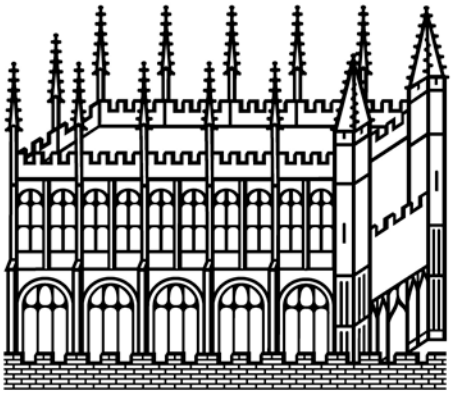

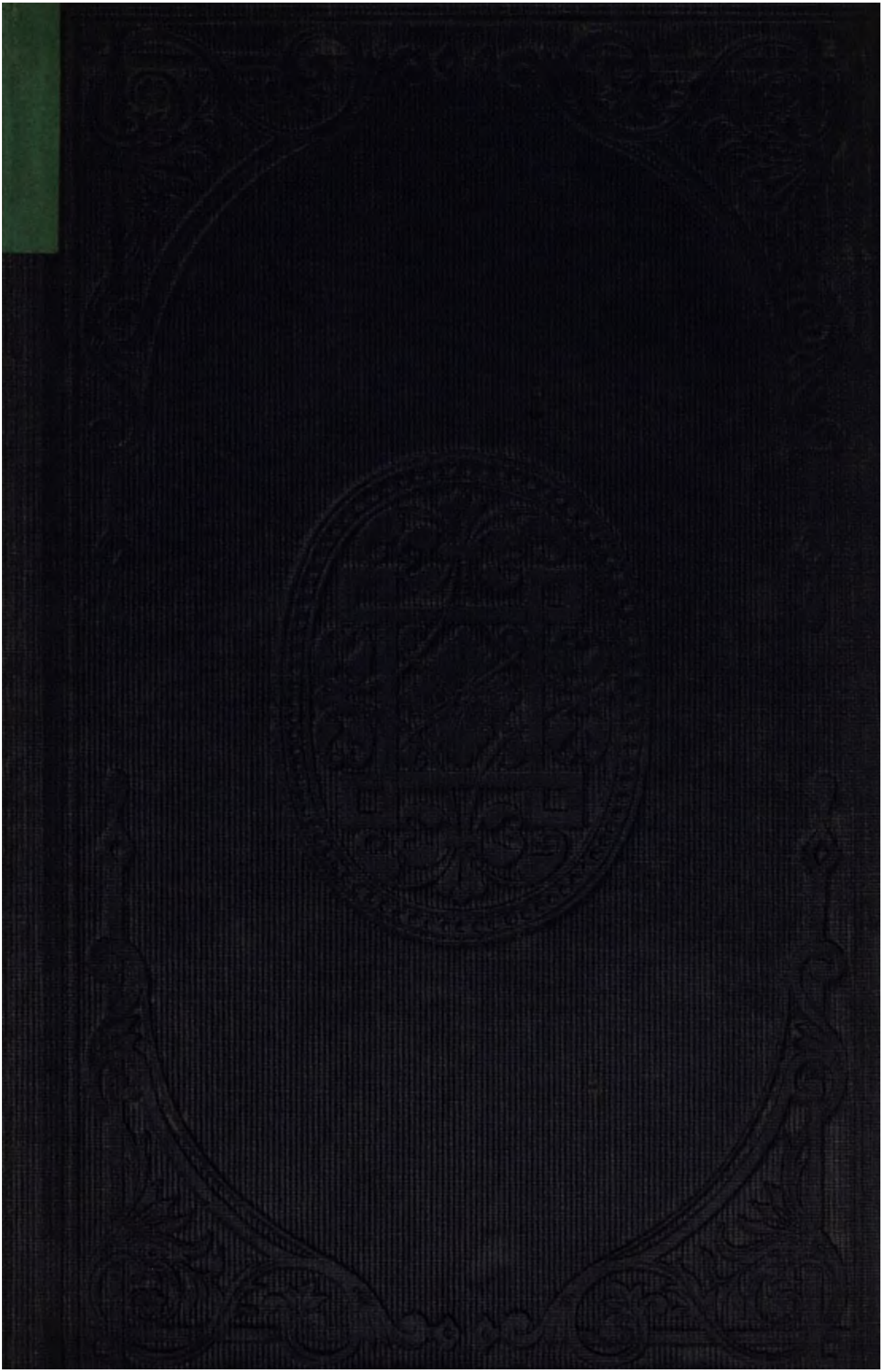

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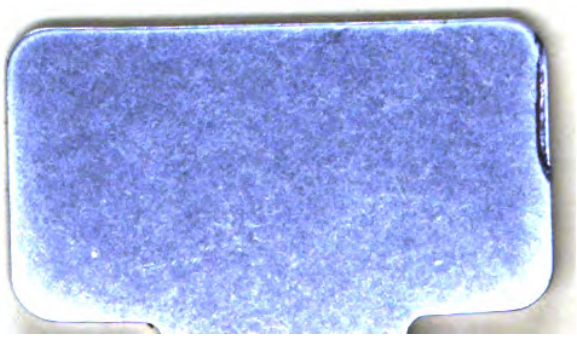

HOME,

AND

ITS RESOURCES;

OR,

GLIMPSES OF NATURE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANICAL LADDER."

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CONTENTS.

GLIMPSES OF NATURE.

CHAPTER I.

OPINIONS ABOUT OTHERS—USING OUR TALENTS—THE SCHOOL—BEES—BIRCH-TREES—SABBATH MORNING—CHURCH—MONDAY'S ARRANGEMENTS.

"I AM very glad those young ladies are gone," said Emily Osborne to her cousin Agnes Gerald; "they are very uninteresting girls; I do not think we shall like them."

Agnes. Perhaps not; but in one visit I do not see how we can tell. The one who talked to me was very agreeable; and they all seemed kind-hearted, and anxious to be useful in the village.

Emily. Oh! yes, I dare say they may wish to make themselves of consequence; but I should not think they had abilities to be useful. Did you see how very awkwardly the youngest moved?

Agnes. I did not notice anything in particular. But indeed I do not think either of us

do right to judge those of whom we know so little. This is their first visit to mamma. We were told before they came they were very agreeable people, and would be a great acquisition to the neighbourhood.

Emily. What harm can anything we say do them? I am sure there can be nothing wrong in forming an opinion of people.

Agnes. It cannot do them any harm; but mamma says we should have a guard over ourselves when we speak,—not only from the injury that what we say may do to others, but on our own account; for if it be our duty to guard our thoughts, how much more when we give them a form in words!

Emily. Now really, dear Agnes, you do carry things too far; as if one must never have any freedom of speech. I know many religious people, but they are not so particular about what they say as you and my aunt are; and I cannot bear to be always under restraint with those I love.

Agnes. I hope, dear Emily, we shall never be under restraint with each other; there can be no real friendship where that is the case.

Emily Osborne and Agnes Gerald were cousins, but had been very differently educated. Mrs. Gerald was a realist, Mrs. Osborne a

nominalist, if I may use such terms. With the one religion was a vital principle; with the other, a beautiful sentiment. Mrs. Gerald knew that the dispositions preparatory to, and in some measure *constitutive* of future happiness, must be formed here: to cultivate them, therefore, in herself and in her children, was her daily, prayerful, watchful effort; for she knew that in the human heart, by nature, they would never grow. To Mrs. Osborne religion had given all that refinement and gentleness which even its externals are ever wont to impart; but it touched not the motives—the hidden springs of her actions; these she never examined, content to glide down the stream of life hoping to enter a fair haven at its close. The cousins had been long separated; it was now arranged they should pass the holidays together. Mr. Montague had purchased an estate in the neighbourhood, and his daughters had that morning returned the visit of Agnes and her mother.

A few days afterwards, Mrs. G. told Agnes she had received a kind note from Mrs. M. inviting them to spend the evening there the following Tuesday. "And I am glad of it," said she, turning to Emily; "for in our quiet village we have so little to amuse you, that I fear you may find your stay with us dull."

Emily. No, dear aunt, I have been so long away from you and Agnes, and have so much to say to you, I am sure I shall not find it dull; and I am really so tired of evening parties at home, that I do not wish to go to any whilst here.

Mrs. G. I have, however, accepted the invitation for Tuesday; and as they are a very intelligent family, I hope you will enjoy the visit.

Agnes. Emily does not seem to think we shall find them intelligent.

Emily. No; I should not think they were clever girls.

Mrs. G. We do not estimate our friends by the amount of talent they possess, but by the use they make of their portion.

Emily. Oh! no; for some of our acquaintance do not possess any, or, as droll Mr. B. says, "What they have would go into a nutshell."

Mrs. G. Well, then we may rejoice they are not required to exert those which would fill a walnut-shell. But I think you are mistaken in saying some have not any: we all have a portion; and how we employ our modicum is the only question of importance to us. Our Saviour, in his beautiful parable of the Talents, did not censure him on whom he had bestowed the

smallest portion for the little use he had made of it, but only because he had not used it at all, but wrapped it up in a napkin, and then accused his benevolent master of injustice and severity, thus showing what is too often our conduct towards our gracious God,—we either over-estimate or undervalue the faculties with which he has entrusted us.

Emily. And which, dear aunt, should you say I did?

Mrs. G. That is scarcely a fair question, and perhaps you are not prepared for a sincere answer; and, as I can give you no other, would it not be better you should not ask it?

Emily. Oh! no. By some people I cannot bear to be told of my faults, as Cowper says,—

> "I wince at every touch;
> They always say too little or too much:"

but indeed *you* may tell *them me*, without my being either cross or offended.

Mrs. G. Well, then, I hope I shall not abuse the liberty you have so generously given me, when I say I think you err in an undue reliance on your mental powers, and a want of right appreciation of your bodily. For instance, I have often heard you say you could play such a piece of music, or acquire an Italian lesson; and

you have found that both required the application of more time and patience than you had imagined. On the other hand, I have sometimes heard you say, Oh! I am sure I cannot do such and such a thing, which seemed to me to need nothing more than a right use of your hands and plain common sense.

Emily. Now, dear aunt, are you not a little too severe?

Mrs. G. Forgive me, dear Emily. We are all too apt to place disinclination in the place of inability, and to depend too much on those mental resources which are weakened and depraved by a fallen nature; we forget that we are mentally and morally as well as physically diseased, and fail to look to the Great Physician, who has warned us that without him we can do nothing. But I did not mean to preach a sermon, and I see that Agnes is impatient to be going.

Agnes. No, mamma; I was only thinking we should hardly have time to go to the school before the day would be getting so warm. Will you meet us on our return in Apsley Grove? The shade there will be delightful; and I should like to show Emily the alterations that have been made: I hope she will think them, as we do, improvements.

Mrs. G. consented to join them on their

return; and when they were gone, she began seriously to consider in what way she could render the visit of her niece profitable as well as pleasurable. She feared her sister was endeavouring to rear a fair structure upon a sandy foundation. She regretted to see in one she so tenderly loved a total ignorance of her own heart's depravity, and of the necessity for that internal conflict which the Christian feels he must ever maintain against the evil propensities of his nature. Emily was affectionate and generous, but, at the same time, vain and worldly. Mrs. G. was anxious to introduce her niece to the Misses Montague, who were very well-informed, amiable young people, but, from not having mingled much in general society, were retiring in their manners, and not likely to attract those who looked only on the outward appearance. Their reading had been confined to a few select authors. If the surface was not extensive, the strata of their knowledge was deep and well arranged, so as to be ready for application when needful.

But we will follow the cousins in their walk. Emily had indeed much to say, and Agnes was an excellent listener. Emily spoke of

"All she loved and all she knew—
The friendly many and the favourite few,"

till they were within a few yards of a pretty rustic building, nearly hidden from their view by clematis and wild roses.

"This is our school," said Agnes. "I dare say you thought I was going to take you to the parish school; but it is quite a different thing. Mamma was the first to set it on foot, as she knew so many destitute children from the manufacturing district. At first we could not engage to take more than twelve; now some friends have joined us, and our funds have allowed us to take twenty. Papa says he thinks we had better limit our school to this number, as when they leave we engage to find them situations, or have them taught some business; therefore we must not undertake more than we can well accomplish."

Emily was interested with all she saw and heard within that rustic little dwelling. The countenances of so many happy, industrious little creatures, all usefully employed, *was* certainly a gratifying sight; and she was earnestly talking with an intelligent little black-eyed girl, when Agnes, approaching from the upper end of the room, said, "Mamma will be waiting for us, if we do not go now."

The lane from the school-house was soon passed; and they had no sooner entered Apsley Grove than Emily exclaimed, "Oh! there is my

dear aunt coming to meet us; she is nicely shaded by these beautiful elms."

"They are beautiful, indeed," said Mrs. G.; "their massive foliage, which completely screens us from the brilliant rays of the sun, forms quite a contrast with this thorny briar-rose peeping now and then between, and dazzling us with its profusion of pink blossoms."

Emily. Where can that large bee be going? What a loud noise it makes! Oh! Agnes, take care. It was just on your bonnet; and if it had flown under it, it might have stung you terribly. I do think there must be a swarm near, and perhaps that great creature is the queen.

Agnes (laughing). I am not at all afraid. It is welcome to look under my bonnet as well as over it if it pleases, for it is only a poor humble-bee seeking moss for its nest.

Emily. What can it want with moss? I thought it lived in a hive, and built its cells of wax.

Agnes. Oh! you are thinking of the honey-bee; quite a gentleman to this little clumsy fellow. Look how he has buried himself in that clump of moss at the bottom of the beech-tree. You need not be afraid, Emily: he has disappeared; and if he had not, he would not

have hurt you. Did you ever notice the diversified manner in which bees and other insects form their habitations?

Emily. No; indeed, I thought all bees lived in hives.

Mrs. G. There are a vast variety even in the class of bees, each proclaiming with an audible voice

"The hand that made us is divine."

The humble-bee, as you have just seen, forms its nest of moss round like a ball; the nest is lined with a kind of coarse wax; the eggs are not placed each in a separate cell, but sometimes as many as thirty are found together; they are provided with a plentiful supply of bee-bread by their careful mother. In collecting honey, the humble-bee is more skilful than the hive-bee; for if it be ever so concealed in the nectary of the flower, it pierces a hole, and easily draws it out.

Agnes. In that decayed tree in the garden, I watched a bee piercing a hole for several days, and never should have supposed it was making its habitation, had not old John, who delights in insects, shown me the curious divisions it had made in a piece of wood about twelve inches long, and not larger than my finger. But I hope

to show you a bee whose taste and skill is equal to that of any fashionable upholsterer, though you do look so incredulous, Emily. But here we are just at home; I am really glad, for it is getting too warm to walk. Perhaps, before you leave us, we can come here again, and make a sketch of that old beech-tree?

Emily. Oh! yes; I shall like to show mamma some of the beauties of Inglesfield. We have not many beeches in our neighbourhood.

Mrs. G. No; they thrive best in a chalky soil, such as we have here.

Agnes. I wonder whether the nuts are of any use, except to feed pigs? I have often seen them groping about for them in the autumn.

Mrs. G. If you or I were to eat them, they would make us very sick and giddy; but I am told the people in Silesia use the oil of them instead of butter.

When they reached home, all were too tired to saunter again, so the remainder of the day was spent in working and reading. The week glided rapidly away in social intercourse and mental pleasures. Emily had always found the Sabbath at home one of the dullest days of the seven; and she feared it would prove doubly so here, where her brothers were not present to diversify the intervals of public worship with

their giddy prattle, or warm admiration of her new dress or pretty bonnet: they were really fond of their sister, who might have had much influence over them, but the value of influence Emily had never yet considered. To Agnes the Sabbath was indeed a delight, holy of the Lord and honourable; she felt

> "It was the day of grace,
> The day to be forgiven,
> The day to seek the Saviour's face,
> And fix her thoughts on heaven;
> To humble her own heart before
> Her God, and gratefully adore.
>
> It was the time to love,
> To know each tie is dearer;
> To feel the links that nature wove
> Were to her heart the nearer."

"Are you almost ready?" said Agnes, as she gently tapped at Emily's door.

Emily. Yes, almost; but why do you get up so soon? We always breakfast an hour later on Sunday morning.

Agnes. And we are always half-an-hour earlier. It is my turn to attend the Sunday-school. Mamma does not wish to hurry you; but she thought you would not like us to assemble for prayers without you.

Emily. Oh! no; I will come directly.

After breakfast, Mrs. G. asked Emily if she would like a walk in the garden before they went to church.

Nature was now dressed in her holiday attire. The borders were gay with flowers; beds of mignionette and stock gillyflowers filled the air with sweet perfume; carnations, roses, and lobellias bloomed in rich luxuriance; while shades of emerald green presented a prospect to gladden the heart and delight the eye.

"Oh! I do enjoy this," said Emily, as, with a light step, she threw open the glass door and bounded forward.

Mrs. G. Yes, all this beauty and brightness is more than a mere vision of delight; and yet, as dear Mrs. Moore says, it is but a gracious earnest—a bounteous prelibation of a happiness which is without measure, and which shall be without end.

Emily. I cannot help feeling Sunday at home a very dull day; I know, dear aunt, with you I may say so, for I can think aloud.

Mrs. G. I hope you will always be able to do so, dear; but how is it you find Sunday dull at home?

Emily. Oh! then I can neither work nor draw, and Harry has nothing to do either, and that makes him say droll things to make me laugh.

And then mamma says, "Harry, it is Sunday; I do not like trifling." And Harry tries to look grave; but I know he does not feel so.

