for here is one *occasioned* you see by it."

"I wonder," rejoined Mrs. P. "that a person of thy seeming discernment should credit the ignorant conjecture formed by a man, who, from his profession, must be an enemy to religion."

"Pardon me, Madam," replied the student hastily, "I say you have now made, in my opinion, an illiberal observation. What should we do without innkeepers? and surely no pro-

fession which the good of society renders necessary, can be unlawful."—"How many false opinions," said Mrs. P. with a smile, "originate from the misunderstanding of a single word! and this ought to make us very circumspect in speaking and hearing. I am glad thou hast given me an opportunity to explain, or perhaps thou mightest have run away with the notion that our whole body of Friends had unchristianized every innkeeper in the kingdom. By the word *profession*, I meant the man's *principles* not his *calling*. If thou recollectest, he said, 'he hated to see a parson in the George;' and he owned that he had endeavoured to decoy into his tap-room the poor man on his way to worship. Does the testimony of such a person against religion deserve a moment's attention?" The young scholar immediately answered in the negative; and the squire, by a significant smile, seemed to coincide in the same opinion. "Come, come," said he, "you have picked a hole or two in my coat since we have been together, and now I think I can pick one in your brown bonnet. How came it about, Madam, that you should run about preaching, while you had a house to manage, and two daughters at home, who by this time, I presume, might be growing up, and requiring a sharp looking

after, lest while you were running one way, they might be disposed to run another: don't you think 'tis the first duty in a woman to look after her house and family?"

"I do," rejoined Mrs. Placid; "but thou knowest the old proverb, 'There are no rules without exceptions.' If I could not have arranged matters prudently during my absence, I believe I should never have been prevailed on to extend my speaking beyond the assembly on the spot where I resided. My husband had a single sister of great prudence and good management as well as piety. She lived on a small fortune, and her motto was, 'I will render myself as useful in society as possible.' With this disposition she *was* to me, and still is, an invaluable relation."

"I hope," turning to Rachel, "thou wilt ever look at thy aunt Hester for an example, and remember if Providence appoint thee a single lot in life, thou art not therefore to suppose thyself appointed to an indolent or useless one. This kind-hearted friend of mine was very desirous of my exerting my speaking talents, and offered, upon every occasion, to supply my place at home. I accepted her assistance, and never had reason to repent the intrusting into her hands the care of my house and family.

Now, Friend!" turning her head round with some humour to Mr. Bustle, "I hope thou canst not see a single hole in my brown bonnet."

"Not one, not one," said the squire, "Now, if you please, I should like to hear the remainder of your history; I forget how it came to be broken off."—"Only by the flight of a few partridges," returned the Quaker, "which thou didst deem more worthy of thine attention; perhaps we may be interrupted by another."—"No, no," replied the sportsman "no more covies to-night; the sun setting very fine and clear, looks well for to-morrow; I hope to pay my respects to that shining gentleman as soon as he is up again."—"I hope," said Mrs. Placid, with a grave and earnest countenance, "thou dost not forget to pay thy respects to the Maker of that beautiful object thou art now contemplating. Thou hast advocated the cause of practical religion in the course of the day: now prayer is certainly a part of it; and one who lives in the neglect of prayer, is unworthy the name of a Christian."—"You have a way," said Mr. Bustle, "of coming so close upon one. As to praying, I believe I don't perform that duty so often as I ought; but I intend to mend, and to repent, and reform all that's amiss very soon."—"Aye, Friend," rejoined Mrs. Placid, "thou talkest like one who knows but little of

his own weakness."—"Nay," replied the squire, "you wrong me there; don't I own that I am not so good as I ought to be?"—"True," replied his fair antagonist, "I am happy to discover that thou hast some knowledge of thy sinful estate. But thou dost vainly imagine that it is in thy own power to repent and reform whenever thou pleasest—whereas the scripture declares that repentance is the gift of God, and that reformation is the work of his Holy Spirit. Now whilst thou continuest in this mind, thou wilt not pray for this precious gift of repentance; consequently thou wilt never receive it; for God has declared that he will for every blessing be inquired of. And thou wilt labour in thine own strength after reformation, which the power of temptation will render unavailing."

"This is Quaker doctrine," replied Mr. Bustle; "I am a member of the Church of England; I don't hold any thing but what's taught in the regular church; I go there very often, and I *intend* going still oftener."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Placid; "as I told thee before, I don't wish to make a Quaker (as thou wilt still persist in calling us) of thee. If thou believest all thine own church teacheth, I verify think that in the *main* points thou wilt be right: as to all I have said about repentance and reformation, I am sure thy

church and the enlightened part of mine will not disagree."—" Is it so, young parson?" asked Mr. Bustle. " I wish most earnestly, Sir," replied the youth, " that you would examine for yourself"—" That's neither here nor there," rejoined Mr. Bustle, " I cannot examine this minute; I've no prayer-book in my pocket."—" But I have," replied the student, drawing one out. " Bless me!" cried Miss Finakin, " do you carry a prayer-book about with you everywhere?"—" No, Madam," he replied, " not always, though perhaps if I did, and referred to it much oftener, it might be for my advantage."—" Sir," continued he, addressing himself to Mr. Bustle, " I cannot pretend to enter upon a criticism on the contents of this book; but if you will permit me, I will read a very few words from our Tenth Article, because it appears to me to apply directly to the point in question. The Article says—' Man cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. We have no power to do good works without the grace of God preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will'."