Mrs. G. Nor is there any necessity that either of you should look or feel grave, for we are told that "it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord; yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful." But I must agree with your dear mother; trifling is very wrong, and inconsistent with the Christian at any time. Surely, in all our joyous emotions we should recognise the God who bestows them, and thank him

> "For the spirits that heighten our days of delight,
> And the slumbers that sit on our pillow by night."

We must not, however, talk any more now; for the bells have struck up for church, and we should be in our seats a few minutes before Dr. B., that we may have time to collect our thoughts, and offer up a short prayer for God's blessing on the service.

Emily was interested in Dr. B.'s discourse. He took his text from the fourth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, part of the sixteenth verse, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." He spoke with earnestness and affection; he dwelt much on man's ruin by sin,

his need of regenerating grace, and the glorious prospects opened for him by redeeming mercy. He drew an awful contrast, and showed how the outward man might be flourishing and vigorous, whilst the inner man might be perishing amidst the forms and ordinances of religion. He might wear the garb—he might deceive himself and others by the Christian's name, whilst the real Christian's views and motives never operated on his mind, never influenced a single action of his life, never curbed a sinful temper, never restrained a foolish word or thought. These were influenced by the fear or love of their fellow-creatures. The inner man, which Christ died to save, to redeem from Satan's power, was left to perish in his grasp; for the aid of God's holy spirit was never sought—nay, often resisted.

All were impressed with the discourse, and Emily felt too much so to wish to pass the rest of the day in trifling conversation. The ways of God, in nature, in providence, and in grace, were the topics to which Mr. and Mrs. G. endeavoured to direct the attention of their daughter and niece.

Monday was always a busy day with Agnes. She arranged, as nearly as she could, her different occupations for each day in the week, always making these, however, subservient to the con-

venience and comfort of others. Then there was the school to attend, tracts to distribute, and to direct the gardener's little boy what to do in the portion of ground her father had allotted to her. Into all these pursuits Emily entered with affectionate interest; and they parted at night, mutually pleased and benefited by each other's society.

CHAPTER II.

DEFINITION OF REFINEMENT—ROSES—ORDER, AND ORDERLY HABITS—GRASSES.

THE next afternoon, according to the previous arrangement, they visited Woodlands, Mr. Montague's residence. "How lovely this is!" said Emily, as they passed a pretty lodge, at the entrance, covered with clematis and roses, and entered an avenue where the graceful birch, the varied lilac, the silvery leaves of the abele or white poplar, and the feathering branches of the larch all combined to shed their charms. "Do the Misses Montague live here? I thought they lived at a small house in the town." Mrs. G. smiled at her niece's rapid association of a small house with the Misses Montague's simple attire and unostentatious deportment.

Mrs. G. Mr. Montague has purchased this estate, and I trust he will prove a blessing to our neighbourhood; for its former possessor did little either to benefit or improve the people around.

As she said this, they entered the sweep that led

to the house, and were welcomed by its possessor with all the courtesy of the polished gentleman, and all the kindly warmth of the Christian friend. Emily soon began to feel herself quite at ease and happy, and, whilst conversing with Mrs. Montague, forgot the restraint her presence had at first inspired. After tea Mr. M. led Emily to the piano. She played one of Moore's airs, at that time very fashionable,—

"All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest;
All that's fair was made
But to be lost when sweetest."

She played with taste and execution, and as all were very attentive (except Laura Montague and her cousin Agnes, whose conversation, however, was carried on in an inaudible whisper), she felt highly gratified, and could not help thinking of Mrs. Moore's address to Attention, as a "Mute Angel," and was therefore surprised, when she had finished, to hear Mr. M. say so sweet a melody, executed with so much taste, was certainly deserving of a more grateful sentiment.

"Oh! do you not think it a true one?" said Emily, rising, and placing her hand upon a drooping moss-rose, whose leaves had fallen from an elegant vase that contained it and many other of Flora's favourites.

Mr. Montague. But these are neither our brightest nor our best things; and even these, in departing, leave us a cheering promise that man shall not be left

"Forgotten in the dust,
When fate, relenting, bids the flowers revive."

These fair but frail things (continued Mr. M.), are lent us, perhaps, as beautiful but faint types of blessings in reserve, when, with purified souls and more exalted mental powers, we enter on our purchased and sinless inheritance; and shall we cast them from us with the ungrateful expression that

"All that's bright must fade,"

as though this fleeting scene, in which we are passing tenants, were the final termination of our existence, though we know it to be but the vestibule to a blissful and perfect state?

Mrs. G. said it reminded her of another song by the same author,—

"I never nursed a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its full dark eye,
But when it learnt to know me well,
And loved me—it was sure to die."

Mr. M. The sentiment appears to me equally ungrateful and untrue. Your pets (said he, turning to his little playful Ann) are all thriving.

Anne. Oh! yes, papa; if they were not, I should soon grow tired of them.

Agnes (laughing). That speech is not at all sentimental, Anne.

Anne. What do you mean by sentimental, Miss Gerald?

Mr. M. My little girl has given you a difficult task, and we are all attention to hear your definition.

Agnes. Oh! I am sure I cannot explain it. I know some people whom I think sentimental, and to me they are very disagreeable.

Mrs. G. But to others they may be very agreeable; so we must not let you off with such a definition as that.

Mr. M. I should call it the degenerate weed of sentiment. I wish I could give as accurate a definition of sentimentality as the pleasing authoress of "Private Life" has of refinement.

Miss M. I never knew you before so pleased with a novel, papa.

Mr. M. It does not, I think, belong to works usually so called, where there is too often little of truth and nature. In "Private Life" we have both; but get the book, Laura, and read the extract.

"A union of elegance, purity, and delicacy appears to me to constitute refinement; these, shed-

ding their combined influence on the mind, morals, and manners, produce that peculiar blending of elevation and softness which designates a refined character. Refinement is as intimately connected with virtue as with intellect. By heightening the delicacy of our perceptions, it increases our nice estimation of duty, and that beautiful tenderness of conscience which makes us bear anything rather than our own rebuke. To produce its most lovely fruits, refinement must be blended with Christian principle. It is when under the controlling influence of that principle which maintains an eternal war with *selfishness* under all its forms, and renders the claims of duty not only paramount but dear which hallows the purposes and motives of the human heart—then refinement gives to the character all its inexpressible grace and beautiful finish."

Mrs. G. said she liked much the view the authoress took of refinement, which, like the words taste and sentiment, were often ill understood, though frequently used.

Mrs. M. Yes; we hear of beautiful poetry when the sentiments will not bear the scrutiny of the Scripture test—of refined manners, though they do not proceed from Christian principle. Surely the children of God should have but one standard for all these, and that standard the in-

spired volume! But the shades of evening are coming on, and Laura is impatient to show you our roses; we have several new varieties.

Agnes. Oh! here is my favourite, the common cabbage-rose; I am so glad to find you have not discarded this among all your more refined beauties.

Laura. No, indeed. Though the varieties now amount to above a thousand, still this shall always find a place in our garden; and even its humble relative and ancestor, with its five petals, looks pretty in the hedge beyond.

Mr. M. The common cabbage-rose has been called the hundred-leaved rose from the time of Pliny, from the notion of there being one hundred petals in each rose. It is not known among gardeners what is the cause of the multiplication of petals in double roses and other double flowers; but monsters I can never term them.

Mrs. G. All double flowers are, I have understood, at first procured from seed, and never from cultivating the roots of single-flowering varieties.

Mr. M. True. But it is a singular fact that double-flowering plants sometimes come to blow single, from being grown in a poor soil or neglected in transplantation; so that everything

really beautiful and useful man must obtain by the order appointed by Providence, diligence and labour.

Agnes. Oh! you have a variety indeed; here are some yellow roses.

Miss M. They are not varieties from the others, dear Agnes, but a distinct species; and so difficult to manage, you see they do not blossom well, even with old Godfrey's care. What can Anne be in such a hurry about? Shall we go up this path and meet her?

Anne. I asked Godfrey to gather me a few of these fine red gooseberries for you, Miss Gerald; I would not gather them myself, for fear of staining my frock.

Miss M. I am glad you remember that acids turn vegetable blues to red. I wish we could give Miss Gerald some such gooseberries as I had last year when staying at Dundee; they were very superior in flavour to these, as I was told the gooseberries of Scotland always are. The farther north, the better they are found to be. A cold climate suits them best. In very hot countries, they are never found. You should have brought us some strawberries, from those roots which were replanted, after well washing them. I assure you the experiment has answered very well, as it did with our violets last

year. But the evening is drawing in; shall we return to the house?

They did so; and after partaking of finer fruit than even Anne's zeal and industry had been able to procure them, they returned, by the beams of a lovely moonlight, home.

The next morning, at breakfast, Emily said she liked the Misses Montague much better than she expected she should; and Mr. Montague too, only he was so very plain. She did not mean plain in person, but in speech.

Agnes. Perhaps you mean literal.

Mrs. G. Our friend is a simple Christian, dear Emily. We are not puzzled to decide whose follower he is, as we are, alas! with too many professing Christians who in former ages might have been supposed to be, the disciples of Epicurus rather than of Christ.

Emily. I never heard any one object to those songs before; most persons think them so very beautiful. Moore's words are always admired.

Mrs. G. Mr. Montague told you why he did not. Everything is brought by him to the Scripture test. How much inconsistency might we avoid, how much evil to ourselves and others, did we compare our conduct, opinions, words, and thoughts daily by this sacred chart, which to us is given to guide our wandering feet to heaven!

After breakfast Agnes attended to the wants of several poor children in the village, who came to her for a supply of books, work, &c. Emily took out a cushion she was working for her mamma's sofa, and was busily engaged in arranging the shades when Agnes returned, and said she was ready to walk or work with her cousin, as she liked best.

Emily. Oh! let us walk, if you please, and take our sketch-book with us.

Agnes. I will put on my bonnet, whilst you put away your work.

Emily. I will not stop for that; it is so much trouble to put away everything.

Agnes. Are you not afraid of your silks losing their colour? Mamma has said so much to me about order and arrangement saving both time and temper, that I am now grown very particular—quite an orderly person, I assure you. You may laugh, Emily; but I hope to convince you of the truth of what I say before you leave us. I will show you some lines mamma wrote for me on my last birthday. Here they are. You may copy them if you like.

Emily read the following lines:—

My Agnes, the planets that roll o'er our head,
And shine in their orbits with lustre above;
The seasons in regular change that succeed,
And ne'er from their beautiful order remove;

The shadows of evening, all grateful and calm,
That offer to labour delightful repose,
When exertion and diligence cease from their toil,
And the duties and cares of mortality close;

The dawn-light of morning, all tranquil and calm,
That summons to duty and action again,
And still in their order successively charm,
Ordained for the good and enjoyment of man;

The sphere on whose beautiful surface we move,
That never grows weary, nor hurries its pace;
No wanderings uncertain or varied it knows,
But keeps in the order of heaven its place;—

My Agnes, the harmony reigning on high
From *Order* first sprang on the bosom of night,
When with beauty celestial she gilded the sky,
And summoned from darkness the first beams of light.

So over your head may her influence preside,
And harmony reign in that gentle abode;
Oh! never may Passion's injurious tide
Deform with her ravage the temple of God.

May faith, hope, and charity dwell in that breast,
And knowledge with meekness and prudence combine;
Till summoned at length to the mansions of rest,
Be the glories and pleasures of Paradise thine.

To the lover of picturesque scenery, the neighbourhood of Inglesfield, with its gently undulating meadows, its rich pastures, and its woody slopes, offered many attractions. The sturdy oak and the Scotch firs, like martial warriors,

stretched their spreading branches or bent to the gently waving breeze. Here and there lovely little cottages, resembling Cowper's peasant's nest, met the eye, and were, in appearance at least, the abodes of love, and joy, and peace. One of these drew Emily's attention, and she exclaimed, "Oh! Agnes, will not this cottage make a beautiful sketch?"

Agnes. Yes, it will do for our leading subject; that wood at the back shall be our distance, and this pretty little garden our foreground. Now we have fixed upon our foreground, middle, and distance, we will take the best point of view for our subject. Let us consider. Will not under this tree be a good place?

Emily. Yes, I think it will.

They accordingly commenced, but had not been thus pleasantly occupied long before a neat little girl came out of the cottage, and, bringing a chair that she could with difficulty carry, she said, "Would you not please to sit down, ladies? Mother would come out herself, but she is too ill to leave her room." "Thank you," said Agnes; "I hope we do not intrude by standing here. Is your mother in that room where the curtain is drawn?"

Before the girl had time to answer, a scream from the opposite side of the lane attracted their

notice, and, looking round, they saw a child on the ground crying bitterly.

"What did you throw her down for, Jim?" said a woman, rudely cuffing a boy who was dexterously throwing stones at an unobtrusive donkey in the adjoining meadow. "I did not throw her down. Lizzy threw her down, in pushing by to see the ladies."

A girl, with her arms a-kimbo, was leaning over a little wicket-gate, and too intently staring at Agnes and Emily to reply in her own defence, or to heed her mother's angry vociferations.

Emily. I am sure that screaming must distract the poor woman who is ill.

Agnes. I think it must. But here is the little girl again; what can she want?

Little Girl. If you please, ma'am, mother says she would be very much obliged, if you would allow her to speak with you before you go.

Agnes. I will go to your mother directly; and perhaps, Emily, you will put in that beautiful oak and the rustic bridge beyond it. We may, perhaps, be able to make a pretty drawing from this rough outline.

When Agnes entered the poor woman's chamber, she raised herself in the bed, and said she hoped Miss Gerald would excuse the liberty she

had taken, but, finding she was the lady who had kindly got her little girl into the school, she wished to thank her, and to ask her if she would recommend her child to a place, as she was an industrious girl and very handy at her needle. She could not afford to keep her at home any longer, though, indeed, she knew not how she should do without her.

Agnes. She must be very useful to you, now that you are wholly confined.

Poor Woman. Her sister will do her best to supply her place; and I hope to be better in a little time.

Agnes. Do you suffer much pain?

Poor Woman. Yes, ma'am, a great deal in my head; but I know in whom I have believed, and I am sure He will not lay upon me more than I can bear.

Agnes. I fear the noise of the children opposite must disturb you very much?

Poor Woman. I do not mind it; but I sadly fear neighbour Davison is not bringing up her children in the right way. However, it is not for me to judge others.

Agnes said she would think of her little girl, and hoped she might soon hear of a place for her; and then returning to Emily, who had finished her sketch, they proposed walking home-

wards. They passed the village common (on the border of which the cottage stood which they had been sketching); it was now glowing with yellow furze rich as bullion unalloyed, and decked with summer flowers, not sufficiently conspicuous of themselves to claim attention, but collectively producing a pleasing effect, just as the minute graces of the Christian character tend to embellish and heighten the more solid virtues.

As they entered an avenue of chesnut-trees leading to the high road, Emily exclaimed, "What a pity that these pretty looking nuts, which the children are so fond of picking up, cannot be put to some use!"

Agnes. Dame Hatcher would tell you they are very useful. She sends her grandchildren to pick them up, but not until the nuts are ripe. She then peels and grinds them; and the meal of twenty nuts is sufficient for ten quarts of water, in which either linens or woollens may be washed without any other soap. Mamma has sent her several things to wash. It takes out spots of all kinds; but the clothes must be afterwards rinsed in spring water. I am told that the Turks grind the nuts, and mix them with corn, for their horses; and this is given as a reason for the name. Shall we go round the

road, or will you like to take this turn through the fields?

Emily. I like the fields best. Stop one moment, Agnes; I must gather a handful of this pretty grass.

Agnes. It is the turfy hair grass; I saw a quantity of it on the mantlepiece in that poor woman's cottage. It is really truly elegant, with its tall flowering stems, which are so silky at the top.

Emily. We may take home quite a nosegay of the grasses. Only see how pretty this is.

Agnes. It is the quaking grass; I know it well. The annual meadow grass is the first that appears on a bare plot of earth; you may see plenty of it at the foot of our garden-wall. You cannot think how pretty some of the grasses look, when dried and put on coloured paper. Anne Montague has a book full of them.

Emily. I should never have thought them worth drying; besides, I should not know which to choose, there are so many.

Agnes. There are, indeed; one hundred and twenty different species in this country alone. Of course, she has only selected a few of the most beautiful. Do you see those wild oats yonder, gaily waving above that bramble-bush in the hedge? When papa was in Ireland, he said he often regretted seeing oats growing on

land which would bear good wheat, were the farmers able to give it sufficient manure; but few of them understand the mode of managing wheat. In the mountainous parts of Scotland, and in the hilly parts of Derbyshire, oats are almost the only grain cultivated; so I heard papa say when he returned home last summer. What are you looking at? Oh! the painted lady; I see her, on her favourite thistle.

Emily. Does this butterfly feed on the thistle?

Agnes. Yes, and so do many other insects. I am quite tired. Are not you glad we are just at home?

CHAPTER III.

WANT OF ORDER EXCITING IRRITABILITY—A VISITOR—THOUGHTS—SPEECH.

EMILY was tired, and therefore not prepared for the little annoying circumstance that awaited her. Careful, tidy Bridget, Mrs. Gerald's little maid, had most neatly put away Emily's work, and in so doing had mingled all the shades that Emily had been at so much pains to arrange. Unlike Lizzy Davison, Bridget was exceedingly sensitive of blame. The former had become almost insensible to her mother's oft-repeated threats, and she generally eluded by her dexterity the blows that accompanied them. Not so Bridget. Judicious, mild treatment had softened a naturally rugged temper; still she was most tenacious of character, and undeserved censure, to which she was not accustomed, was more than she could bear in silence. When Emily said she wished she would not be so absurd as to meddle with her things, she hastily replied she did not know there was anything absurd in putting things to rights; it was what her mistress

and Miss Agnes always wished her to do. Emily walked away, not choosing to contend with a servant. Mrs. G. said she was exceedingly sorry for the mischief Bridget's tidiness had occasioned; but when we consider how

> "A harsh reproof or a look unkind,
> May spoil the peace of the heavenly mind,"

as Miss Fry expresses it, she thought we should be careful not to excite by angry words the tempers of those who, from their position in society, were less likely to have their feelings under control than the better educated. Agnes sympathised and suggested remedies: but finding nothing would avail to restore the equanimity of her cousin's temper, she was leaving the room, to seek some occupation for herself, when Mrs. G. remarked that the habit of dwelling on trifling grievances was as injurious to the mind as stooping to the body—both had a contracting effect; and she hoped Emily would be able to remedy the former, and Agnes the latter.

As she finished her sentence, the footman threw open the door, and announced Mrs. Le Clerc. A genteel-looking woman entered, and, seating herself on the sofa, began to apologise for not having visited Mrs. Gerald before; but really she had been so seriously indisposed, she feared she should never have been able to visit any of her

friends again. Poor George, she said, feared so too; he had been almost distracted during her illness. Mrs. Gerald expressed sincere concern, and suggested the probability of change of air proving beneficial.

Yes; Dr. B. said she must go to the sea, and George talked of taking her next week.

Agnes thought this a good opportunity to speak of the sick woman she had seen in the morning, and to name the little girl so desirous of finding a place.

Mrs. Le C. I should be willing to give the poor child a trial under my Phœbe; but, though a most valuable creature to me, she is such a temper, I fear any poor child would lead but a sorry life.

Agnes. If I could raise a little sum for her mother against the winter, I should be very glad; though I scarcely think her life will be spared so long.

Mrs. Le C. said that would certainly be a good plan. The cases of distress were so numerous. She had just put down her name as an annual subscriber to the hospital for consumptive cases. Hearing the clock strike, she hastily rose, saying she was not aware it was so late; but no wonder, for time always flew on doves' wings when in the society of Mrs. G. and her sweet Agnes.

Agnes looked most satirically at Emily, who, as soon as Mrs. Le C. left the room, exclaimed, "Well, I think the whole of that lady's conversation consisted of the personal and possessive pronouns. Shall we form it into a grammatical lesson of parsing, as we used to do at school, Agnes?"

Agnes (laughing). Let us try.

Mrs. G. As you and Emily are so perfectly free from all mental and bodily defects, you are certainly at liberty to animadvert on those of others, though you have not the moral courage to correct them.

Agnes. Dear mamma, I am sure neither of us think ourselves free from faults, and I know I have many bad habits to lament besides; but I do not see how either of us, or even you, could tell Mrs. Le C. that we thought her very egotistical.

Mrs. G. It would neither have been right nor proper for either of us in the present case to have done so: therefore I think we should be silent, and not indulge our own vanity by making the defects of our friends a subject of ridicule; for, be assured, we never point out the faults of others in a ludicrous manner without congratulating ourselves on our fancied exemption. Now, though you may not have precisely our friend's

defect of egotism, yet, believe me, my dear child, you are very ignorant of your own heart, if you do not feel that you have faults quite as heinous in the sight of God. We are all diseased, and suffering under the fatal malady of sin: it does not then become us to be amused by that for which so great a ransom was paid; let us rather sympathise with and pray for each other.

Agnes felt the truth of her mother's remark; but she was not sorry to have the subject changed by the appearance of a letter which the servant brought in.

Agnes. Is it not from dear Mrs. E., mamma?

Mrs. G. It is; and you will be glad to hear that she talks of visiting us in October, on her way to her brother's.

Emily. What a pretty seal, *Paix à mon amie.*

Agnes. "Peace to my friend." Oh! she brings more than peace; she brings with her joy—the joy that a bright sunny day sheds. I always call dear Mrs. E. our sunbeam.

Mrs. G. I wish you would learn to be more impartial and moderate in your estimation of others. The Apostle enjoins us to let our "moderation be known unto all men." Each character has its lights and shadows, as in the natural world, so in the moral. And as time,

my dear child, shall rob you of some of the false glow of enthusiasm, though I trust of none of its genuine warmth, you will learn the truth of the Psalmist's experience, "I have seen an end of all perfection"—all that can be met with in the fallen creature.

Agnes. Well, I think I shall be a long time in discovering all the perfections that are to be met with in dear Mrs. E., and the longer the better; for I do not wish to grow weary of her, as I do of Mrs. Le Clerc, and of many others.

Emily. Mamma says she should like Mrs. E. a great deal better if she were more quiet; she always makes her feel so tired. And Harry says he is sure Mrs. E. has found out the secret of perpetual motion.

Mrs. G. Yet she can be quiet, mentally quiet, under perplexing circumstances, neither hastily seeking to remove them, nor sinking under their depressing influence. And this quietness, my dear girls, she has acquired by simply living, day by day, upon the promises of her God, remembering that, whilst duty is ours, events are his.

Agnes. But, mamma, do you not think that Mrs. E. is very good tempered; and that it is this which makes her so easy and happy, even when, as you and I know, she has been very

anxious and uneasy? I mean, she has had causes which would have made most people so.

Mrs. G. A devotional spirit, united to good sense and a cheerful temper, has given that steadiness to her virtues which they always want when produced and supported only by good natural dispositions.

Emily. The seal is very pretty; I should like to take the impression with gum.

Agnes. I wonder who first invented sealing-wax!

Mrs. G. Francis Rousseau was the first inventor, in 1692. A lady of the name of Longueville made this wax known at the French court, and caused Louis XIII. to use it; after which it was purchased and used throughout Paris. I have read that Rousseau gained by this article £50,000 before the expiration of a year.

Agnes. Can you tell us what was the impression of the first seal ever made?

Mrs. G. No, indeed, I cannot; but the oldest seal, with a red wafer, ever yet found was on a letter written by Dr. Krapf, at Spires, in the year 1624, to the government at Bareuth.

Emily. I have often been puzzled to think of what wafers are made.

Mrs. G. They are made of flour, isinglass,

and a little yeast; this mixture is first coloured, then spread out in very thin cakes over tin plates, dried on a stove, and cut into wafers.

Agnes. Did not you tell me, mamma, that the first paper-mill was erected at Dartford by a German, and that Queen Elizabeth knighted him on that account?

Mrs. G. I did. But the art was brought to much greater perfection by Thomas Watkins, a stationer, in 1713; to him we are principally indebted for our numerous paper-mills.

Emily. I am sure we are all *greatly indebted* to *him.* Mind, dear Agnes, to write to me much more frequently than you have done, and tell me all your thoughts and deeds.

Agnes. That is a large demand, and one which I think even your partiality would repent my having complied with. My thoughts! Oh! I scarcely know them myself; they are so vain: they flit across my mind just as rapidly as those passing clouds, and, like them, they are ever changing. I often try to recall them, but I cannot.

Mrs. G. That is a serious consideration, that they will not bear the scrutiny of your own judgment; and yet there is One who knoweth our thoughts afar off, whose displeasure is more to be feared, and whose favour should be more

earnestly sought, than that of all our fellow-creatures united: besides,—

"Speech is but thoughts' canal,
And thoughts' criterion too."

So do not flatter yourself that your thoughts are altogether hidden from those around you; they manifest their vanity too often, both in word and deed.

Agnes. But, mamma, vain thoughts are not like sinful thoughts?

Mrs. G. And yet the wisest of men has told us that "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. xxiv. 9); and it is so because it is not checked on its entrance into the mind, but too often indulged and cherished as a welcome guest. Speech is bestowed on man alone, because he alone is endowed with reason to guide and govern so important a gift.

Agnes. You forget, mamma, that parrots speak; and do not monkeys, and some other creatures?

Mrs. G. Parrots may be taught to utter certain words; but this is very different from the clear articulation of the human voice. Apes do not articulate: they have no organs sufficiently perfect for this end; and if they had, there is no impulse to the act of speaking. In speaking, a

force of air is first expired; in the second place, the vocal chords at the top of the windpipe must be drawn into accordance by their muscles, the open passages of the throat must be expanded, contracted, or extended: all this must take place before even a single sound is produced; but to articulate that sound, so that it may become a part of language, there must be added an action of the palate, tongue, and lips. The meshes of the spider's web, that you were so admiring this morning, are few compared with the concealed filaments of nerves which move those parts; and if but one be wanting, in vain shall we open our mouths, we shall not be able to utter a single word.

Agnes. Really, dear mamma, I do not understand all you have been saying; but I remember how delighted we used to be to watch my little cousin when he first began to learn to speak.

Mrs. G. Colours and toys first attracted his notice; and then his playful smiles and lively emotions showed his delight. By degrees he tried to give expression to these in words. These Jane, understanding what he meant, repeated; and now you know how cheering and delightful are his playful tones.

Emily. Yes, indeed, aunt; he has grown quite a noisy boy.

Mrs. G. Will you afford us a little harmonious noise at the piano? You must forgive the application of your own term.

The remainder of the evening was spent in music and reading; and at an early hour the family were assembled for prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

A PLEASANT WALK — FLAX — WATERLILIES — BIRDS, WHY SOME EXCEL OTHERS IN VOCAL POWER.

THE next morning Mrs. G. asked Emily if she would be afraid of encountering a walk of three miles in extent. Agnes had accomplished it with ease; and the little picturesque village of Playford, could they reach so far, would amply reward their toil.

Emily. Oh! yes, dear aunt; I am stronger than I was. Dr. P. has ordered me at home to walk every day; and he says the use of the shower-bath will prevent my being so liable to take cold, and so I have found it. Do you know last winter I did not suffer frost and snow to keep me in doors? and having Dr. P.'s sanction, mamma was not frightened, and did not think I should be melted before I came home.

Mrs. G. rejoiced to hear her sister had grown wiser in this respect. She knew how much the tone of temper and feeling is dependant on the health; and she had always been desirous to remedy, as far as lay in her power, the bodily

infirmities of those over whom she had any influence. At the same time, she felt grateful that God had bestowed on her dear child a healthful body and a clear understanding; to these she prayed he would add a sanctified and just, a charitable and humble, a religious and contented spirit. With the joyful consent of both her young friends, she now prepared to accompany them to the village of Playford. They passed by the cottage of the patient invalid, and as they approached it saw the children with tearful eyes waving their blue kerchiefs from the cottage window.

"What can that mean?" inquired Emily.

"Let us go, and we shall see," replied Agnes.

They did so; and at the corner of the lane, they saw good-natured Farmer Beaton, with Susan at his side, in a neat kind of chaise-cart. Too judicious and disinterested to keep her daughter at home, Mrs. D. had gratefully accepted a place that was offered to her at the farmhouse at Playford kept by Farmer B. and his notable wife. This was another inducement to reach the village that morning, and speak a word in Susan's favour. Their path lay through flowery meadows and little woody knolls, for they were not sufficiently large to be dignified by the name of hills. Ascending these, you

reached a spacious common; then a corn-field, with waving sheaves of gold, met your eye, and caused the grateful heart to exclaim, "These indeed are thy glorious works, Parent of Good."

Emily. Oh! what is this beautiful little flower?

Agnes. It shall answer your question. Now hearken,—

"Of me is made the dress you wear,
Like me, you say, is fair light hair:
My flower is purple streaked with blue;
My stem's the part that's worn by you."

Emily. It is flax, I suppose; I wish the bloom did not fall off so soon.

Mrs. G. It is very beautiful, and grows almost in every country in the world. It is highly valuable for its oily seeds, which when crushed yield linseed-oil. When ground, they are used in fomentations; and when boiled, they produce a thick jelly, well known as linseed-tea. To its stem, you are indebted for the neat cambric collar you have on, as well as for lawn, lace, and thread.

Agnes. I wish that poppies were not injurious to the corn; for, really, I think them very ornamental.

Emily. Is not opium obtained from the poppy?

Mrs. G. Not from this species, but from a white poppy very common in the East.

Emily. Is it not sometimes found in this country?

Mrs. G. But rarely; it is not nearly so common as this gay-flower. The poppy is an oleaginous plant, and its seeds yield oil perfectly wholesome. I suppose, you know that oils are divided into fixed and volatile. The latter may be extracted from almost every plant, and used as a perfume; the fixed are extracted from the seeds of a class of plants called oleaginous, of which the poppy is one.

Agnes. I do not know the difference between opium and laudanum.

Mrs. G. Laudanum is made by dissolving opium in spirits of wine.

Emily. This corn-field and open common are very pretty; but, really, I shall be glad when we get into the shade: the sun is almost scorching just here.

Agnes. I thought you would never complain of the sun's bright rays; but we shall soon have the shade of some beautiful limes. Look, mamma, at that little boy; what can he want with those green branches of the ash?

Mrs. G. I dare say his mother has sent him to collect wood for firing. The branches of the ash will burn almost as well when green as when dry: its wood is very tough and elastic, and it

splits easily; so that it is very valuable in making hoops, poles, ladders, and other things, which require strength united with lightness. The bark is used in dyeing, as well as in the tanning of calf-skin.

Agnes. Now we have come to the avenue; you have shade enough here.

Emily. Do you remember, mamma, when we were in Norfolk, we saw a lime-tree nearly ninety feet high, and three in circumference? Did not Mr. C. tell us so?

Mrs. G. Yes. But in Switzerland and in Germany they grow to a still greater size. A great deal of their ornamental work is made of this wood; indeed, it has been called the "Carver's Tree." Small toys are often made from the lime. It forms a capital board for the leatherseller and shoemaker.

As Mrs. G. said this, they turned into the path that led to the farmhouse, where all presented a scene of cheerful industry, order, and neatness. The garden in the front court was gay with flowers of varied tint and form: here the Turk's-cap and lily vied with the dwarf larkspur, maiden pink, and American bindweed. The farmer's cart, with Susan in it, had arrived just before them; and Mrs. Beaton was kindly showing her the dairy, and informing her of

the duties and cares that would more especially devolve on her. She was crossing the small hall that led to the parlour, when Mrs. Gerald advanced, and, after recognising her mistress, said, "I am glad to see you here, Susan, as I have no doubt you will be very comfortable; and I hope, with the grace of God, for which I know you will pray, you will prove a blessing to your employers. We shall call on your mother in a few days, and will let you know from time to time how she is." Mrs. B. then asked the ladies if they would please to take some new-milk and fruit, and afterwards offered to show them her garden, poultry, &c.

Emily's attention was attracted by a sunflower, in which the bees were very busy. Mrs. Beaton said that plant was one of the most useful in her garden: the seeds yielded excellent food for her poultry; and since she had supplied them with it, they had given her a more abundant stock of eggs. The leaves, when dried, formed a good powder for the cattle.

Agnes. Why, Mrs. Beaton, are those cabbage-leaves scattered in front of your fruit-trees against the wall?

Mrs. Beaton. We grease the leaves on the under side, miss, and by that means collect the small snails that would else destroy our fruit.

Agnes. Mamma, had we not better tell George to do the same with our trees in the kitchen-garden?

Mrs. Gerald. I think, from its size, this is the queen-bee of the hive.

Mrs. Beaton. Yes, ma'am, it is; I have often watched her. They are surely the most wonderful little creatures of all insects. When about to lay an egg, she puts her head in the cell, and remains a minute or two, to see if it be fit to receive it; she then withdraws her head, curves her body downwards, and, after laying the egg, withdraws.

Mrs. Gerald. The sagacity of bees is indeed astonishing, and proves to us that none of God's works are too insignificant to claim our attention and repay our investigation.

Mrs. Beaton. I have noticed, too, that when she lays a number of eggs on one side of the comb, instead of laying in all the empty cells in the same quarter, she leaves some, and goes to the other side, and lays in those that are directly opposite to those she has just supplied.

Emily. I have heard that bees are attached to some persons, and not to others. Can that be true?

Mrs. Beaton. It seems very strange, miss; but when my niece is here, I durst not let her go

near the hive, she is sure to be stung, whilst I have had them settle on me often without being hurt.

Mrs. G. I have been told they are guided in this aversion by the scent of different persons.

Agnes. Oh! that seems impossible.

Mrs. G. One fact, you know, is worth a thousand theories; and it is proved that they are very harmless to some, whilst very injurious to others. My watch reminds me that it is more than time to leave this pretty place.

Mrs. B. showed them through the garden-gate that led round by a beautiful piece of water into the high-road.

Agnes. Oh! stop, mamma, one moment. Did you ever see anything more exquisite than these waterlilies?

Mrs. G. They have been considered by some to rival the mangolia of America. It is sometimes called "The Naiad of the River." In Egypt, this flower was dedicated to the moon. It grows luxuriantly on the Nile, and was the more reverenced from that circumstance, since the river was held sacred by the inhabitants of the land. These white blossoms were considered emblematic of chastity, and the bands of virgin priestesses who ministered in the temple wore them wreathed in their hair on

solemn festivals. Had we been a little later we should not have seen its expanded petals; for the waterlily closes at four, and opens at seven in the morning.

Emily. I think it is one of the most beautiful of our water plants. Do not you, aunt?

Mrs. G. The butomus, or flowering rush, is a very elegant pretty thing; but with you, I think it cannot be compared to this Naiad of the River. Rice is the only plant fit for food which grows in the water; and I have read that this nutritious diet supplies one-third of the human race with food.

Emily. Oh, that horrid creature! Did you see it, Agnes?

Agnes. I did not see any horrid creature. What I saw is the water-rat, a miniature representation of the beaver, excepting the form of the tail, which is somewhat different. Only see how adroitly he dives. He has need to be more frightened of us than we have cause to be afraid of him. I dare say you would as much object to seeing the little water-shrew, though I assure you he is a most elegant little creature in my estimation, attired in a coat of silver. It has that appearance from the air contained in the close fur of the coat, which resembles that of the mole.