" Thy Articles, Friend," said Mrs. Placid, " are of no value, if thou canst not produce scripture in confirmation of them."—" Granted,

Madam," replied the collegian; "but as this gentleman professes himself attached to his national church, I imagine *he* will be satisfied with the doctrines she teaches. I will thank *you* to recollect a scripture confirmation."

"There are so many applicable to the subject, that I hardly know which to produce," rejoined the widow—"Our Lord says by his apostle John—'The branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing.' And Paul says—It is God that, 'worketh in us both to will and to do good of his pleasure!' With such texts as these," continued Mrs. Placid, "and our Bibles ever at hand, I cannot see the necessity of creeds and articles, which are mere human institutions; unknown in the days of primitive Christianity."

"Till the church of Christ became corrupted," replied the collegian, "they were certainly very unnecessary appendages, but in the present day they are useful—they act as a check to false doctrines, and thus aid (so to speak) the Bible in defence of the truth."

"*Aid!* my Friend," rejoined Mrs. Placid; "what dost thou mean to say the Spirit which indited the Holy Scriptures stands in need of assistance to support his own doctrines?"

"No, Madam," replied the student, "not in

one sense—for the Holy Spirit is invincible. But while human nature continues prone to error, I conceive every means may be lawfully resorted to, which has a tendency to obstruct its progress—and in this point of view I consider church-articles and subscriptions." Mrs. Placid made no answer to the collegian, but seemed wrapped in reflection; probably she was collecting the whole force of her controversial powers, in order to level a strong battery at creeds and church establishments, when her attention was diverted from the subject by Mr. Bustle, who exclaimed—" Well! I find you both know more of these matters than I do; but this I can say, that from what has passed this day, and a few serious thoughts, which, in spite of my endeavours to get rid of them, will sometimes perplex me, I am inclined to think all is not quite right in these two places,"—laying his hand on his heart, and pointing his finger to his head.

Mrs. Placid, as the squire uttered the last sentence, fixed her eyes upon him, and with a sweet and animated tone of voice, " I verily believe," said she, " that thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven. I verily believe that there is a work of grace begun in thine heart; and the Scripture says, ' He who hath begun

a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' O my friend," continued she, " I entreat thee that thou wilt no longer stifle thy serious convictions; thy proneness to do so, is a convincing proof of the truth of the Scripture declaration, that ' The carnal mind is enmity against God.' Fly instantly to the hope set before thee in the Gospel, and to Jesus, who alone delivers ' from the wrath to come.' He will give thee that repentance which is unto life; for we are assured that he is appointed to this very end. ' A Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins'."

" I thank you heartily for your good counsel," returned the squire; " where do you live, when you are at home? I should like to call upon you sometimes, if agreeable; I don't wish to intrude."

" I shall never deem thee an intruder," answered Mrs. P. " I live at the house where we were taken up, for I have retired from business these two years, leaving the whole of it to my partner, who allows me one-third of the profits." —" Your house is a great way off," rejoined the squire, " and I very seldom go to London; I'm afraid I shall never see you again. I wish you would come to *my* house, a nice snug

hunting-box as ever you saw in your life, and you shall have a hearty welcome."

"We must not be guilty of improprieties," replied Mrs. Placid, drawing herself up with rather a reserved air. "I must know thee better, and also the inmates of thy dwelling, before I can consent to pay thee a visit."

"True, true," rejoined Mr. Bustle: "I forgot that the women must be nice in these matters; and for what you know I may be a single man, and your scandalous people might talk. But however, I can truly say, I have as good a little wife as ever man was blessed with, whose acquaintance will be no discredit to you, and I'm sure you will like one another, for she has no objection to religious folks, and she's not one of your fal-lal ladies who will despise your plain gown and cloak."

"If that be the case," replied the widow, "perhaps I may call upon her, if thy dwelling does not lie far from———, where I propose staying the ensuing month."

"It is not more than one mile distant from that place," said Mr. B. "I'll give you my name and address," taking out his pencil and a bit of paper from his pocket-book—"Now I recollect though," added he, "we will do things genteelly; if you will give me your name and address, my wife shall call upon you

first. Is not that the right way of it, Madam ?" appealing to Miss Finakin. " I believe so," she replied, while Mrs. Placid, quick as thought, wrote her name, and that of her friend also to whose house she was going, on the paper the squire presented her for the purpose.

" Now," said I, " that your controversies and your visiting engagements are amicably adjusted, may I presume to request (to Mrs. Placid) the conclusion of your history ? Many interruptions have taken place, but the day wears off, and the hour of separation will soon arrive."—" I have not much more to mention," she returned ; " but as thou art pleased to express an interest, I will comply with thy wishes."

So saying, she went on as follows in my next chapter.

CHAP. X.

Mrs. Placid's history concluded. The sympathetic feelings of her hearers described. The scholar insists upon Mrs. Placid's defining the word Misery. The squire is made impatient by the dullness of the scholar, and decides the argument. Miss Finakin's carefulness for her nephew, the captain. He is admitted for the second time as an inside passenger, on condition of good behaviour.

"THE feelings of my relations and friends on the melancholy intelligence I had to communicate to them, may be conceived better than described. I will not dwell on this painful subject. I cannot possibly fathom the design of Providence in this most trying dispensation, but I think myself authorized to apply to my own case the words which our Lord addressed to his disciple Peter, 'What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter'."—"What! when you get to heaven, I suppose you mean?" said the squire. "Yes," replied Mrs. Placid, "when we reach that happy place all mysteries will be unravelled, faith will be turned into sight, and God himself will wipe away every tear.