Emily. Listen! Is not that the note of the nightingale? I should be sure that it was, only I know it will not favour us till some hours later.

Agnes. That is quite a mistaken opinion; for when we were staying at Dover last spring, I used to enjoy hearing it quite early in the morning, in the grove at the back of our house.

Mrs. G.—

> "Now the wise nightingale that leaves her home,
> Pursuing constantly the cheerful spring,
> To foreign groves doth her old music bring."

This is what Waller says of your favourite the nightingale, which visits us from the Continent, crossing the sea where it is narrowest, between Dover and Calais, in the beginning of April. It does not leave us till August, though, during its continuance here, it roams not through all parts of our islands. It is not found in Scotland, Ireland, or North Wales, nor in any of the northern counties, except Yorkshire; nor does it migrate so far to the west as Devonshire and Cornwall. I have been told it is seldom found more than one hundred and seventy miles from Dover.

Emily. Nothing more astonishes me than how the birds know when to come and go from different countries.

Agnes. I am still more surprised at their different notes. I never heard it explained, how some birds have such superior powers of singing to others.

Mrs. G. Mr. Hunter, the celebrated anatomist, dissected several birds, both male and female, in order to discover what were the distinctions of those which excelled in vocal powers; and he found the muscles of a part of the throat, called the larynx, which is the instrument of voice in man as well as birds, strongest in those which had a superior capacity for singing, and stronger in the male than in the female bird. The Honourable Daines Barrington, who has paid great attention to this subject, says, that though the power of singing depends upon the original formation, yet it is greatly promoted by plenty of food.

Emily. I cannot think how they manage in flying. Do they never hurt their little bright eyes against the branches of the trees?

Mrs. G. They are provided with a membrane to protect them, which we have not. Their ears are placed more within, and covered with feathers to shield them against the piercing wind. The bones of birds are much thinner than those of land animals, that they may be lighter and better able to mount in the air; and that the thinness

of the bones should not render them weaker, the substance of the bone itself is stronger and harder. Birds, of all animals, breathe the greatest quantity of air in proportion to their size.

Agnes. There is a nest, mamma, of chaffinches close to my bedroom window, in that old tree nearly covered with ivy; and I have often watched them, and admired the tender care they take of their young.

Mrs. G. Yes, we may learn many an important lesson of self-denial even from a little bird. How much it costs the parent thus to nourish its young, contrary to her habits and her pleasures, formed as she is for liberty, she submits to confinement! When all nature is inviting her to stretch her wings and fly abroad, there she sits, fixed to her nest as if she had not the power to move. Harvey tells us he has often known the female bird wasted to skin and bone by sitting upon her eggs.

Emily. That is indeed wonderful.

Mrs. G. But wonder must not be the only emotion excited; it must be love and gratitude to that Invisible Being who thus provides for the happiness and good of the minutest of his creatures, rendering them all subservient and beneficial to man, and teaching him many an

important lesson by them; for, as Cowper remarks,—

> "Reasoning at every step he treads,
> Man still mistakes his way;
> Whilst meaner things that instinct leads
> Are rarely known to stray."

As Mrs. G. said this, they entered their tranquil, happy home, where we will leave them for the present.

CHAPTER V.

LETTER WRITING — LIGHT — THE EYE — EARLY RISING — AN AGREEABLE TRIP IN CONTEMPLATION.

In the afternoon the cousins separated, each to be engaged with her pen; Emily to write to her mamma, and Agnes to prepare a few lines to enclose in her mother's reply to Mrs E.'s letter. Writing, as Cunningham has remarked, seems to be peculiarly the province of women; it was one of Agnes's most favourite occupations, not as the vehicle of glowing facts or sage opinions, but for those sweet sentiments, and sweeter charities, which are the language and life of the heart. Emily too loved letter-writing, especially when, as on the present occasion, she had much to write about,—Playford and its rustic beauties, the Misses Montague and their beautiful grounds, and Agnes's new school. Both were thus pleasantly employed, when the shades of evening obliged them to lay aside their agreeable tasks, and the servant brought in candles and tea. Agnes was complaining of the feeble rays the candles emitted, and regretting the loss of the

lamp, which had unfortunately been broken the day before.

Mrs. G. We have four lighted candles in this room, and I think you should find them sufficient. I dare say you can form no idea of the space the rays of one lghted candle will fill.

Agnes. Not any very great space, since this room, at the further end, looks dark with four.

Mrs. G. Yet a single lighted candle will fill a cubical space of two miles every way with its rays, before it has lost the least sensible part of its substance.

Emily. Dear aunt, can that be possible?

Mrs. G. So Dr. Dick informs us, and I think he is an author we may safely depend on. Mr. Ferguson has remarked, that if the particles of light were so large that a million of them were equal in bulk to an ordinary grain of sand, we dare no more open our eyes to the light than suffer sand to be shot against them from the mouth of a cannon. But why do you hold your work so near to your eyes? I do not think you will find it assists you in seeing any better.

Agnes. No, indeed, mamma, I do not after a time.

Mrs. G. We see objects most distinctly from five to eight inches from the eye. Now, had the eye been formed for distinct vision at only one

inch distant, the object would have obstructed the light; and had it been beyond five or eight inches distant, we could not have written letters, or read with the convenience and facility we now do. These things, though habitually unobserved by us, are by no means unimportant, as they tend to show us with what minute tenderness our heavenly Parent has ordered all things to contribute to the enjoyment and good of his creatures.

Agnes. There is one thing that often surprises me, when I go out of the light into a dark room, as I did the other day into Susan's mother's. At first I could not see anything; but after I had sat with her a little while, I could see everything distinctly.

Emily. Yes; and when you came out again, and I asked you to look at my sketch, you said, "The light quite dazzles me; I cannot see anything."

Mrs. G. Nor could you till the pupil of your eye had contracted itself, and excluded a portion of those superfluous rays. A circumstance well worthy of our attention is the power which the pupil of the eye possesses of contracting or enlarging the aperture through which the light is admitted. So, in a minute or two after you entered the dark room, the pupil had time to dilate, and then you could perceive the surrounding objects more distinctly.

Agnes. Yes. You know, Emily, I told you I could see the quaking grass on the mantlepiece; but I cannot understand how.

Mrs. G. By means of fibres, that act contrary ways, the iris has the power of enlarging the size of the pupil. I hope, before Emily leaves us, to be able to ask our kind friend Mr. D. to dissect the eye of an ox before you. There you will see the pupil is an oblong, placed across the eye that the animal may be able to see on each side, and avoid all things hurtful, as well as to observe the herbage spread on the ground for its support. In man the eye is placed chiefly to look forward, so as nearly to take in the hemisphere, or half the circumference of the horizon. In birds and some other creatures, the eyes are so fixed as to enable them to see the greater part of the circumference of the horizon at once. Now, what important lesson do you think we should learn from the position of the eye in man?

Emily. Indeed, aunt, I cannot tell.

Agnes. Nor can I just now.

Mrs. G. Should we not learn to raise our mental eye above earthly things—to look forward to our eternal destiny, and to our blessed Redeemer for the influences of his promised Spirit to rectify our disorderly thoughts and raise our low desires?

Emily. Yes; and indeed I do very much wish to think of these things: but do you know, aunt, I cannot; they do not come into my mind as other things do.

Mrs. G. No; nor in other things, which you really desire to accomplish, are you content with mere wishes. When you sent Agnes, on her birthday, that beautiful box, which we all so much value, as a proof of your love, your mamma told me you rose two hours earlier every morning in order to complete it by the day.

Agnes. Yes; it was so very kind of you. Every body admires it; I am sure you do, mamma.

Mrs. G. Indeed, I do; and only regret the sad weakness of our natures, that we put forth our best energies to please our fellow-creatures, whilst we too often shrink from the least exertion of mind or body to please that gracious God in whose favour is life,—not only this frail life in which we yet can discern such astonishing proofs of his wisdom and goodness, but a life of whose blissful existence we can now form no idea, in which we shall no doubt discern manifestations of wisdom, power, and love beyond any of our present conceptions. Perhaps you are neither of you aware how much early rising increases the length of life?

Emily. Oh! aunt, you do not mean to say that

people who get up early live longer than other people do?

Mrs. G. A person who rises at five o'clock in the morning gains in the space of forty years 3 years 121 days 16 hours more time than another person who indulges in sleep till seven in the morning.

Emily. I will think of that, and try to get up earlier. When I sleep too long, and the sun wakes me with his bright beams, I generally have the headache all day.

Mrs. G. A sudden transition from darkness to light, or from light to darkness, would be very prejudicial to us.

Emily. How is it that the light comes and goes so gradually from us?

Mrs. G. You must rise early, and read the explanations of those who have more knowledge on these subjects than I have. I can, however, tell you that this great service is rendered to us by the atmosphere, by means of which we enjoy the sun's reflected and refracted rays after he has set. The rays of the sun, which fall upon the upper parts of the atmosphere, are bent towards the earth, instead of being carried off in a strait line.

Emily. I do not know the meaning of refraction.

Mrs. G. Any fluid or substance through which a ray of light penetrates is called a medium, as air, water, oil, and glass. Now the air near the surface of the earth is more dense than in the higher regions of the atmosphere, which is said to extend about forty-five miles above the surface of the earth. Beyond the atmosphere, the rays of light are supposed to meet with no resistance. The rays of the sun, in passing through our atmosphere, are broken, and proceed as though they had been propelled from some other point. I will show you better what is meant by refraction, if you will get the little tub out of your room; all the sides of which are strait.

Agnes. I will go. Here it is.

Mrs. G. I will put this shilling at the bottom. Now, go and stand by that chair, where you can but just see the shilling. Stand there till I have more than half-filled the tub with water. Now, tell me what you see.

Emily. It seems a great deal further from me than at first.

Mrs. G. Look at this little staff of wood which I put in the water.

Emily. It looks broken; and that part in the water looks higher than it really is. I do understand a little; but, as our old Scotch woman says, "It is but a wee-bit."

Mrs. G. And a wee-bit is all you must expect to gain on these subjects at a time. All knowledge comes to us as the light of the morning sun, by degrees.

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Gerald, who said he had obtained tickets to see the house and grounds at Oakham Park, a seat now belonging to a descendant of Sir Philip Sidney, a gentleman who possessed much of the classic taste of his ancestor. The paintings and sculpture, he had been told, were well worth seeing.

Agnes. How very kind of you, dear papa! But why did you not say a word about it before?

Mr. G. Because I was uncertain whether I could obtain the tickets. They have, however, been sent me to-night; and I know you will be glad to hear that two of the Misses Montague will accompany you.

Agnes. Very glad indeed; for, as somebody says, "Joy flies monopolists." Who is it, mamma?

Mrs. G. Dr. Young, in his "Night Thoughts." But we must be up in good time to-morrow; so I will ring for prayers, and then we will retire to rest.

CHAPTER VI.

A DAY AT OAKHAM — SCULPTURE — HUMMING-BIRDS — PETRIFACTIONS — A STONE TREE — HOW GREATLY HAPPINESS DEPENDS UPON GOOD-TEMPER AND CHEERFULNESS.

Miss E. Smith has remarked, that "A happy day is worth enjoying; it exercises the soul for heaven." But how little of what the world terms happiness is worthy of the name! Certainly, not noisy mirth nor extravagant gaiety, which leaves the mind and body both wearied with undue excitement. Not of this nature was the truly cheerful, pleasant day which Emily and her friends enjoyed at Oakham. The weather was more than usually lovely; the firmament without a cloud,—

> "The bee hummed o'er the level green,
> Where knots of graceful hairbells bowed."

Rapidly the carriage rolled on. Too rapidly, Emily thought; for she longed to get out, and gather a bouquet of wild flowers. But Mrs. Gerald said, they would have so much to engage their attention at the house, that they must not loiter by the way.

At length they reached the porter's-lodge, and wound round a spacious park to the front entrance. Among several beautiful pieces of sculpture, they were particularly struck with one, executed by the classic chisel of Banks, to the memory of a child who died at the early age of six years. The feverish restlessness of disease was exquisitely represented by the ruffled robe; simplicity and elegance appeared in the workmanship; tenderness and innocence in the countenance. A figure of a young girl, on a stag at full speed, attracted the attention of Miss Montague; but for the singularity of the position she could not account, till she heard, from the person who conducted them through the apartments, that it was derived from a German tradition of a girl who lost her way in a forest in Hanover, and was rescued by means of mounting the stag, who led her safely into the open road. Miss M. said it was a most improbable story, but related it to Agnes, who was intently gazing on a little figure, which Emily took to be Cupid. On a nearer approach, however, she perceived that it was an infant boy, of about two years and a half old, with a rabbit in his arms, which he was playfully caressing.

Mrs. G. turned away from an alabaster vase, saying, "We must pass on, or we shall not have time to examine the paintings."

Agnes. Oh, mamma, we must not miss the pretty things in this little boudoir, which I know leads to the picture-gallery.

Emily. What brilliant little creatures!

Agnes. Yes; all in that case are humming-birds. Mamma, what do humming-birds feed on? Surely, they cannot eat berries and seeds, as other birds do—the beak is so small?

Mrs. G. In America they are constantly seen fluttering about the flowers, from whence they extract the honey that supports them. Small, however, as they are, they are very formidable to much larger birds, and especially to one called the gosbec, which attempts to surprise the young humming-birds in their nest, but flies off at the appearance of the mother, who pursues the invader, and, fastening her little talons under his wings, pierces him with her pointed beak till she has disabled him.

Miss M. What a curious looking bird is that in the glasscase under the table?

Mrs. G. The mountain pheasant of Australia; not unlike our domestic fowl in its actions and manner, but its plumage far more gay. Only notice how variegated are the feathers on the head and neck. It is a bird that lives on the ground: never taking to a tree, unless when closely hunted; and then it will run its head into

a bush, and is easily taken. It has a mournful note, very like that of our pigeon. Here is another native from the same part, the brush-turkey. It is gregarious in its habits, associating in flocks which wander among the thick brushwood. It does not hatch its eggs by incubation, or sit upon them like other birds, but collects an immense heap of decaying vegetable matter, and, laying its eggs there, trusts to the heat engendered by the process of decomposition for the development of its young. The mode in which it accumulates these heaps is very singular; never using its beak, but always grasping a quantity in its foot, as you see it has been stuffed, throwing it backwards to one centre, and thus clearing the surface of the ground to a great distance. But we must not stay here any longer, though there are many more of the feathered tribe to interest us, as the golden pheasant, African roller, &c.

Emily. Aunt, the shells in this cabinet we have not looked at.

Mrs. G. Here is one I must give you a short account of. On the back of this fish, called the purple fish, is a folded tunicle, or bag, containing a white liquor, which dyed wool of a bright unfading purple; but the quantity in each fish was so small, that a great number were necessary to

dye one piece of stuff, which caused the ancients to set a great value on their Tyrian dye, so called from being first discovered by the people of Tyre.

Miss M. These petrifactions are very wonderful. Actually, a stone tree!

Mrs. G. It has the appearance of one; but the vegetable undergoes no real alteration. Certain springs abound with sparry particles, which, being by time insinuated into the pores of the substances put into them, acquires the exact form, whilst the vegetable itself decays.

Emily. I never knew exactly what fossil productions meant. My uncle said we should see some beautiful fossil productions here.

Mrs. G. Shells, animals, or parts of animals, found in all parts of the earth, and at almost every depth, contained in the very substance of stones, and evidently petrified. These shells, when compared with others taken from the sea, are found to be of just the same form and nature. At Touraine, in France, more than one hundred miles from the sea, is a plain twenty-seven miles long, the whole of which is composed of shells without any earth between them; and I have heard Mr. B. say, near Reading, a continued bog of oyster-shells is found for the space of nearly five or six acres. Many conjecture from

these things that the ocean formerly covered large portions of the earth which are now dry land.

Agnes had not felt much interested in her mamma's explanation of fossils to her cousin; therefore she had quietly walked into the next room, and was looking at an allegorical piece by Barry, the meaning of which she could not understand.

Mrs. Gerald said it was one of a series of epic paintings, intended to depict the origin and progress of human nature through its varied combinations to the final retribution of happiness or misery. The one before them represented mankind in a savage state, with its attendant misery.

Miss M. remarked she had been reading the life of Burke, in which was an excellent letter addressed to Barry; but she judged from it that he was a very unamiable temper.

Mrs. G. I recollect that letter, in which Burke says, "Believe me, my dear Barry, the arms with which the ill dispositions of others must be combated are moderation and gentleness, great indulgence of others, and distrust of ourselves."

Agnes. Mamma, here is a beautiful head by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Oh, that child! I could almost spring forward and kiss it.

Mrs. G. In temper, Sir Joshua was quite a contrast to the talented artist we have been speaking of. I have at home an extract of the rules of conduct which this amiable man wrote for himself. Before you leave us, Emily, Agnes shall copy them for you.

Emily. Thank you, aunt; I think I like this piece better than any. What a pretty scene that cottage! and the cattle strolling down the lane, as though returning home.

Mrs. G. A sunset-scene, by Gainsborough. You should persuade Harry, who is fond of drawing, to follow the plan of this great artist. When quite a boy, he used to repair to the woods and fields of his native town, Sudbury, and to employ himself in sketching the various subjects that struck his fancy,—a flock of sheep, a shepherd's hut, or the stump of an old tree. It is to these rural studies that we are indebted for that deep feeling of the beautiful in nature which he has shown in all his works.

Several other pieces claimed their attention; after which they strolled into the flower-garden, which presented so many attractions that they reluctantly quitted it, and drove round the park home.

The Misses Montague spent the remainder of

the day at Mr. Gerald's. After dinner, the conversation turned on the characters of the artists whose productions they had been viewing. Speaking of Barry, Mrs. G. said it was much to be deplored that his superior genius and high attainments should have been marred by so captious and censorious a temper; his wayward and ungrateful conduct nearly alienated from him his best friend and patron Burke, under whose patronage and at whose expense he visited Rome. Barry was a native of Cork, and came to London in 1771, when he became acquainted with Burke, then commencing his splendid political course. In 1777 Barry was elected Royal Academician. In 1786 he was appointed Professor of Painting to the Royal Academy; but in 1799 he was removed from his office.

Emily. I think very clever people are often hasty in their temper; and, surely, a hasty temper is much better than a peevish or a sullen one.

Mrs. G. They are all, my dear Emily, of Satanic origin, and equally adverse to the Christian's spiritual progress, and to those fruits of the Spirit mentioned in the closing verses of the fifth chapter of Galatians, by which alone we can be known as the disciples of that blessed

Redeemer who has enjoined us to let our light shine before men. Besides, does not the Apostle admonish us, by his own example, "to exercise ourselves to have a conscience void of offence towards our fellow-creatures?" How can we be said to do this, if, by hasty words or unkind looks, we are exciting that evil which is, alas! uniformly found in depraved man?

Emily. But, aunt, do you think people can always help speaking just as they feel at the moment—angrily?

Mrs. G. We generally find they can, when under the influence of fear or self-interest.

Miss M. Cheerfulness has been called the medicine of life. I am sure good temper may, with equal truth, be termed its nectar.

Mrs. G. To produce this nectar, we will hear what Sir Joshua Reynolds says. Agnes, fetch my book of extracts. One of his maxims was, that the great principle of being happy in this world was not to mind or be affected by small things. To this rule he strictly adhered; and the constant habit of controlling his mind greatly contributed to that evenness of temper, which enabled him to live pleasantly with persons of all descriptions. Agnes, can you repeat those lines by Goldsmith on Reynolds? I

always think them not more complimental than just.

Agnes.—

"There Reynolds is laid; and to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind.
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland:
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart."

CHAPTER VII.

PAINTING—WILD FLOWERS—THE SUNDEW; LINES UPON IT—A WALK—VISIT TO A POOR WOMAN.

THE next morning, at breakfast, Mr. Gerald asked Emily which she preferred, painting or sculpture.

Mrs. G. said she thought it scarcely a fair question, since both had such distinct attractions; they were sister arts, but not rivals.

Agnes. I think you enjoyed seeing the paintings most, Emily; did you not? But I could have spent all the time we were there in the sculpture-room.

Emily. I scarcely know; but I think I do prefer seeing paintings.

Mr. G. Sculpture is by far the most difficult of all the fine arts, though each of them supply us with an inexhaustible fund of recreation and enjoyment, stimulating our mental activity, purifying our taste, and bringing beauty and cheerfulness to animate many of the otherwise monotonous hours of life. How grateful should we be to our heavenly Parent for such various

streams of pleasure following us through all our earthly pilgrimage!

Mrs. G. Sculpture was the favourite art of Greece; and I have read that her sculptors were far more numerous than her painters.

Mr. G. It emigrated from the desolated cities of Greece into Syria and Egypt. Rome imitated, but never equalled Greece in this art. The most celebrated statues which have been rescued from the ruins of time are the Apollo Belvidere, the Medicean Venus, the Hercules, the Dying Gladiator, and the Laocoon.

Agnes. The art of painting was first brought from Rome, was it not?

Mr. G. No. Painting was first brought to perfection in Greece. Rome afterwards cultivated the art; but at the overthrow of the Roman empire, it was buried in the ruins, with literature and science, and did not revive in Italy till the year 1450. Raphael Santio was born in Rome in 1483; he surpassed all modern painters, but died quite in the vigour of manhood, when only in his thirty-eighth year.

Emily. I wonder why so many artists paint their portraits with crimson curtains behind them? I noticed several yesterday.

Mrs. G. In order that the spectator's eye may be prepared to receive the otherwise exaggerated

colours of the portrait. The eye first surveying the red curtain, the colours which represent the flesh in the countenance are softened down, and appear more blended, as they are in nature.

Emily. I do enjoy seeing fine paintings; but, after all, there is nothing to equal a beautiful landscape. When I went to the balcony yesterday, and looked out on the hills and vales around, and then turned my eye to the pictures in the room, they looked so different, I did not think them half so interesting.

Mrs. G. No; the whole effect was gone. The reflected rays from the pictures were too feeble to produce their first impression. If you look on a sheet of paper, and then on a picture, the tints, on the contrary, will appear stronger. Do you remember, the other day, when the oil painting Mr. Montague showed us was taken out of the frame, and placed on a sheet of paper, how offensive the browns and yellows appeared?

Emily. Oh! yes; I never could have supposed the difference the gilt frame made.

Mrs. G. It not only cuts off the surrounding objects, but prepares the eye for the colours of the painting. In looking at paintings, it is very desirable that the retina be not exhausted.

Emily. I do not know exactly what part of the eye the retina is.

Mrs. G. The retina is like fine network, which covers the bottom of the eye, and on it are painted the images of the objects we see. When the eye is fixed upon one point, the lights, shades, colours continually striking upon the same part of the retina, the scene is exhausted. Much of our enjoyment arises from the motion of the eye. If the eye were quite still, sight would be quickly lost. You may try that little experiment by fixing your eye on the corner of that frame of the picture.

Emily. At first, I see all around very distinctly; but oh! dear aunt, I cannot keep my eye there any longer, or I shall see nothing at all.

Mrs. G. If you change the direction of your eye ever so little, the whole scene is again distinctly before you. On coming into the room, you think you see the whole side at once—the mirror, the pictures, the chairs; but you are mistaken. Each object is rapidly but successively presented to your eye. But we have talked almost too long over the breakfast-table. The study of optics, and the wonderful means by which visible objects are presented to us will, I trust, increasingly interest both you and Agnes. The wisdom of our glorious God is admirably displayed in the adaptation of the eye to light, and light to the eye. They are perfectly distinct

from each other, yet so nicely adapted that, had any one circumstance been wanting in either, the functions of vision could not have been performed; and, surely, our benevolent Creator never intended his rational creatures should overlook such exquisite skill to promote their happiness. For instance, on no colour could our eyes rest so long and agreeably as on green, the universal carpet of nature, to which the blue of the sky forms a beautiful contrast. But, Agnes, I should like you to call on Susan's mother to-day. Suppose you go now, before the sun has more power.

Agnes. Yes; and to make a change in the walk, we will go down Bog-lane.

Emily. It has a very unpoetical name, dear Agnes. I hope you do not mean to lead me into a bog.

Agnes. I will promise not to lead you into a bog; but I am not equally sure you will not lead yourself into one after,—the bog pimpernel, from which elegant little flower the lane has its name. And there, too, I have found that curious plant the drosera, or sundew.

Emily. The bog pimpernel I have seen; but I do not think I ever saw the sundew.

Agnes. It is not a very common plant. The lane we shall go down runs by the side of a moor, where there is a great deal of damp ground.

The sundew is more curious than pretty; the leaves are thrown out from the root; they are green, cup-shaped leaves, thickly fringed with hairs of a deep rose colour; these hairs support small drops of liquor like dew, which continue even in the hottest part of the day.

Mrs. G. I do not know by whom they are written; but I once read some very sweet lines on that plant. I think I can repeat them, if you would like me to do so, before you go; they are not long.

Emily. Do, dear aunt, if you please.

Mrs. G.—

"Wouldst thou that to thy lot were given
Thus to receive the dews of heaven;
With heart prepared, like this meek flower,
Come then and hail the dawning hour;

So shall a blessing from on high,
Pure as the rain of summer sky,
Unsullied as the morning dew,
Descend, and all thy soul imbue.

Yes; like the blossom of the waste,
Would we the sky-born waters taste,
To the high fountain's sacred spring,
The chalice let us humbly bring:

So shall we find the streams of heaven,
To him who seeks are freely given;
The morning and the evening dew
Shall still our failing strength renew."

Agnes. Those lines I always admire so much.

Mrs. G. The sentiment, I trust, we shall each of us not only retain, but practise. But now you had better go and put on your bonnets.

The walk down the lane was, indeed, most lovely, and Emily acknowledged Agnes had not exaggerated its beauties. The majestic trees on each side formed quite a Gothic arch, which, whilst it admitted the sun's beams to play around their way, quite excluded his fiercer rays. The air was soft and balmy, and sweetly scented by the dogrose and wild honeysuckle. Here, too, they found the ivy-leaved speedwell. Emily said she did not know there was such a variety of the speedwell.

Agnes. Yes. Indeed, there are a great number in this country; and blue-rock speedwell and flesh-coloured speedwell are found only on the Scotch mountains. But here is a curious plant: do you know what this is?

Emily. No; and I do not see much beauty in it, with its square stems, and small, whitish, whirled flowers.

Agnes. I did not say it was pretty. Its name and its use, I think, you will never guess; it is called gipsey-wort, or water-horehound. It has its first name because the leaves, when boiled, yield a chesnut-brown colour, with which it is

said the gipsies used to stain the skin of the children they stole, that they might appear as dark as their own.

Here they turned out of the lane, and soon after reached the invalid's cottage. They ascended the narrow staircase, and entered the chamber. Emily took her seat by the door; the curtain hid her from the poor woman, which she told Agnes she thought would be more desirable, as she was a stranger.

With a grateful smile, Susan's mother welcomed Agnes, and said, "It was very good to come and read to her, now that her little daughter was gone."

Agnes. I hope you are better than you were.

Poor Woman. Not better, dear lady; but quite happy.

Agnes. I am glad to hear that you feel the truth of mamma's favourite hymn, by Toplady:—

"Safe is the expanded wave,
Gentle as a summer's eve;
Not one object of his care
Ever suffered shipwreck there."

Poor Woman. Not one: nor shall I; for though a most guilty creature, yet my Saviour has died for me. Will you please to read me the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Agnes did so; and after conversing a little

longer, and speaking a few kind words to the little ones below stairs, they returned home. Emily said she never saw any one so near death seem so peaceful and happy as Susan's mother did.

Mrs. G. That peace, my dear Emily, is the result of a hope well founded in the mercy of her covenant God in Christ. Daily looking to her Saviour for strength, she has maintained for many years a conflict with her own sinful nature and the devices of her spiritual enemy. The report of those best competent to judge of her character has been, that through much mental and bodily suffering, she has held a consistent Christian course; and by so doing was blessed of God, and made the instrument of reclaiming a very profligate husband. Since his death, she has brought up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The remark is as true now, my dear niece, as when uttered by our blessed Saviour, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Our evil propensities will not yield to a few weak efforts and ineffectual wishes: watchfulness and prayer must be the weapons of our warfare.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DELICACY AND BEAUTIFUL CONSTRUCTION OF THE EYE—DR. CHALMERS' REMARK—ILLUSTRATION BY DR. DICK.

THE next morning Emily accompanied her aunt and cousin, to pay some little bills in the village, now displaying its gayest attractions. They called on the notable, energetic Mrs. Brown, the linendraper's wife, who, since her husband's death, had carried on the business for herself. Agnes was closely engaged in talking with Mrs. Brown's sister,—a kind-hearted, gossiping person, who had a little to communicate of every body's affairs, and a large budget of her own. In vain Emily touched her cousin, and told her her aunt was going. The long story was not finished, and Agnes must hear the end: so, with a quickened step, she followed her mamma and Emily to the loquacious Mr. Emmett's, the grocer, who was eloquent in his thanks for past favours, and hoped the superior quality of his fresh articles would secure a continuauce of the same; from thence to the taciturn Mr. Reynard's, the plumber, who always seemed to think that the least said

was the soonest mended. Here Agnes' patience was tried; for she much wished to tell her mother the subject of her conversation with Mrs. Brown's sister: but it was impossible; for a troop of noisy urchins, just let loose from school, met them, with a dozen of as noisy geese, who sought the neighbouring pool. So she determined not to revert to it till they were quietly seated in the parlour at home; when she told her mother that Mrs. Brown's sister had been with poor Mary Andrews, to an occulist in London, to have an operation performed on her eye: but she thought he must be a very rough, unfeeling man; for Mrs. Brown's sister said he turned up the poor girl's eyelid, and put his thumb quite on the ball of the eye.

Mrs. G. I do not think that is a proof that he was either rough or unfeeling. All that might be done to either you or me without our suffering half the pain that we might experience by the smallest particle of dust getting into our eyes. The different parts of our nervous system have different properties; and there are nerves insensible to touch and incapable of giving pain, though exquisitely alive to their proper office.

Agnes. I really do not understand you, mamma. I thought the eye was such a very

delicate part, it could not be handled without great pain.

Mrs. G. The eye is indeed a most delicate organ; and not only is it exposed to all the injuries to which the surface of the body is liable, but to be inflamed by particles getting into it, which are so light that they float in the atmosphere, and to which the skin of the body is quite insensible. For the protection of this wonderful organ of sight is a ready motion of the eyelid, and the shedding of tears, which, coming as it were from a little fountain, play over the surface of the eye, and wash away all that is offensive to it. "It is the eye," as Dr. Chalmers beautifully remarks, "which multiplies our acquaintance with the rich and varied creations of our heavenly Father on every side, and gives to man his loftiest command over the scenery of nature."

Emily. I always feel very sorry for poor Mr. Newstead, who sometimes comes to see papa. Do you know, aunt, he is nearly blind? Papa says it is occasioned by the want of two little muscles which serve to lift up the eyelid.

Mrs. G. I have seen that gentleman, and felt much concerned for his misfortune. The eye is moved on all sides by six muscles, admirably well placed; they raise it, lower it, turn it to

the right hand or left, obliquely or round, as occasion requires. The occulist has observed, that by the touch of a thing as light as a feather, the muscles of the eye will be much affected; but if the point of the finger be pressed somewhat rudely between the eyelid, and directly on the eye, he can by such means hold the eye steadily, producing scarcely any sensation, and certainly no pain.

Agnes. I am glad to hear that. I do not like to think any one unkind or unfeeling.

Mrs. G. I fear, my dear Agnes, that word is very often misapplied, as well as the term sensibility. We hear of people having too much sensibility to witness the sufferings of others. The fact is, they have often too much self-love. Do you remember what Mrs. Moore says? that

> "Sighs and tears,
> With all the graceful drapery feeling wears,—
> These are her garb, not *she;* they but express
> Her form, her semblance, her appropriate dress:
> And these fair signs reluctant we relate,
> These lovely symbols may be counterfeit."

Emily. Oh! dear aunt, I hope you do not think that of Agnes. I am sure she would not pretend to feel for others what she did not; would you, Agnes?

Agnes. I hope not.

Mrs. G. I do not think either of you would. I only wish to remind you that real feeling manifests itself in self-denying exertions for the good of its object. The natural emotions of our own hearts must be overcome, if the good of a fellow-creature requires the sacrifice.

Agnes. That we see such a variety of things at once often surprises me. What a boundless prospect we had the other day, at the top of that hill returning from Woodlands!

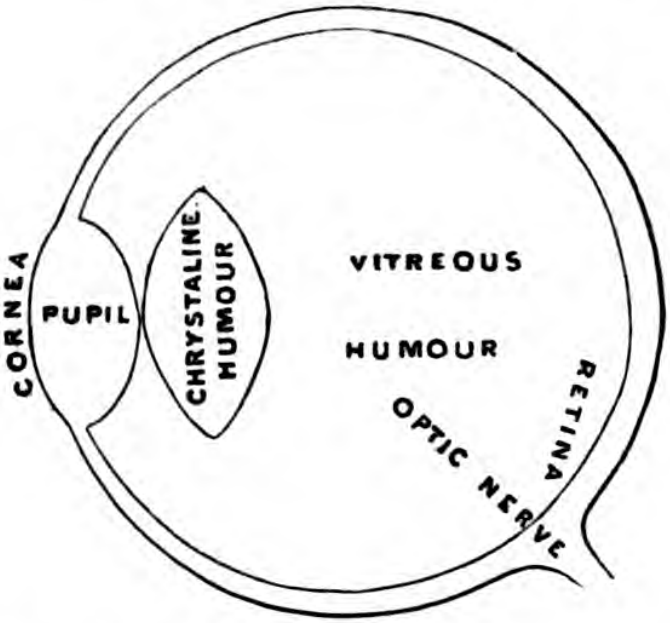
Mrs. G. Yes, indeed. Could a painter delineate on a piece of paper no larger than a sixpence such a landscape, so that every object, with a magnifying glass, might be distinctly seen by the human eye, we should think him superior to all the masters of his art who ever went before him; yet on a space less than half an inch in diameter are delineated all the objects that delight and renovate our mental and bodily powers, whenever we choose to walk abroad and survey them. But we live in our beautiful world too much as strangers, content with admiring the wisdom that is manifest in all that delights the eye and charms the ear, but never inquiring in what particular adaptations and contrivances this wisdom is displayed. When taken out of the cavity that contains it, the eye consists of three

distinct fluids, or humours, as they are called, enclosed within several coverings: the outward one covers the whole eye, except that part which we call the sight. Immediately under this lies another, which covers the whole; it is transparent, like horn, and from that circumstance has received the name of cornea: this membrane contains the aqueous humour, which is a clear, transparent fluid. The choroides is the next, and is transparent in front; beneath the transparent part lies the chrystalline humour, which resembles a clear ball of jelly. The vitreous or glassy humour fills all the back part of the cavity, and gives it its roundness. Behind this is spread the retina, on which is painted the images of the objects we see. The different humours serve to refract and reflect the rays, in such a manner as those only which are required for impressing images on the retina should pass through the pupil.