"Soon after my return home, I discovered a gloom seated constantly on the face of my partner, at which I was much surprised, for he

was generally of a pleasant cheerful disposition: at first I concluded it was occasioned by the death of my son, for whom I knew he had a tender regard. But seeing that a few weeks made no alteration in his deportment, I noticed it to him. 'John Tradewell,' said I, 'thou art very dejected of late; I fear thou art sorrowing after the dear departed youth we have lost, like one without hope; consider, he is only *removed*, and that if it be not our own faults, we shall soon follow him. We have good reason to imagine that he was a partaker of the Gospel, and if so, he is certainly a partaker with all those who 'through faith and patience inherit the promises.' He made no reply, I believe he was not able, but instantly quitted the room. A few days more elapsed, and I expected the words I had spoken would take effect; but still his dejection seemed rather to increase than abate. I spoke to him again. 'There is something mysterious,' said I, 'in thy conduct; hast thou any thing disastrous to communicate to me? any thing amiss in our business? If so, don't, I entreat thee, be averse to mention it: I am not afraid of evil tidings, seeing that my heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.'—'Thou hast not, I believe,' replied he, 'examined our books very lately.' This was a short sentence; but the

manner in which it was spoken, and the look which accompanied it, was equivalent to a long explanation. 'I understand thee, John Tradewell,' said I, 'we are going behindhand, I suppose: what, are there bad debts?'—'Several,' rejoined he, 'but the worst of all is the failure of our banker, which happened when thou wast in Ireland. I expected thou wouldest have heard of it, by the newspapers, or some other channel, before this!'—'Truly,' said I, 'thou hast acted indiscreetly in keeping this secret from me a single day; but thou didst mean well, no doubt.'—'How could I bear to add to thy distresses?' said he. 'It has happened very providentially,' continued he, 'that we had no considerable sum in the banker's hands, for I had occasion to draw upon him a few days before his failure. Yet there was enough to injure us greatly, and, added to the bad debts, we are much embarrassed, and what can be done in the matter I really cannot devise.' 'Thou art in general not backward in good contrivances, John Tradewell,' said I, 'and am surprised thou shouldest be at a loss in so plain a case. What can be done so proper as to call our creditors together, make known to them the state of our affairs, and take their advice on what will be the best part to act?'—'But our credit! our credit!' repeated he

'no one at present has an idea of our situation.'—'I don't know what thou dost mean,' replied I, 'by the word *credit*, as thou dost apply it. The credit of a tradesman is, on all occasions, to act with openness and candour, and if he has reason to fear he shall not be able to pay his creditors, it is but fair to give them timely notice, and consult upon a plan which may enable him to do that in time, which he cannot do immediately.' By such reasonings as these, I soon prevailed on my partner to coincide with me in opinion, for he was an honest man, though he had got some undefined notions about credit and character floating in his head, which were near misleading his judgment. As soon as it could be conveniently managed we called our creditors together, and when affairs were fully stated, it appeared that, if they chose to make us bankrupts, we should pay about fifteen shillings in the pound. Every creditor we had objected to that measure, and expressed their wishes for our proceeding on the usual plan, not doubting but time would retrieve our losses. They behaved towards us with the utmost lenity, and even kindness; and I am convinced, if others in our situation would act the same, we should not hear of such frequent bankruptcies and imprisonments. My partner was soon assured that he had lost no

credit, in the proper sense of the word, by this procedure, for we were treated even with respect by all our creditors."

"I wish my son had done so," said Mr. Bustle, "I might then have seen him a flourishing linen-draper at this moment, instead of a half-starved lawyer, for he's too honest ever to be a well-fed one. But, bless his heart, he had no more notion he was going behindhand than I had, who was a hundred miles off."—"Do not vex thyself about it," rejoined Mrs. Placid, "thou mayest live to see thy son a useful pleader for justice, and we should permit our children to follow the bent of their genius, so far at least as that is lawful and expedient. I can allow for thy vexation indeed respecting his debts, as they might occasion distress to many."

"No, no," replied the squire, "I had plenty of money then, more than I have now, thanks to the law, which I have plagued myself with of late years; and I took care that no son of mine should pay less than twenty shillings in the pound."

"Well done, Friend," said Mrs. Placid, who proceeded. "My partner's mind was now made easy, and our trade went on prosperously; he married a young woman with a very small fortune, to whom he had been long attached,

and in consequence a separation took place between us, in respect of residence. I took a small house ye saw at Kensington, and there removed myself and daughters. Their society now became the chief delight of my life; and to inform their minds in useful branches of learning was my greatest care. My partner now took the whole of the active part in the business, and I had attained what I had so anxiously desired, a freedom from care about trade affairs, and a quiet retirement. My kind sister-in-law lived very near us, and was ever ready to assist me in the delightful task of education, as thou, Rachel, canst attest."—"Yes," replied Rachel, "and thou wilt excuse me if I say that I think Aunt Hester is in one respect a better teacher than thou art; not because she knows better than thyself, but she is so slow and deliberate in her manner of speaking, that I can understand her better." Mrs. Placid smiled; "Thy Aunt Hester too, thou mightest have added, has more patience than thy mother, and that is a necessary ingredient in the art of teaching. She is a pattern of patience and perseverance in every pursuit she has in view. In her is exemplified the exhortation of the apostle, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'."

In a few months after we came to reside

at Kensington, my eldest daughter, then sixteen years of age, was seized with the scarlet fever, from which she was scarcely recovered, when she was attacked by a still more formidable one, a frenzy fever. To describe the scenes of distress and anxiety which, as a mother, I endured at this time, is utterly impossible; nor do I wish to pain your minds by a recital. But I was not forsaken by that God in whom I trusted; my health and spirits were kept up in a manner, which, on recollection, seems now almost miraculous.