Agnes. Dear mamma, I cannot clearly understand you.

Mrs. G. And I doubt my ability of making this interesting and wonderful subject at all clear to you; however, I will try. Bring me your slate, and I will endeavour to draw you the illustration which Dr. Dick has given of the eye. No objects can become visible to us unless

some rays of light proceed from them: these rays enter our eyes through the cornea, where



they are refracted, and become still more so as they pass on to the chrystalline humour, for the different humours serve to refract and reflect the rays of light. We have talked long enough on this subject now; I hear your papa's voice. Let us separate, and dress for dinner.

Emily. One word first, dear aunt. I wanted to ask you why you have begun to wear glasses? Your eyes do not look at all weak; and they make you look so much older.

Mrs. G. The gentleman Agnes thought rough and unfeeling once gave me some very useful rules on the use of glasses. He said many persons injured their sight by deferring the use of

them till it was too late to remedy the evil. But I do not think these rules are of any importance to you just yet; however, I will tell you why I have adopted them. I do not see small objects distinctly; and my sight is much more easily fatigued than it used to be, as you observed the other day. I cannot read small print by candle-light. Now, Mr. R. told me, whenever I observed any of these symptoms, no longer to defer the use of spectacles. If you can recollect it, you may give your mamma this information on your return.

Emily. Thank you, dear aunt; you always give me a reason for what you do, and that is what I like.

Mrs. G. Not always, dear Emily; but whenever I can.

CHAPTER IX.

AGNES' DESCRIPTION OF HER OWN HOME—POETRY—COLORS—BENEVOLENCE IN THE SYSTEM OF NATURE.

In the evening Emily was deploring her brother Harry was so soon to leave home for school. "When he is gone, I shall be dull indeed. The people in our village are so monotonous. There is plenty of visiting among us; but then it is round and round to the same dull persons, with their worn-out faces. Do you know, Agnes, they overwhelm me with the spleen. I sometimes long to change the scene; and thank you and my aunt for having made my visit so pleasant here. I begin to long to see mamma; but still dread the thought of parting from you."

Agnes. Oh! do not speak of parting yet; we have scarcely met. But I do not like to hear you say your home is dull. I always think your village and the people in it very pleasant. Besides, you know what Dr. Young says,—

"Those who bask in virtue's beams make their days various—
various
Every hour, as the sun's rays on the dove's neck."

Mrs. G. You are fond of pretty sentiments, dear Agnes, and Dr. Young has furnished you with a very beautiful one; still I should like to know what you understand by basking in virtue's beams. In my opinion, we can only do so as we draw near to the Sun of Righteousness, our blessed Redeemer, making his precepts the guide of our daily conduct, his promises the support and comfort of our hearts. We must not be deceived by glowing language. The Christian's life is a warfare, and must be maintained by self-denying watchfulness and prayer. I do not wish to discourage you; only I would wish you to make use of my past experience. At your age, I was like you, too much looking to outward things for enjoyment. Happiness presented herself in the too homely garb of content; my

"Desire was transport, and content my scorn."

I have since learned that our satisfaction must be derived from an even course of piety, an humble confidence in the mercy of God through Christ, and the hope of eternal life. In this week's newspaper there are some beautiful lines on common blessings, which we are all too apt to despise. I cannot do better than read them to you. Would you like to hear them?

Emily and Agnes. Oh! yes, if you will be so kind.

Mrs. G.—

"It is true that we despise
Blessings common in our eyes:
The fair azure of the sky,
Or the meadow's emerald dye;
Stars that duly every night
Sparkle with exceeding light;
Moonbeams, with enchanting grace,
Making earth a fairy place;
Or in sunny hours of May,
Nature's blessed holiday,
When each bright and joyous thing
Glitters in the pleasant spring:
Common blessings these may be,—
They are beautiful to me.

Health, to gladden every day;
Hope, to banish care away;
Love, prosperity to bless;
Prayer, to sanctify distress:
Common blessings these may be,
But most precious unto me.
Treasures of our common lot,
Not unnoticed or forgot,
Silent as ye come and go,
Grateful hearts your presence know;
Long continued may ye be,
Common blessings unto me."

Agnes. Whilst you have been reading those pretty lines, I have been watching that bright

star in Orion's belt. How much I should like to know if those distant stars we see, and which you once told me were supposed to be suns to other worlds, are inhabited!

Mrs. G. There is every reason to suppose they are, since the light which proceeds from those stars is capable of being separated into the prismatic colours, just as the rays of light proceeding from our sun are. You remember that Sir Isaac Newton discovered that the rays of light, when separated from each other by a prism, or piece of glass cut in a triangular form, each ray retains its original colour.

Agnes. I think I know those seven primary colours: they are violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red; and the beautiful colours we see in birds, flowers, and other things, is not in the objects themselves, but in the rays of light which fall upon them.

Mrs. G. True objects reflect or send back rays of colour, and absorb the rest.

Agnes. If the rays of light had been all of one colour, then, I suppose we should not have the variety we now have in nature?

Mrs. G. No, indeed. The system of nature, in all its parts, exhibits the benevolence, the goodness of our heavenly Father. He knows our insatiable desire of change and variety, and has

amply provided for our enjoyment in the variegated colouring spread over the earth, in the various agreeable sounds that charm our ears, and in the thousand pleasant images which delight our eyes. How agreeable are the feelings produced by our contact with almost everything we have occasion to touch! Pleasure is attached to eating, drinking, and to the movement of our bodies; and the sweet interchange of thought and affection with our fellow-creatures, all remind us of the truth of the assertion, "God is love."

Emily. Whenever I ask papa any of those kind of questions, which Agnes asked you just now, if there are other worlds inhabited, I never can get an answer; he always says they are mere vain conjectures.

Mrs. G. I cannot but think, with your papa, that on matters unrevealed it is unwise to exercise our minds. Let us be content with the sources of knowledge that are open to us.

Agnes. If the colours we see in objects are not in them, but only in the rays of light that fall upon them, I cannot think what makes them reflect one colour more than another.

Mrs. G. Some philosophers have thought that animals, vegetables, and minerals are all formed of an earthy substance that is white; and that

their different colours proceed from the addition of very minute particles of coloured matter, which, like the infusion of a dye to woollen or other articles, gives a tint to the whole. Little, however, is known with certainty on the subject. We might perhaps explain many things, did we pay more attention to such subjects.

Emily. What often delights and astonishes me are the innumerable shades in the colours of flowers.

Mrs. G. Yes; we may ask ourselves, Why are the particles of light so infinitely subtle, if not to paint the most minute objects to our eyes? What exquisite skill appears in the shading of even a flower! There a light pencil seems to have laid on the colours. Then, again, they are blended so as to produce the most agreeable effect to our sight.

Agnes. Mamma, are the rays of light and the rays of heat distinct from each other?

Mrs. G. Yes; they are quite distinct from each other. Solar light consists of three different orders of rays; one producing colours, a second producing heat, and a third chemical effects.

Emily. I never felt any interest in these subjects, Agnes, till I came to see you and my aunt; but you seem to find so much pleasure in them.

I wish I could, for the time often hangs heavily at home.

Mrs. G. Earth, air, and water all present us with such innumerable sources of pleasurable information, that I am surprised any one who has leisure for the investigation of them should complain of being dull. The whole map of human knowledge is spread around us; and when we perceive how many unexplored regions are yet to be cultivated, it should render us humble as well as diligent. Mrs. Moore, your favourite authoress, says, "The woman who derives her principles from the Bible, and her amusements from the beauties of nature, will not pant for praise from surrounding multitudes; her resources and enjoyments are within herself." But you both look wearied. Let us close the evening with some sacred music.

CHAPTER X.

THE RAINBOW — CLOUDS — WEIGHT OF THE ATMOSPHERE — ACCOUNTS OF TRAVELLERS — A WALK AFTER RAIN — DEATH, BUT BRIGHTNESS BEYOND.

"How very fast those clouds are moving, and how dark it looks!" said Emily, as she stood at the window, watching the dancing sunbeams, now hidden by louring clouds, and again faintly gilding the surrounding evergreens, like hope smiling through tears.

Agnes. I think we must not venture to take our walk yet. I wish I knew whether it would rain or not; one loses so much time when the weather is so undecided.

Mrs. G. (smiling.) You remind me of Cowper's lines; for you seem to find our changing clime a happy source of wise conjecture and well-timed discourse. Now, though you cannot give decision to the weather, you can to your own plans. Suppose you and Emily take out your work for half an hour; by that time these portentous clouds may have dispersed.

Emily. What a beautiful rainbow!

Mrs. G. Very beautiful, and a proof that the rain is only partial. Considered merely as a phenomenon of nature, the rainbow is a most interesting object; but when we recollect that God has made it a sign of his pardon to guilty man, and of the covenant he vouchsafes to make with him, it suggests matter for the most instructive reflection.

Agnes. I cannot understand what occasions a rainbow.

Mrs. G. When the sun reflects its rays on the drops of water which fall from the clouds, and we are placed with our backs towards the sun, and have the cloud before us, then we see a rainbow. The varied colours are caused by the refracted rays of the sun on the falling drops of rain. Ancient philosophers could not at all account for this meteor.

Agnes. I think I have read in ancient history that the priests preferred the wood of those trees on which the rainbow appeared to rest for their sacrifices.

Mrs. G. Yes; they supposed that the wood acquired thereby a perfume peculiary agreeable to their deities.

Emily. Since we have been talking, how rapidly those clouds have passed! I think I never saw them move faster; though I heard

Captain B. tell papa that, when he was at Barbadoes, in a hurricane, he has often known them move at the rate of a hundred miles in an hour. I wonder how high the clouds are?

Mrs. G. The clouds are generally supposed to be only vapours exhaled from the sea and land; these seldom, if ever, extend more than two miles above the earth's surface. In general the clouds are suspended at about the height of a mile. The atmosphere in which the clouds float are supposed to extend forty-five miles above the earth's surface, and it presses on the earth with a force proportioned to its height. From experiments made by the barometer, it is proved that the weight of the air on a middle-sized man, such as your uncle, is equal to 32,000 pounds. Even you and I bear no inconsiderable portion of its weight.

Agnes. I should think such a weight would crush papa or any body else to the earth.

Mrs. G. It undoubtedly would, were not its pressure equal in every part, and balanced by the spring of air within us. The necessity of the pressure of the atmosphere is distressingly felt by persons who have ascended very high mountains; I mean, such as are four or five miles above the level of the sea.

Emily. Are there any mountains so lofty?

Mrs. G. Yes, several. Nineteen mountains in the Himalayan Chain are said to be above four miles in perpendicular height. You will find them in the north of Bengal. Acosta, in his relation of a journey among the mountains of Peru, states that he and his companion were seized with such a violent distemper of vomiting and other distressing symptoms, that they would have died had they remained two or three hours longer in that elevated situation. In that case, you see the pressure of the atmosphere was not sufficient to counterbalance the spring of air within the body.

Agnes. Was not papa reading a very interesting account some days ago of what is frequently seen on the tops of very high mountains?

Mrs. G. From the summit of the Andes, in South America, the most grand and novel scenes burst upon the eye. The traveller beholds the upper surface of the clouds far below him, covering the subjacent plain, and surrounding, like a vast sea, the foot of the mountain, while the place on which he stands seems like an island on the ocean; he sees the lightning issuing from the clouds, and hears the thunder rolling far beneath, while all is serene about him.

Emily. Too serene; I should not wish to be there. I have heard persons who came from In-

dia say, they went to reside a few months on the mountains for health. I always thought the air was more wholesome there than in other parts.

Mrs. G. It is; but not on such elevated points of land as we have been speaking of. The atmosphere is formed of two ingredients, called oxygen and nitrogen. In 100 measures of atmospheric air, 21 are oxygen, and 79 nitrogen. Oxygen is necessary for the support of animal life; but nitrogen is destructive of it.

Agnes. Then how can we breathe in it?

Mrs. G. We do indeed breathe it; but being lighter than the air which surrounds us, it rises above our heads before the next inspiration. Now, had nitrogen been heavier than common air, it would have accumulated on the surface of the earth, and produced painful diseases; but being lighter, it rises above our heads, and we never breathe it again till it enters into new combinations. Here again we see a proof of our heavenly Father's wisdom and goodness.— But see! the dark clouds have dispersed, and the horizon looks clear and bright all around. We may venture abroad, without fear of another shower just yet. I want to know how our poor invalid is to-day.

They were soon on the little lawn that led to the garden-gate, now sparkling with crystal gems

from the recent shower, and bent their steps across the village common, where the nodding hairbell, creeping potentilla, and modest daisy formed a pretty contrast with the tufts of wild thyme scattered here and there, on which many a gay insect was rejoicing in the returning sunshine. The blackcap, thrush, and skylark were all mingling their wild melodies.

"Shall we go round the lane, or will the ground be dry enough for us to ascend the hill, and cross a part of the wood?" said Mrs. G. as she lent on the little stile at the end of the common.

Agnes. Oh! the wood, mamma, will be dryer than the lane: and we are not tired, so we can well climb it; and you can lean on the arm of each of us.

Emily. I enjoy having a hill to ascend. Those disagreeable railroads will soon leave us none to climb.

Agnes. I hope they will never succeed in reducing our earth to a plain.

Mrs. G. I do not think we need any of us fear that. Were the earth a plain, we should be deprived of metals and minerals; the vapours would not be condensed; nor should we have either springs or rivers. By the present form of our earth, the water is equally distributed all

over the globe, and the salutary use of the winds is everywhere felt.—But stop, I think I see the shutters closed in the cottage yonder.

They drew near, and found that the tranquillity of death reigned within, though all was blooming life and beauty without. Susan had been sent for early that morning, her mother having died in the previous night.

They entered the cottage, and Mrs. G. went into the chamber alone, leaving Agnes and Emily to comfort the bereaved little ones below. When she returned, Agnes said, "Oh, mamma, do let us go up! there is no fear now of our disturbing dear Mrs. Webster."

Mrs. G. You can go together. It is a profitable sight; there is nothing to pain or alarm in it. May our last end be like hers.

They ascended the narrow stairs. A placid smile rested on the countenance of the departed. Susan stood on one side of the bed, vainly endeavouring to suppress her tears; while an aged neighbour was seated on the other, whose more subdued grief was displayed by now and then a silent tear coursing her furrowed cheek, which she wiped off with her apron.

"She looks sweetly, ladies; does she not?" said the old woman, as she threw back the white handkerchief that covered the face.

Agnes. Very peaceful and happy; and so I suppose she died. Were you with her?

Old Woman. Yes, ma'am; and the last words I could hear her say were, "Jesus is precious."

More she would have told them; but Mrs. G. silently approached, and drew Emily and Agnes down stairs, when, after speaking words of comfort and sympathy to Susan and the other children, they left the cottage.

Agnes. Do not let us go round by the village to choose the silk for my bonnet; for I really do not care whether it is black, brown, or green that I have.

Mrs. G. I thought you wished to have your cousin's opinion before she left us. Besides, we may render a useful service to those we have just left, by procuring them some articles of mourning.

Agnes. I did not think of that. We will go then; but I feel so differently to what I did when we first set out.

Mrs. G. You must not let the scene we have just witnessed render you gloomy or morbid. Surely, there is nothing in seeing the death of a believer in Christ to do this. We have a little longer to wait; but how little none can know! We should not consider life only as a thing we actually possess, but as a blessing we are daily

expending; and if spending in a right manner, introductory to a better life still, purchased and prepared for us, never let us forget at what a *price!* I have, however, to call at Zion House, relative to the character of a servant. If you prefer it, we will go there instead, and send in the afternoon to the shop for some silks, that you may have the benefit of your cousin's taste: We will think of a few articles the little Websters will want; and they can be sent at the same time. We must not let our regret for those who are gone render us insensible of the wants of the living; that would be only the indulgence of a selfish grief.

While Mrs. G. was conversing with the lady of Zion House on the character of a person who had been recommended to her, Emily and Agnes were looking at a portrait that hung over the mantlepiece. When they had left, and were walking home, Emily asked her aunt if she knew who it was taken for?

Mrs. G. It is an excellent likeness of Francis Duke of Bedford, whose name will be long respected as the promoter of useful science and the illustrious patron of agriculture. Westmacott has erected a beautiful statue to his memory, in which he has represented him holding in one hand a bunch of corn, and resting the other on a plough.

Agnes. He looks quite a young man in the picture. Did he die young?

Mrs. G. He was thirty-seven years old when he died. The life of man should not, however, be reckoned by the days and hours he has existed, but by the benefit he has conferred on his fellow-men. Do you remember Dr. Young's beautiful lines?—

"That life is long which answers life's great end;
The time that bears no fruit deserves no name;
The man of wisdom is the man of years;
In hoary youth Methusalems may die."

But here we are at home. You will be glad to rest a little before dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

TAKING A WALK — OBJECTS IN VIEW — BOTANISING — FERNS — CONTENTMENT IN POVERTY.

THE next day, when Mrs. G. was reading, she turned to Agnes, and, giving her the book, asked her if she did not fully enter into the truth of that sentiment, to which she pointed:—

"Se vedi alcuno addolorato, e piangente; non piangere. Stoico mon sai tu che le lagrime d'un uomo compassionevole sono per gl' Infelice piu dolce della rugiada su l'erbe appassite."

Agnes. I do not know that I can translate it correctly; but I think it means, that whilst some say, "Do not let our happiness be interrupted by the sorrows of others," the author remarks (such is the sentiment of the Stoic), "that sympathy to the afflicted is as cheering and refreshing as dew to the parched herb."

Mrs. G. Yes; and when our sympathies are excited by the sufferings of those around us, there is a counterbalancing relief in the prompt benevolence and active usefulness they excite. I should like you and Emily to call this morning

on the Misses Montague, and ask them if they do not think we could allow the little Websters to be altogether at the school for the present, under the care of the mistress, till matters are finally arranged for them to go to their relatives in the country. Susan must not give up her place to take care of them, and old neighbour Brown has her own grandchildren to attend to; therefore, if other friends consent, I think this will be the most eligible plan.

Emily and Agnes were soon on their road to the Misses Montague and other friends, all of whom approved the plan of placing the little Websters under the care of Mary Dormant, the schoolmistress; and as the morning was bright and clear, they agreed to take a stroll together round the park at Woodlands, and call at the school on their way home. Agnes only feared the walk would be too far for her cousin; but Emily reminded her that she had not been overtired when they went to Playford. "Besides," said Miss Montague, "whilst my sister is botanising, we can rest at some cottage by the way. I want to introduce you to a new acquaintance I have made, quite an original, and one of the happiest and most independent old women I have ever met with. I will go and ask the housekeeper for some seed-loaf, which,

perhaps, Catherine will condescend to allow to be put into her tin case, till she finds something more worthy to occupy so dignified a situation.

Catherine. That I shall soon do; so I think you had better provide a basket.

A basket was soon found, the lawn crossed, and hill and dale stretching before them, affording varied and interesting objects of inquiry and delight.

Agnes. Oh! here is something for your box, Catherine.

"Have ye e'er watched it budding
With each stem, and leaf wrapped small
Coiled up within each other
Like a round and hairy ball?"

Catherine. Yes, indeed; I have often watched it. This is one of my favourites, the lady-fern. Only notice the rolling up of the fronds.

Emily. What do you mean by the fronds?

Catherine. Fronds are young fern leaves, entire or divided. Ferns are mostly found in islands. Our country furnishes between forty and fifty species.

Emily. How can you ever know them all?

Catherine. Oh! I do not suppose I ever shall know them all; but I like to make a selection of the most beautiful, and this is one. Only see what an admirable contrivance for the preservation of

its tender leaves. During its growth, it gradually uncoils. I must show you our fernery. We are so much indebted, as well as many other persons, to Mr. W. for his discovery of plants growing well in close cases, and not even requiring a supply of fresh air or water: for when they are put in, the earth is well moistened with water; this evaporates, and trickles down the glass-case at night. But, instead of a glass-case, we have a window enclosed out of our little boudoir. The shells you gave us, dear Agnes, look so pretty among our plants.

Emily. I have been frightened of ever attempting to study botany, by the long list of hard names; and after one has learnt the classes and orders, it does not seem to me of much use. I gain nothing by knowing the number of stamens plants contain.

Catherine. Oh! indeed, you are mistaken; you gain a great deal of useful knowledge. For instance, with the word *Icosandria*, which means plants with numerous stamens, and which you think a hard and unintelligible word, comes to my mind most of our delicious fruit-trees; and I know that in that class are no poisonous plants: and so it is with the names of all the different classes,—they all bring with them some interesting and serviceable knowledge.

Agnes. I knew Kate would defend her favourite pursuit; but I must say I much prefer the natural system to the Linnean. The word *Rosaceæ* is much easier to remember, and brings with it just the same useful information as the term *Icosandria.*—But stop. What is this? I often see children squeezing its juice, which, they say, cures their warts.

Catherine. The greater *Celandine.* It is in the class *Polyandria*—the same class as the poppy; and it contains a great many poisonous plants. Most of this order are natives of Europe.

Emily (laughing). Here, Catherine, is something very precious to you, I suppose,—the shepherd's purse. For my part, I see no beauty in it; so the shepherd may keep his purse for me.

Catherine. Oh! you must not despise this: it belongs to the cruciform tribe; and in it are found plants having medicinal properties of no mean value, being stimulating and anti-scorbutic. And though you do not admire the shepherd's purse, can anything be prettier than this little delicate white flower—lady's-smock, or cuckoo-plant, which you please to call it,—one of the same tribe with many of our nice vegetables, such as cauliflowers, turnips, and others.

Agnes. You ought not to despise any plant in

the same family with our favourite, the emblem of love in adversity, the wallflower,—

> "The weed is green, when grey the wall;
> And blossoms rise, when turrets fall."

But where is your sister leading us? These thickets and this high grass seem to warn us not to approach any farther.

Miss M. I will not lead you to a giant's cave, nor yet to a fairy's bower, I promise you.

Just then they peeped upon a rustic little building, nearly hidden by majestic forest trees; and in the front of its richly-cultivated little garden was one who appeared bent beneath the weight of years,—not of sorrows, for her countenance had all the cheerful serenity of youth. Peace seemed the inmate of that breast—a peace which the world could neither give nor take away.

"I hope we do not intrude," said Miss M., advancing.

Old Woman. Intrude! Dear me, no; you are heartily welcome to the best my humble place can afford.

So saying, she placed some seats in the cool porch, fragrant with roses and honeysuckle; and then went and gathered some of her finest gooseberries, of which she begged them to partake.

Agnes. Do you live here quite alone?

Old Woman. Yes, miss.

Emily. Are you not afraid in the winter? You must be very lonely.

Old Woman. Afeared, dear! of what? I never saw anything worse than myself, though many's the dark night I've walked home from chapel through the wood. And as to lonely,—why I cannot be that; I have plenty of company.

Emily. Do many persons come to see you here?

Old Woman. No; I cannot say many people come to see me. But I have one Friend always near; and he sends the blackbirds, robins, and chaffinches to breakfast with me every morning, —for I always give them their breakfast before I takes my own; and then, in return, they gives me as fine a concert as ever you heard at the castle, or anywhere else.

Miss M. You contrive then to be happy here in this lonely nook?

Old Woman. Dear me, miss! it is not I that contrives, but One who contrives for me. Sure you know who I mean? that Almighty Friend that loveth at all times. His presence could make a desert happy; and as you see, ladies, this place is no desert. Would you please to have a nosegay out of my garden? You do

not often see finer roses than these (said she, plucking one bending beneath its veil of mossy beauty); and as for my carnations, I got a prize for them last year at the Flower Show.

Each of our young friends were presented with a splendid bouquet, and, after thanking their hospitable hostess, they took their leave. They had scarcely passed the wood, and entered the shady lane, when Miss Montague exclaimed, "Oh! there is papa coming to meet us."

Mr. Montague said he had been on some business to the castle, and hoped he might meet them; for when they strolled out on a bright, sunny morning, they sometimes forgot to take time by the forelock.

Miss. M. We will hasten home now, papa. Only we must stop one minute at the school, just to speak about the little Websters.

Emily, whose spirits were much elated by cheerful society and a remarkably fine day, was more than usually sportive, and ran on before, to gather many a creeping weed, as she supposed, for Catherine's tin case; for all of which Catherine expressed herself exceedingly obliged.

Emily. Now really, dear Kate, I only gave them you in joke. Can you value such worthless things?

Catherine. You do not deserve I should tell

you their uses; however, if you will make no more such naughty speeches, I will tell you that this little thing with the crowded flowers is eye-bright.

Emily. Well; you do not want that, for your eyes are bright enough.

Catherine. If I do not want it now, I may at some time. It was once used to make an ointment to cure dimness of sight, and that is the reason of its name. This little purple-reddish flower in a close spike is self-heal, and formerly employed in curing wounds. Then here is toad-flax; and I hope you will respect that, for the sake of its relation flax-linum. I suppose you know we are indebted to that plant for our beautiful lawn, lace, and cambric.

Mr. Montague turned round, and asked what they were stopping for.

Kate (laughing). Oh, papa! I am only defending some of my favourites. Miss Gerald thinks the study of botany can be of no use.

Mr. M. I am sorry to hear that. Perhaps Miss Gerald does not know all the parts of plants are useful for some purpose or other. From the roots arise medicaments, food, and fuel to make pitch, dyes, and utensils of every kind. Even the bark is useful in medicine, and for tanning. The ashes are necessary for bleaching cloth,

manuring land, and making saltpetre; and pot-ashes are used in dyeing. Pitch and tar are made from rosin. You, who are so fond of music, Miss Gerald, and whose happy talent so often delights others, should remember that rosin is used for varnishing, and rubbing the bow-strings of musical instruments, to render them more sonorous. So, then, you see all lovers of music are indebted to the vegetable world.

Just at this moment they reached the school-gate; and Mary Dormant, after hearing the purport of their visit, said she should be happy to do all in her power to supply a mother's place to the little Websters, till they were better provided for.

Here Emily and Agnes parted from their friends, who took the road to the right; whilst they crossed the common to the left, and soon reached home.

CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER—A JOURNEY TO WARWICK—STEAM AND STEAM-BOATS—HAPPY GREETINGS.

DURING her daughter and niece's absence, Mrs. Gerald received a letter from her brother, which gave her some uneasiness, as he did not write in his usually cheerful, easy strain. He spoke of Emily's return, and wished it not to be delayed, as her mamma had been suffering from cough and indisposition. He seemed, from the tone of his letter, to be labouring under mental anxiety, which his tenderness made him unwilling to excite in the minds of those dear to him; but Mrs. G. was too keen an interpreter of her brother's feelings not to perceive this, and lost no time in consulting with her husband on the practicability of herself and Agnes returning with Emily.

Mr. G. only regretted the cause of their separation, but promised to come in a few weeks and fetch them home.

On Emily's return, Mrs. G. read her part of the letter, and told her and Agnes of this arrangement.

"Oh, that will be delightful!" said Agnes, seeing her cousin look more than usually thoughtful and anxious. "We shall not have to repeat that dreaded word—Farewell. You know,

> 'Farewells, they say, should in utterance die—
> In writing but seldom appear;
> Never heard but in the breath of a sigh,
> Never seen but in the fall of a tear.'

Now, ours shall neither be seen nor heard; so do not, dear Emily, look so grave."

Emily. I cannot help feeling very anxious about dear mamma. I am sure she must be very ill, or papa would not write for me to return yet.

Mrs. G. I do not apprehend your mamma is so very ill; and by unnecessary fears you weaken your own mental strength to bear the trial, should she be so.

Emily. I wish we could go directly. I do not think I can enjoy anything till I know how mamma really is.

Mrs. G. We will set off the day after to-morrow; and as Agnes must be occupied to-morrow in arranging the work and books for the children during our absence, perhaps you had better both of you collect the things you wish to take with you this evening.

Mrs. G. knew that the best antidote to a state of suspense was exertion both of body and mind.

The little boudoir adjoining Emily's sleeping-room was quickly filled with sundry articles; but, to the chagrin of our young friends, it was found the following evening that neither Bridget's indefatigable patience and perseverance, nor Agnes' skill in placing and replacing her dresses, could afford sufficient room to admit her herbarium, music-portfolio, and drawing-box. Emily urged strongly that the herbarium should be left behind; that the music and drawing-box would then find a place: but Agnes, who remembered the benefit she had derived on a former visit from her uncle's botanical knowledge, and the beautiful plants he had collected and arranged in her book for her, could not consent to this; and as Mrs. G. entered the room at this moment, they referred the subject to her.

Mrs. G. said Agnes must consider and decide upon which pursuit would afford her the most gratification: that in trifles, as well as in matters of more importance, there was generally an even balance of good; but that persons often erred in endeavouring to grasp too much, and unite pleasures of an opposite nature.

After a little further discussion, the paint-box was left behind.

Each trunk carefully packed and corded, a tranquil and refreshing night's rest prepared

our young friends for their journey the following day, which they commenced after breakfast in Mr. G.'s carriage, in which they were to proceed to the railroad station.

Agnes. I wish we were going all the way in this comfortable carriage,—one can see nothing of the scenery of the country in travelling by the railroad; though, for poor Emily's sake, I ought to be glad of it. On the present occasion, we shall be much sooner at our journey's end.

Mrs. G. And you ought to rejoice, my dear Agnes, for another reason, in the application of steam to so important a purpose; for we have every reason to believe that the recent discoveries in science will tend much to aid in the spread of the glorious gospel through all parts of the earth. For instance, our missionaries will be able to reach foreign lands at far less expense, and far more expeditiously than they have done.

Emily. I dare say Agnes never thought of that. I am sure I should never have thought of it either. Do you know, aunt, who made the first steam-vessel?

Mrs. G. The first was made by an Englishman of the name of Hull, who, in 1736, obtained a patent for the invention of a steamboat, to be moved with a crank and paddles; but it was in 1807 that the invention was fully brought into

practical use by Mr. Fulton, who had the advice and assistance of Mr. Bell, a Scottish engineer. This gentleman, who did so much to promote steam navigation in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, never received any public reward for his services. I have been told he died in comparative poverty. He built the "Comet," of twenty-three tons and four-horse power, to ply on the Clyde.

Agnes. What ingratitude! I wonder he did not seek some other country in which to display his talents.

Mrs. G. We will hope he was actuated by higher motives than merely the desire of pecuniary emolument, or the honour that cometh from man. The Christian even in this world has the advantage of those who act from such views only; for whether his plan succeed or not, he has the consolation of knowing he is seeking to please that God who seeth in secret. In this instance, Mr. Bell, in conjunction with others, must have been aware he had conferred a lasting benefit on mankind. The improvements, however, in the application of steam to travelling have been very gradual. When I was a girl, it would not have been believed that intelligence might pass and repass between Great Britain and the continent of America in twenty-three or twenty-four

days; so that you might receive an answer to the letter you sent to George Anson in less than three weeks and a half.

There the carriage stopped, as they had arrived at the station; and after a few hours' ride, they entered the ancient and interesting town of Warwick, situated on a rocky eminence above the Avon.

Edge Hill House, the abode of Emily's parents, was just at the outskirts of the town; and when, at a less rapid rate, they proceeded in Mr. Osborne's carriage from the station to Mr. Osborne's residence, though Agnes had often travelled the road before, yet, as they passed rich glowing corn-fields, and pasture lands of varied hue, from the tenderest green to deeper shades of almost brown, divided here and there by ploughed land, Agnes could not help exclaiming, "Oh, mamma! is not this lovely?"

Scarcely had Mrs. G. time to make a few more remarks on the aspect of nature around them, when the carriage stopped, and Emily was locked in the arms of her fond father. Indeed the cordial greetings of affection were visible in every face.

"This is very kind of you," said Mr. Osborne, turning to his sister. "You have read the wishes which I scarcely dared express; for I

know how reluctant you are to leave home, and how numerous and important are the claims that detain you there."

Mrs. G. Still more important, my dear brother, are those which have brought me here. May we go to Mary's room, or would it be advisable you should tell her of our arrival first?

Mr. Osborne. She is aware of that already.

Emily had been no sooner disengaged from her father's arms than she had hastened up stairs, and, in the ante-room adjoining her mamma's bedroom, found her on the sofa. "My Emily!" was all she could say, and a flood of tears relieved emotions which were too deep for utterance.

This would not have been the case under other circumstances, for Emily had often been separated from her mamma for a much longer period; but the feeling of bodily weakness, which incapacitated Mrs. Osborne from going forward to meet those so dear to her, and the sudden appearance of her child, was too much for her enfeebled frame.

> "Ah! who celestial bliss would seek
> On this terrestrial sphere,
> When even joy can only speak,
> Like sorrow, in a tear?"

Mrs. Osborne received her sister and niece with unfeigned emotions of pleasure. "This is

very kind in you," said she; "I felt persuaded you would come. I have sadly missed Emily since I have been confined to the sofa; but I am amply rewarded for having spared her to you. How well she is looking! And my dear Agnes too! Emily has borrowed some of your roses." So saying, she impressed a warm kiss on her cheek, which was as affectionately returned.

Agnes. I do hope, dear aunt, you will soon be better. If you could take a drive in the pony phaeton, would not that do you good?

Mrs. O. No, dear; my head would not bear the motion. But your uncle says Telford shall draw me round the park, in the garden-chair, some warm day, when I am a little stronger.

Emily. Oh, mamma! I am so sorry to hear Harry is with the Thorntons.

Mrs. O. They wished him much to spend a short time with them before he left home for school. He will, however, return before your aunt and cousin leave us. Ring the bell, dear, and I will order tea; after which Ann shall assist you both in unpacking.

The young people retired early to rest; and the pleasurable excitement Mrs. O. had experienced rendered it needful for her to do the same.

When alone with his sister, Mr. O. told her

his anxiety respecting his wife's health had been much increased by observing a great diminution of strength. "Within the last few weeks, the cough," said he, "has been almost incessant, and that fearful symptom in expectoration has again returned. Mary, you know, is not naturally gloomy; but her spirits have been much depressed of late. You remember her sister Harriett, your early friend, who died of decline. Do you not see appearances indicative of the same fatal malady? Dr. M.'s answers to my questions on this point are very evasive, and I dare not too closely question him."

Mrs. G. sympathized with her brother. At the same time, she regretted those she loved should fear to realize the probable approach of that enemy which we must, individually, one day encounter. Prayer she felt now to be her only resource; and, after some further conversation, they separated.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONVERSATION ABOUT AGNES — AZALEAS — NECESSITY FOR HOLY PRINCIPLES, NOT OUTWARD PROFESSION ONLY.

THE next morning, after breakfast, Mrs. Gerald took her work, and sat in her sister's room, whilst Emily and Agnes amused themselves in the garden. Mrs. Osborne remarked how much Agnes was improved in person,— "She grows a very lovely girl, and looks now remarkably well."

Mrs. G. Yes, dear Mary; but I am more concerned for her spiritual health than even her bodily.

Mrs. Osborne. Dear Maria, I should think you could have no anxiety on that subject. Few young people are more amiable than Agnes; I do not know a more perfect temper.