"My daughter lay one month in this deplorable condition; her precious senses quite lost through the violence of her disorder. Her life was despaired of, and every day the awful change was expected. But how shall I speak the joy I felt, when, at the end of a month, symptoms of amendment appeared, and the physician gave hopes of her recovery! I was somewhat surprised to observe, that there were no particular marks of pleasure in his countenance when he announced what seemed to me such happy tidings; but, alas! this mystery was in a few weeks unravelled; for I found, that although God had seen fit to preserve the life of my dear child, he had (no doubt for wise, though to me inscrutable, purposes)

deprived her of that valuable blessing, understanding."

The countenance of each in the vehicle bore evident marks of sympathy with the afflicted widow, in this part of her narration: it was a sympathy which, I believe, deprived them all of the power of articulation; a deep silence reigned amongst them, when Mrs. Placid paused, and looked in expectation of some observation. Finding none, she turned to her daughter, "Thy sister's calamity," said she "though an awful, may be to thee an improving, lesson. Thou wast strikingly marked by the eye of sparing mercy, for thou also hadst the scarlet fever, which might have terminated in the same effect. This ought to be a subject of unceasing gratitude and praise, and the gracious Sparer of thine intellectual powers seems to have a double claim to thine improvement of them to his glory."

By this time the faculty of speech was restored to me, and I asked Mrs. Placid whether her daughter's understanding was entirely lost? "I am thankful," replied she, "that she is not reduced to an absolute state of idiotism, nor is her appearance so distressing as that of most persons in her situation. She is besides extremely manageable, and perfectly good-

tempered. These circumstances are great alleviations in the case, but when I recollect that strikingly retentive memory she once possessed exchanged for the vacant stare and unreflecting repetition; when I behold her lively imagination now spending all its powers in useless and unmeaning occupations; oh! my heart is grieved, and my spirits at times depressed; for nature must feel."

"Feel?" repeated the squire, with a strong emphasis; "yes, indeed, and *I* feel too. I hope this is the last of your *miseries*, and upon my word I think it the greatest you have yet communicated."

"Don't speak of it," returned Mrs. Placid, "in such strong terms. None of the trials which I have been exercised with deserve the name of *miseries*. I am, however, happy to inform thee, that this is the last of my *miseries*, as thou callest them; and I have no more to say of myself, in the least worthy of thine attention. I thank thee, and our other friends, (looking at each) for their attention."—"Madam," said the collegian, addressing himself to Mrs. Placid, "I have been much interested, and I hope instructed, by your narrative; but I am rather surprised at your last observation, for I must confess that with this gentleman,

(looking at Mr. Bustle) I can give most of your trials no other appellation than *miseries*. If you will not allow them this appellation, you will favour me with the definition of the word *misery?*"

Mrs. Placid smiled. "Thy discourse," said she, "throughout the day, has savoured of scholarship; thou dost like to have terms and ideas defined. I commend thee for it, and by so doing thou wilt avoid many errors which the vague and indiscriminating commit. Taken in the abstract, as thou wouldest logically term it, unconnected with my particular views and circumstances, my trials may be called *miseries;* but they were so intermixed with *mercies*, that they could not render me *miserable.*" The scholar, in the true spirit of an obstinate disputant, still appeared dissatisfied, and insisted that the widow had not properly defined the word *misery*. "Nay, Friend," she replied, "thou art too fastidious; dost thou wish me to harrow up my own feelings and those of our hearers, by describing the nature of positive *misery?* Must I take thee to the field of battle, to the besieged city, and the dying bed of the convinced sinner, awakened from his infatuated dream, only in time to feel the horrors of his situation, and to exclaim with one of old, un-

der those circumstances, 'The battle is fought, the battle is fought, but the victory is lost for ever'!"

"Why," said our squire, turning to the young gentleman, "you scholars are a sort of lawyers, all of you. I believe in my conscience your delight is to perplex every case that comes before you, or else your brains are uncommonly shallow. I know exactly what the gentlewoman means to say, without all this preamble and round about. She means to say, that *true religion will make us all happy in a miserable world.* Now do you understand it?"

"Perfectly, Sir," replied the youth, with an arch smile, which convinced me the former part of the squire's conjecture was the most agreeable to truth.

Miss Finakin now expressed her apprehensions, that as the damps of the evening were coming on, her nephew would take cold, and her wish that he might be accommodated with an inside place. The scholar said he would make him an offer of his the next time the coach halted. "I should have thought a soldier better cut out to face evening damps than a scholar," observed the squire; "and I don't like to part with you, for when you don't raise quibbles you are good company."

The coach soon drew up to a small public-

house to water the horses, when the squire hallooed out, "Captain, if you will behave better than you did the last time you were here, the ladies will let you come in; for I understand you don't like any but town air of an evening." The captain's answer escaped my ear; but it was soon discovered, by the approach of the driver to open the door, that the invitation was accepted. "We can make room very well," said Rachel, glancing her eye towards the collegian, whose departure I shrewdly suspected was as far from her wishes as it was from the squire's. He took the hint, and springing forward, seated himself between her and Miss Finakin, who was thus once more compelled to endure the *misery* of travelling seven in a coach.

Perhaps some of my readers may wish to know the particulars respecting the captain's conversation and deportment as an inside passenger; if so, they must take the trouble of proceeding a little further, and they shall be related as briefly as possible.

CHAP. XI.

An effect produced by evening shadows regretted by one person in company. The captain addresses the fair Rachel in an appropriate speech. Mrs. Placid answers for her. The word *Quiz* briefly considered, and a few specimens given of the Quizzing art. A political conversation, in which all parties deliver one sentiment. The captain and Miss Finakin arrive at their journey's end. Mrs. Placid pronounces upon an object of misery. A happy mother and an amiable son. An action of true gallantry.

A GENERAL silence, as if by mutual consent, pervaded our party for a full quarter of an hour after the entrance of our gay captain. This circumstance may appear surprising, and may be accounted for in various ways. I supposed the widow's silence arose partly from a conscious ignorance of the suitable topics for conversation with a fine gentleman. Mr. Bustle, I imagined, might be pondering certain ideas of a serious nature, which the widow had suggested. The scholar possibly might be solving a problem in Euclid; and his fair neighbour might be reflecting on the amiable qualities of some favourite broad-brim. The fine lady of course was not wanting for subjects of reflection; and as to myself—but I say nothing of

myself, lest I should incur the charge of egotism —I regretted the sudden alteration we experienced, and I regretted also another circumstance; for now,

"Confessed from yonder slow extinguished clouds,
"All æther softening, sober evening takes
"Her wonted station in the middle-air;
"A thousand shadows at her beck."

And I could have dispensed with that she threw over the face of Mrs. Placid: but she was an arbitrary power, and remonstrance would have been useless.

Our captain was the first to break the solemn pause which had taken place. He was seated opposite to Rachel, and she had been, throughout the day, an object of his attention. "Let me see," said he, addressing himself to her; "if I mistake not, thou art namesake to her who led our father Jacob a tedious twice seven years' courtship: I hope thou wilt not be so cruel." The light glanced sufficiently on the face of the gentle Rachel for me to discover a look of contempt, which I could hardly have supposed her features capable of expressing, accompanied by a turn of face towards her mother, which seemed to say, I wish thou wouldest answer him. "Art thou a Jew, Friend," said Mrs. Placid, looking earnestly at the captain, as if to discover by his

physiognomy, "that thou callest Jacob thy father?"—"O, upon my honour," rejoined he, evidently a little disconcerted, "I forgot that your sect were enemies to a joke—I really ask pardon; I am so accustomed to humour, that I cannot refrain myself as I ought in compliment to my company."

"Don't imagine, Friend," replied the widow, "that our sect are averse to decent mirth, and innocent humour. For myself, though I can say that I am decidedly of the poet's opinion, that

"*Sense* is the diamond, weighty, solid, sound,"

yet I also think with him, that

"When cut by wit, it casts a *brighter beam*;"

therefore if thou canst entertain us by some innocent lively sallies of this agreeable quality, I do assure thee I shall be as well pleased as any other person in the coach."

"Truly, Madam," said the collegian, "were I in the gentleman's situation I should account myself in a miserable one; to be requested by a lady to be witty would destroy every effort I could possibly make for the purpose."

"I don't desire impossibilities," rejoined Mrs. Placid; "if wit be not thy talent, make thyself easy, thou wilt never want it in thy pulpit."

"I assure you, Madam," said the captain, "I am no wit, and what I said to the young lady was designed"————"To convince us of it, I suppose," interrupted Mr. Bustle; "and, by George, you could not have taken a better method; for to speak a word to a modest woman to put her out of countenance, is the silliest thing that can be imagined!"

Rachel, thought I, thou art amply revenged!

It is scarcely probable but that a man of the captain's courage and fashion would take fire at such an abrupt interruption and remark. And no doubt the affair would have produced much altercation between the gentlemen, had it not fortunately happened that the attention of each party was instantly diverted from the subject, by the sudden stopping of the coach in a part of the road where neither house nor person appeared. Miss Finakin expressed an alarm and was sure something must be the matter, at the same time requesting her nephew to make inquiries. He did so, and was informed that an outside passenger had let his umbrella slide from the top of the coach where he had placed it, and was alighted to pick it up at a small distance. "What is it old Codger?" said he. "Yes, Sir," replied the man—"Quiz him, then," rejoined the captain; "give him a run, and here's half a crown for you." The driver

took the hint, smacked his whip, and set off at a speed which our first-rate pedestrians could not have overtaken. "Really, Friend," said Mrs. Placid to the captain, "it gives me much concern, that as thou dost profess to be guided by the impulses of the moment, thine impulses are not better tempered. How wouldest thou like to be served as thou art now serving Friend Codger?"—"A queer put," rejoined the spark; "I have quizzed him all the way. He took a glass of ale at the last house we stopped at—I bobbed his elbow, and pop it went into the boot. As to his umbrella, he has been so careful of it as to march with it in his hand into every inn we have entered, and a musty old proverb, 'Safe bind safe find,' was always spouted on the occasion."

"I should like, Sir," said our scholar, "to know the derivation of the word *Quiz*. From Greece or Rome, Sir?"—"Faith, I can't say," returned the captain; "I am only concerned with its application; *apropos*, I was engaged a few nights ago with three smart fellows, my intimate friends, in a good *quiz* for a watchman. We passed by about three o'clock, the dog was fast asleep in his box; we hoisted our strength, and down we laid him on his side like a snail in his house, taking care though to lock the door, or else he'd have *quizzed* us by marching out."

"Why, Sir," said Mr. Bustle, "this is a stale joke; for when I was a boy, I am sure I read it somewhere; I have a bad memory in reading matters, but I think it was in the Spectator."—"If so, Sir," observed the collegian, "and the young gentlemen were not so well informed, it proves that the bucks of the present age are not degenerated in their intellectual powers of invention. Have you any more *quizzing* achievements of a more modern date to communicate, Sir?"

"We have lost some of our *quizzing* fun," rejoined the spark, "as it respects the ladies, for they are now so used to our quizzing-glasses, that they don't value them of a rush—and being provided with some for themselves, they very wisely level them in return; and so a general *quiz* goes round with all parties. We had a good one though, a little time since, at the play-house. Two of us were in a box with a pretty-looking lass, with her maiden aunt, from the country, and a young prigish chap, who looked like her brother. Their whole souls were wrapped up in the play, a thing never known amongst people of style. We feigned bad colds, and every time Siddons was displaying in Lady Macbeth her finest tones of voice, we contrived to make some noise peculiar to our affected malady. The old lady turning round

with a " Pray, Sir, be so kind as not to cough so close to my ear;" the gentleman between every act observing, with an audible voice, that persons with colds should never go into public; and the young lass looking as cross as her face would permit, venturing now and then to cast a frowning glance, when in return we levelled our glasses, and pop went her face away in a moment. But the best *quiz* I ever knew was at an author, who"——————" I wish, Friend," interrupted Mrs. Placid, " thou wouldest cease for a while from the recital of thy *quizzing* exploits, to consider the case of the poor passenger, now suffering under the influence of one of them—I am sure we must have gone a mile at this rate; it is dark, and our running friend is much to be pitied. Do, I entreat thee, exercise thy sympathy, and desire the coach to stop, that we may wait his arrival."

Contrary to my expectations, our captain hailed the coachman, said old Codger had been *quizzed* enough, and gave him leave to stop; in about ten minutes the *quizzed* object came up with us, almost breathless with speed and anxiety. " Well, Sir," asked the captain, " have you recovered your umbrella?"—" 'Tis safe enough, I have no doubt, Sir," replied he, " on the top of the coach, and if you want your's, you'll find it a mile behind, if you'll take

the same trouble which I have done; for the moment I cast my eye on the lost sheep, I discovered you were the owner, not I." So saying, the man mounted the roof, and called out, as loud as he could,—"Aye, aye, here it is safe enough; if you had taken your's inside with you, you would have found that 'safe bind is safe find'."—"Thou art an ill-tempered old fellow," replied the captain, "for not stooping to pick up thy neighbour's umbrella."—"You should have kept your wise head inside the window," rejoined the man, "when you gave your orders to the driver, and then you would have saved your umbrella." The dialogue here ended, and the captain, a good deal disconcerted, reseated himself. "Verily, Friend," said Mrs. Placid, "thou art *quizzed*."

"But the author," said the collegian;—"allow the gentleman, now, Madam, if you please, to finish his *quizzing* story of the author." The captain proceeded—"A shy bashful fellow, with a phiz as ordinary as ever genius possessed, wrote a volume of poems, and without prefixing his name, sold it to a bookseller. One day I put on the gravest air imaginable, and assured him that I was informed, from indisputable authority, that his *likeness* had been stolen, and that it was the bookseller's intention to prefix it in the title-page of his book, without his

knowledge or permission. Fired at the intelligence, he instantly seated himself, and wrote in the strongest terms of angry resentment to the bookseller, and insisted upon his relinquishing a design so unwarrantable on his part, and so repugnant to his own feelings. The next post brought him a few lines in reply; wherein his bookseller assured him, that, being convinced the profits of his volume would not pay the expense of a copper-plate, and fearing that he would not gain celebrity sufficient to excite a public desire of beholding his physiognomy, he had not taken the liberty of which he complained."

"Really," said the collegian, "I had no idea before of the miseries inflicted by *quizzing*; and being of a sympathetic frame, I will not request further information. Sir, you have been amply revenged of genius and modesty, if they have ever offended you."

"I wish, with all my heart," observed Mr. Bustle, 'that the bucks would set their heads to work, and hit upon some invention to *quiz* BUONAPARTE."

The conversation now took a political direction, and here all parties agreed extremely well, for all were united in one sentiment—That to love their king and country, respect the consti-

tution, and obey its laws, were the duties required from Englishmen. Mr. Bustle, indeed, dwelt largely on our wooden walls, and insular situation, which he insisted would ever be a match for French invaders; which occasioned Mrs. Placid to caution him against presumption, and ascribing the salvation of his country to second causes. And the captain inveighed in the harshest terms against the common enemy, which drew from her a few mild remonstrances, and an exhortation to love our adversaries of every description, and to pray for the spiritual interest even of a BUONAPARTE.

Our political debate was scarcely ended, when the coach stopped five miles short of its final designation, where we found we were to part with the captain and Miss Finakin. The latter declared she was so *miserably* fatigued, that she could with difficulty alight; and in a tone of voice scarcely audible, wished us a good evening. "Good evening to you, Madam," returned Mr. Bustle, in a tone of perfect contrast—"take my advice, go to bed early at night, and rise with the sun in the morning, and you'll soon be stout enough in health, to bear a stage-coach jumble."

"Sure," said the scholar, as we again drove on, "it is no minor *misery* to spend a whole

day with a fine lady!"—"Yes," replied I, "when compared with the misery of being married to one."

"They are poor vain creatures," said Mrs. Placid, "but they ought to be the objects of our pity, rather than of our contempt. I commisserate the state of mind which is constantly occupied by the frivolous occurrences of time, and has no relish for the sublime delights of devotion, but turns with aversion from Christian conversation. To such persons, old age indeed is a terrific enemy, and we cannot wonder to behold the absurd means they take to disguise its approach from others, and, if possible, from themselves. A fine lady in the vale of years, is a miserable object."

After a few more sage observations of a similar nature had fallen from Mrs. Placid, we arrived at the house where our scholar was impatiently expected by his anxious mother. We saw her head peeping over the shoulder of the servant who opened the door. Having previously taken a polite leave of us, and ordered the driver to secure his portmanteau—the youth sprang out of the coach, and into her arms in a moment.

"Happy mother!" said Mrs. Placid, "thy feelings are enviable!" She sighed, and added, "Yet why should I envy thee?"

In a few seconds we reached the inn, where Mrs. Placid was rather surprised at not finding a male acquaintance who had engaged to meet her, and be her escort to the house of her friend. The squire took his leave of her with a hearty shake of the hand, and an assurance that his wife should call on her in less than three days.

I followed the widow and her daughter into the inn—for I assure the reader that whatever opinion he may have formed of me, I had too much gallantry to leave a lady in such a situation. I called for a glass of wine and water, and prevailed on each lady to take one sip. The events which afterwards took place we will relate in the next chapter.

CHAP. XII.

The arrival of a stranger—his adventure in his way to the inn, from which his business was to conduct Mrs. Placid. An unexpected discovery, and a resolution formed by Mrs. Placid. A deeply-regretted farewell takes place. Society pronounced necessary to happiness. The unspeakable blessings conferred on man in the gift of the Gospel.

MRS. Placid expressed some uneasiness at the non-appearance of her friend, but desired me not to defer my departure on that account, as she made no doubt but that he would soon arrive. I assured her, with great sincerity, that I was in no haste to quit her company, in which I had found much satisfaction. "Friend," said she, "thou hast conversed but little to-day, yet from that little I am convinced that, if thou choosest, thou canst talk to the purpose: this being the case, I would recommend thee to be more ready to communicate thy sentiments; for I am not quite sure whether those persons who are capable of rational discourse have a *right* to be silent."

While I was reflecting upon a proper return to this unexpected address from the widow, her friend entered. He was a tall majestic figure, with a tremendous broad-brim on his

head. As there appeared no peculiar marks of animation in his countenance on first beholding her, I concluded no *particular* interest attracted him to the spot. "I fear," said he, "I have kept thee waiting."—"Not long," she returned; "and this friend (looking at me) has taken good care of us." I received from the stranger a look of complacency, and the short sentence, "Thou hast acted kindly."—"It rains," said he, turning again to Mrs. Placid; "at least it did when I came in, and therefore I recommend thee to wait a few minutes, till the shower, as I believe it to be, is over." The lady acquiesced in the proposal, and I was also furnished with an excuse to continue a little longer in her company.

"In my way hither," said the Friend, "I met with an adventure, or rather with a circumstance, which has excited a considerable interest in my mind." He paused. "If it is not impertinent, Sir," said I, "may we be informed?"—"Not in the least, Friend," he returned; and placing a chair by my side, took his seat, with his hat upon his head, and a stout walking-stick supporting his two hands. "Supposing myself too early," said he, "for the arrival of the stage, I called in my way at our county jail, as is frequently my custom, in order to inform myself of the wants of those

sons of misery enclosed within its precincts. I was told that an unhappy wretch had been committed yesterday, taken in the act of robbing on the highway; and seeing that there was no possibility of his escaping from justice, he had confessed other acts of atrocity, particularly being privy to, though not personally concerned in, the robbery and murder of one John Turnround, a few days since, by throwing him into a river. It was supposed he made these confessions for the easement of his conscience; or, possibly, under some vague idea of their efficacy in point of atonement, either to his God or his fellow-creatures."—"I hope," said I to Mrs. Placid, "the landlord of the George will hear of this—pray, Sir, proceed."

"I wished," continued the benevolent stranger, "to be admitted to the presence of the miserable sinner; and I accordingly communicated my desire, and was soon ushered into his cell. He lay upon the ground, as is usually the case, I have observed, with those in his situation: whether this attitude proceeds from the nature of their feeling, their desire of concealment, or,"————"It is not material to determine," interrupted Mrs. Placid, whose lively delivery, and quickness of idea, ill accorded with the deliberation of her friend; and

whose interest was also excited in the story he had to communicate.

" Perhaps not," rejoined the narrator ; " but when I see an effect, I like to investigate the cause. The poor wretch raised his head as I entered, then started with a look of horror in his countenance, and placed his hands before his eyes. I advanced nearer towards him: ' Wherefore,' said I, ' this emotion? Be not alarmed at my plain appearance ; I am come to relieve thy wants, both spiritual and temporal ; the latter indeed I may engage for, but the former can only be attempted under a divine blessing.'—' You are the last person I could wish to see,' rejoined the poor creature, still averting his face.

" ' Thy words,' replied I, ' are to me incomprehensible. Thou canst not be acquainted with my person, and I am not thine accuser.' —' Yes, but you are,' said he, withdrawing his hand, and staring so wildly on me, that I was deliberating whether the most prudential method would not be to summon the turnkey, lest peradventure the object before me was a lunatic, instead of a criminal. ' Yes, but you are,' repeated he, before I had determined what part to act; ' your dress and your speech are my accusers.'—' Nay,' thought I, poor man,

thou art certainly deranged, and my person may be in danger.' I turned round, in the full intention of quitting (at least for the present) the cell, when he appeared more composed, and in earnest tone of voice entreated me to stay. 'I have already confessed,' said he, 'many crimes, and to you I must confess one more, because it was committed against one of your sect. Amiable creature! I see thee now,' cried he, fixing his eyes as it were upon something, which again alarmed me, supposing him, as I had occasion to remark before, to be disordered in his intellects. He still kept staring upon vacancy, and exclaimed, with a tone of voice and a look of depair I believe I shall never forget, 'The eye of God is upon me, and I have robbed the fatherless and the widow!' Friend, thou turnest pale," said the narrator to Mrs. Placid; "art thou unwell? or is thy tender heart too much affected by my relation?"

"Don't be apprehensive about me," replied Mrs. Placid; "I am not ill, but more interested in thy account than thou hast reason to suppose. Be prevailed on to proceed as quickly as thou canst."

"'I conjecture from thy words, although there is little method in them,' replied I, 'that thou hast robbed one of our Society—I

hope not murdered one of them?'—'No, no,' said he; 'God is my witness, I would not have killed her to save my life.'—'This is not thy most aggravated offence then,' returned I. 'No,' rejoined he; 'but it dwells upon my soul with a weight, which nothing but her forgiveness can remove'."—"Thou shalt have it to-morrow," said Mrs. Placid, with an earnestness which alarmed her friend. He raised his hat high upon his forehead, and gazed upon her animated countenance with some surprize. She perceived his astonishment: "It is a long story, Friend," said she, "and I can find a more convenient opportunity of telling thee of it; but I have no doubt that this unhappy man is the one who robbed me about ten years since. Be so kind as to proceed."

"If so," rejoined the friend, "thou hast been in Ireland in the course of thy ministry, of which I do not recollect ever being informed."—"Even so," replied the widow: "thou shalt be informed of this too, which is nothing to the purpose at present." She spoke this with somewhat of an impatient air. "It is much to the purpose," rejoined her deliberate friend, "for this poor unhappy wretch who robbed thee, had, as he informed me, an accomplice in the affair, who heard thee speak in Ireland, and who heard thee not in vain. Thou

wast made the instrument of convincing him of his lost estate, and he died two years afterwards blessing thy name, and in the hope of the pardon of his manifold transgressions through that Saviour thou hadst described." Mrs. Placid did not attempt a reply to this unexpected intelligence, but her countenance strongly expressed the pleasing emotions it occasioned. "I will accompany thee to this poor man to-morrow," said she. "Nothing unforeseen preventing, thou shalt," returned her friend. "I am strongly inclined to hope that those deep convictions which he experiences will be followed by saving effects. He appears also to possess a good understanding, and I am greatly mistaken, if that valuable gift hath not been improved by education; for I perceived no grammatical errors in his conversation, which are usually discoverable in persons of circumscribed information. I should have continued longer with him, but my time was expired, and I was unwilling to make thee wait."

"Did you leave him more composed than you found him, Sir?" said I. "I cannot determine that point," replied he: "he certainly was not so wild in his deportment, and I would fain flatter myself that the words of consolation I addressed to him made some desirable impres-

sion; but of this I shall be a better judge to-morrow."—"How came he informed," asked Mrs. Placid, "of the happy effect of my words on the mind of his guilty companion?"—"By a letter which he wrote to him from Ireland. 'O,' said he, 'that I had attended to that letter! But I answered it in the most hardened style, glorying in my sins!' Now that he answered it at all, argues, I think, a probability that my conjecture of his having received the advantage of an education, is not groundless."

"Very true," replied Mrs. Placid—"I will be obliged by thy looking out to see if the rain be over; for I wish to arrive at the end of my journey." With a slow pace her friend walked out to ascertain the point. "My friend," said she, "has contracted a few peculiarities of manner, for want of a more extended intercourse with the world, which those who know him best, can best excuse."—"I already know him well enough," returned I, "to pardon all his eccentricities, were they ever so numerous."—He soon returned with the intelligence that the rain was much abated, and that he had good reason to believe the clouds nearly dispersed. The widow, therefore, began to make preparations for her departure, securing the drapery of herself and daughter, by a careful folding, from the effects of dirty streets. I had no pretext to

remain longer in her company, yet I felt an unreasonable reluctance to bid her adieu. At length I presented her (with a more gentle air than the squire had previously done) my hand, which she condescended to shake, saying at the same time, with a complacent smile, "Farewell."

I soon arrived at my own habitation, where a faithful male and female servant, a dog and a cat, were waiting to receive me. My solitary situation forcibly affected me. Man, thought I, is formed for society. That of the warm-hearted squire, and the amiable scholar, become by turns the objects of my wishes; but my mind dwelt with peculiar pleasure on the pious and benevolent widow. And had I possessed the indispensable requisite to gain her favour—a broad-brimmed hat—I am not sure whether all my persuasive eloquence would not have been exerted, in the endeavour to make her forget her long-lost Zacharias. I followed her in idea to the melancholy abode of misery, which she purposed on the morrow to visit. There I beheld her treading in the steps of her Divine Master, practising the lesson of forgiveness he had taught her, and publishing, in his name, salvation to the chief of sinners. From this pleasing contemplation my heart was raised into a frame of grateful praise for the unspeakable

blessing of the Gospel, which has not only opened the way to eternal happiness, but meliorates every evil incident to human nature; which, to use the words of a pious writer, "becomes all things to all men—the instruction of babes, the consolation and joy of old age, the provision of poverty, the monitor of riches, *and the refuge of the miserable.*"

THE END.

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