Mrs. G. She is very amiable; and so we have every reason to suppose was the young ruler who left our Saviour, for he had great possessions. Though the latter is not the case with Agnes, I sometimes fear lest the former should be.

Mrs. Osborne. What can you mean? What!

would you wish her to be more than she is — gentle, well-informed, and polite to all?

Mrs. G. I am grateful to say she is all this: but I would wish her to feel a deep sense of her depravity by nature, and of her increased guilt by sins of carelessness and wilfulness; so that she might perceive the preciousness of her Saviour's love, and her need of his atoning merits.

Mrs. O. Only consider her age, not yet sixteen. Surely, you would not desire to rob her of the buoyancy and elasticity of youth.

Mrs. G. A sense of personal sin and weakness, with gratitude for God's unspeakable gift, will never damp the joyous feelings of youth, my dear sister, but will rather tend to sweeten and heighten every temporal blessing.

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Emily and Agnes.

Agnes. Mamma, my uncle has taken us all round the shrubbery, and into the greenhouse. I should like to show you some beautiful plants that were not in the garden when we were here before. You know that rich flower, the ash-leaved trumpet; my uncle has promised to give me a plant of it. It may be propagated by layers or by pieces of the root, which should be kept in a pot for one year, and then planted out. Our garden-wall would just suit it, you know, for it stands south-east. And then there

is the rose acacia. My uncle says that will flourish very well in a light, vegetable earth, with a portion of loam.

Mrs. G. Yes; that is a very beautiful shrub, and I should like much to have one on our lawn. It is a native of America, and will there attain to the height of twenty feet.

Agnes. Talking of America, mamma; I thought azaleas came from America. But Emily has shown me such a superb yellow azalea from Pontus; it is called *Azalea Pontica.* I hope you will have one of those; it would form such a pretty contrast with those we have.

Mrs. G. (smiling.) You are becoming quite exorbitant in your requests. Our garden, remember, is not so large as this is; we shall not find space for such a variety.

Emily. My cousin has not half done, dear aunt; she is quite in love with a little tamarind-tree.

Agnes. Oh yes, mamma! I am sure you will wish to have one when you see it: it is so elegant; the leaves of a most delicate green.

Mrs. G. I have learnt to control my wishes, which I hope you will do in time.

Agnes. But, mamma, tamarinds are easily grown in a room; it being only necessary first to raise them in a hotbed. The seeds, as found in the preserved fruit, if not too old, will readily

germinate; and if potted, and brought into an apartment, will live through the summer, and look so pretty in a room, closing their petals every night, and opening them in the morning.

Mrs. G. We can try that experiment. Go now, and take off your things. You have tired your aunt with talking.

Mrs. O. Dear girl! she seems quite pleased with our new arrangement and selection of fresh plants; but I have scarcely been in the garden since they came.

Mrs. G. Agnes is too earnest about trifles. She touches life at many points; and I am grateful she possesses the ability of extracting pleasure from innumerable sources, since it affords her more enjoyment than is the portion of the indifferent and apathetic. Still, like all other natural propensities, it needs restraining grace.

Mrs. O. I trust Agnes will learn by my example. Everything in life has been interesting to me, but the things that now I feel to be all-important are the concerns of eternity; and when I think that I may probably not recover, I cannot help feeling anxious and unhappy.

Mrs. G. Rejoice, my dear sister, that you have a Saviour's merits to trust in.

Mrs. O. That Saviour's pardon and grace I never sought in my days of health, ease, and comfort, and I dare not apply to him now.

Mrs. G. Yet he waiteth to be gracious, and casteth out none that come to him.

Mrs. O. My bodily weakness renders me so soon weary of prayer, and I cannot meditate on serious things. I want now to realize the support of that religion of which you have so often spoken, but which I have hitherto neglected.

Mrs. G. scarcely knew how to reply. Her sister had long worn the Christian's garb: she had long walked in the sunshine of a religious profession; but she had never experienced its constraining power. It had not subdued her passions; it had not raised her above the cares and trifles of a worldly mind. She had not become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Alas! she had never known a Saviour's love—she had never considered her state as a lost sinner; and therefore had never contemplated with devout gratitude the height and depth of that love which passeth knowledge.

Mrs. Gerald's religion, on the contrary, had not been that of sentiment merely, but of experience; she had felt the perturbing influence of worldly cares, and the pressure of varied claims and duties, and under their disturbing effects had known the tranquillizing and elevating power of prayer. She was not only looking to eternal realities, but daily aiming after a meetness for that holy world to which all things here

are only preparatory. In heaven she thought there would be progress in knowledge and in love; and here she knew there must be progress in moral excellence. She was desirous that her Saviour's love to her might be the pattern of her's to all those around her. She had long been seeking for those scriptural evidences by which she might ascertain she was a child of God; and those evidences had been apparent to others in the beautiful fruits of self-denying kindness to her fellow-creatures, and in humility, gratitude, and submission to her heavenly Father. She knew there was but one certain guide through the intricate maze of life, and that guide the word of God. This was her support in trouble, and to this she repaired for direction under difficulties: and weak and sinful as she was, she felt she could not follow this guide of herself; therefore she sought the promised aid of God's holy spirit,—that spirit she remembered might be grieved, and would be quenched by negligence, indifference, or worldly-mindedness. That this might not be the case, frequent were her seasons for retirement; and the even tenor of her Christian course was maintained by constant communication with her heavenly Father.

CHAPTER XIV.

MUSIC—THE SYCAMORE—CATERPILLARS—ENTOMOLOGY—CLOCKS AND WATCHES—WILD FLOWERS.

THOUGH Agnes and Emily's tastes and pursuits were similar, still the former often regretted her cousin's desultory habits. Emily had never been accustomed to order and arrangement in her occupations. Each portion of the day had not its particular task assigned for it, as was the case at Mr. Gerald's.

"What shall we do this morning?" said Emily, as she turned over her music-portfolio. "Would you like me to play you some of my Italian airs?"

Agnes. Yes, very much. Do you usually practise at this time? Do not let me interrupt any of your plans.

Emily. I never form any plan for the day; I used to be so wearied with that monotonous routine at school.

Agnes. I find I cannot succeed in anything without a plan. But there is my uncle coming over the lawn; I think he wants us to come out, for he is beckoning to us.

Mr. Osborne. You and your cousin, Emily, should be out this fine morning, enjoying the bracing breeze on Guy's Cliff. Your music will do very well for the evening, when you cannot walk.

Emily. Will you take a walk with us, papa? Though the wind is very boisterous, I do not think it will rain yet. Only see! it has broken off this branch of the sycamore-tree.

Agnes. You have some beautiful old trees in this garden.

Mr. O. Yes; but we have not any sycamores equal in size to those of the East. There it spreads out its leafy branches to an amazing extent; and the Arab will often be seen, surrounded by his swarthy companions, screening themselves from the scorching rays of the sun under its rich foliage. In Egypt the tree is much cultivated, and forms a grateful shade over the roads to the towns and villages: it is often called the wild fig-tree.

Agnes. Its fruit does resemble the fig, and its leaf is not unlike that of the mulberry-tree; do you think it is?

Emily. We have a beautiful mulberry-tree in the kitchen-garden, and I dare say its fruit is nearly ripe; I will go and see.

Whilst Emily ran to see if she had formed a

right conjecture, Mr. O. remarked, that though in this country the mulberry-tree was generally found growing alone, in other countries they formed groves of considerable extent.

Emily. They are not ripe enough to gather yet; but there is plenty of food for Harry's silkworms.

Mr. O. Round about Beyrout, a town of Syria, I was told by Mrs. L. Smith, plantations of mulberry-trees flourish very well, and the silkworms that feed on them produce a great quantity of silk. The banks of the river Hasberia, between Tiberius and Damascus, are completely covered with mulberry-trees, for the silkworms are there very profitable little animals.

Emily. Only see how completely the leaves of this tree are fastened together, and eaten full of holes!

Agnes. Oh! that is the work of a mischievous little caterpillar, called the leafroller. Did you never watch one making its nest? A leaf, you know, is a difficult thing to roll; but this caterpillar spins slender silken ropes, and fastens them with its feet, first to the edge, and then to the middle of the leaf, the head moving backwards and forwards all the time. I wish we could see one at work. But we must not keep my uncle whilst we look for one. Some

caterpillars, instead of living alone, form a large tent for their common habitation.

Emily. I think I have noticed those silken tents.

Agnes. However far they may have rambled, the caterpillars always find their way back again, by a little carpet of silk which is spread in the path, by which those that go first, and those which come after, follow in the same track.

Mr. O. You seem very fond of entomology, Agnes. I wish you may be able to inspire Emily with a taste for some of your pursuits.

Emily. You will never inspire me with a taste for entomology; for of all studies, it appears to me the most uninteresting. What have we to do with such disgusting things as insects?

Agnes. They deserve our notice, as displaying the wisdom and power of God. Do you not think they do, uncle?

Mr. O. Surely, they do. And why should you call them disgusting? Perhaps you do not know that some of them carry as pretty a parasol as that you have in your hand.

Emily. Papa, you are joking; that cannot be true.

Mr. O. It is quite true. There are ants found in South America, which construct their nests of green leaves, and place them between the branches of a tree: these are their habitations

during the wet season. When it is dry, they leave their nests, and swarm all over the woods; and, on their return, each brings a piece of green leaf, so large that the insect is hidden under it. My friend, Colonel C., whom I met in India, told me that in some places they were called parasol ants, from their carrying these round green pieces of leaves. I well remember how the conversation originated. I was expressing to him my surprise at the depredations wrought by the termites, or white ants, found in the East and West Indies, as well as in Africa. They are not more than a quarter of an inch high; but their habitations rise twelve and often twenty feet above the ground,—that is more than five hundred times their own height. Only imagine,—were our houses built in the same proportion, they would be fifteen times higher than the Monument. The buildings of these ants are of a much firmer kind than those found in this country. They have some means of hardening the clay which they use, so that it resembles stone. I have often seen their nests, like a number of sugar-loaves piled one upon another; and you might stand upon them, they are so hard. Wood is their chief food; and having a great dislike to feeding in the light, they approach under ground through the floors,

or by the posts which support the building. Multitudes enter the roof, and form galleries, or pipes of clay, which serve them for passages; and in this way they completely take possession of a house. I have known them destroy a spacious apartment in one night.

Thus conversing, they passed the precincts of Mr. Osborne's grounds, and were walking through a narrow path with waving sheaves of corn on each side. Mr. O. remarked that the Indians in New England, and many other parts of America, had formerly no other vegetable but maize, or Indian corn, for making their bread. They call it weachim; and in the United States of America, there is much of the bread of the country made of this grain, not of European corn. The savage Indians, who knew nothing of our account of months, used to guide themselves in the seed-time of this useful plant by the budding of some particular trees of the country, and by the coming up of a sort of fish into their rivers which they call aloofe. These things were both so regular, that they were in no danger of mistaking the time.

Agnes. That might do very well for the months; but how did they find out the hours?

Mr. O. I cannot exactly tell you how the Indians managed that; but the ancient Romans

measured time by water,—the same quantity pouring from one vessel into another, in the same manner as the sand passes from the upper to the lower side of the hourglass. Some ingenious persons observed the regularity of the shadows reflected by fixed objects, and thence constructed sundials. The first that is mentioned in history was erected by Papirius Cursor, at Rome. Clocks and watches are of later date. A striking clock was unknown till the end of the twelfth century.

Emily. I like the clock in the hall at your house, Agnes; it chimes the quarters. But here we are at the water-mill; I suppose we must not prolong our walk?

Mr. O. No; we had better return through the wood; you both look tired.

Agnes. Before mills were invented, I wonder how people managed to grind their corn?

Mr. O. Before corn was in abundance (for at first, like other productions of the earth, it was scattered about in wild profusion), men tasted the food, and ate so much of it, that it became scarce. By gradual improvements, they cultivated the ground, till they obtained regular harvests. It was first ground in small mills turned by men; then by mills turned by horses. Windmills, and then watermills succeeded.

Agnes. Is it true that the Laplanders grind the bark of trees for their bread?

Mr. O. Yes; and the Chinese, with the inhabitants of many other warm climates, use rice.

Emily. I wonder people in this country do not grow tired of bread, eating it so constantly.

Mr. O. It appears to be designed as the principal food of man, for the plant which produces it will grow almost in any climate; and we can scarcely find an inhabited country where wheat, if properly cultivated, will not ripen. By quickly dissolving when moistened it shows its nutritive quality, and that it is easy of digestion.

Agnes. What is that you have in your hand, Emily?

Emily. The corn-cockle. I picked it up as we came through the field.

Mr. O. Its Latin name is *Agrostemma*, and means the crown of the fields, from the beauty of the flowers.

Agnes. It is pretty, but not to be compared to the corn blue-bottle.

Mr. O. You mean the blue cyanus. No: that we cannot forget; 'tis the gem of the harvest coronet.

They had now nearly reached the termination of their walk, and were entering the park-gate, when Mr. O. advanced, and cordially shaking the

hand of a gentleman, who alighted from his horse at the same moment, said, "How are you, Mr. Grant? I am truly glad to see you. It seems an age since you have been in this part of the world."

Mr. G. My parish is a scattered one, and I cannot run away from my duties at the Glen. But here are my young friends, grown out of all knowledge; certainly much improved in stature, and I doubt not in wisdom too.

Mr. O. That remains to be proved; and I hope your stay will be long enough to judge whether they are.

Mr. G. I must be off the day after to-morrow; but I could not pass through this part of the country without taking a peep at my old friends.

As they walked on together, Mr. O., in reply to his friend's kind inquiries, told him of his anxiety on account of his wife's state of health.

Mr. G. I cannot help wishing you could induce her to try the south of Devonshire. You know what a different man I have been since my removal there.

As he said this, they entered the hall-door. Emily and Agnes ran to announce the pleasing intelligence of Mr. Grant's arrival to their mamma and aunt, and then went to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER XV.

EASTERN CUSTOMS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE FACTS—APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN THE SCRIPTURES EXPLAINED.

No addition to the family circle could have been more acceptable to Mrs. Gerald than was Mr. Grant. She had sometimes felt with her relatives that discourse wanted an animated turn to give an interest to conversation, and to make it flow. Mr. G. had been an old college friend of her brother's. The kindness of his disposition, and his knowledge of men and things, rendered him a general favourite. To these were united sterling piety; so that to promote the glory of God, and the good of his fellow-creatures, was the one important aim of his life. He had been for some years endeavouring to accomplish these objects in the office of a minister of the gospel, and had recently taken possession of the living of Glenmore, in the south of Devon.

After dinner, the following day, the conversation turned on the manners and customs of Eastern nations, a knowledge of which Mr. G. said would tend much to elucidate the Scrip-

tures; and he particularly recommended to Emily and Agnes Harmer's "Observations on the East," and Burder's "Oriental Customs." "As an instance," he said, "would not the injunction in Eccles. ix. 8, 'Let thy garments be always white,' seem singular to a native of Europe? But light was thrown on the passage, when we knew that in the East the general dress, especially among the higher classes, was white; and therefore the beauty of the dress consisted in its whiteness, not in its shape, which, unlike ours, never varied in form."

Agnes. And where it is said, in St. Matthew, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill," I suppose at that time they ground their corn, as my uncle was telling me yesterday, by a hand-mill?

Mr. G. Yes; turned chiefly by female slaves, which shows the degradation threatened to Babylon, in Isaiah xlvii. 1, 2, "Come down, and take the millstones and grind." They usually ground at break of day. Hence the noise of millstones was a token of a populous and thriving country. From not being acquainted with Eastern customs, many of the injunctions in the Old Testament may seem to us incomprehensible. In Deut. xxv. 4, we are told, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn."

Now we use a flail; but they turned in oxen on the barn floor, to tread it out. Dr. Shaw says the Moors and Arabs do so to this day.

Mrs. Gerald. I have read that the scarcity of fuel, especially wood, in the East, is so great, that they supply their fires with everything capable of burning.

Mr. Grant. Yes; they employed the stalks of flowers, myrtle, rosemary, &c. to heat their ovens. This supplies us with a comment on those words in St. Matthew, "The grass which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven;" by which our Saviour enforces tranquil trust on God's providential care.

Mrs. Gerald. At the meeting of Saul and Samuel, I never heard it explained why the cook was ordered to set the shoulder before Saul.

Mr. G. The shoulder of lamb, with butter and milk poured over it, was reckoned a peculiar delicacy in the East. Josephus tells us it was called the royal portion.

Several other passages of Scripture were spoken of, and Mr. G. said, "In case his young friends should not be able to procure either of the books he had previously mentioned, he would strongly recommend Nicholls's 'Help to Reading the Bible' as a most valuable little work."

Here Emily asked Agnes if she would like to take a turn in the garden, before it was too late. Agnes said she should, and they left the room together.

When they were gone, Mr. Osborne said the apparent contradictions of the Scriptures often struck him; for instance, we are told that God repented of having made man upon the earth, and, in another part, that he is not "the son of man, that he should repent."

Mr. Grant. At first they do appear contradictions; but may we not consider them as belonging to the mode of instruction employed by the sacred writers? No language could convey to us, with our present faculties, a clear and just notion of those attributes and facts which revelation was designed to impart. Recourse is therefore had to expressions which convey to us, in faint shadows and figures, such a knowledge of divine things as can be brought within the reach of our faculties.

Mrs. Gerald. Do not some of the same difficulties occur in our intercourse one with another at the present day? We speak of treasuring up things in our memory, of having the memory well stored. At other times, we speak of having events engraved on the memory; yet the expressions never mislead us.

Mr. Grant. Certainly not; for, when taken literally, they contradict each other. The memory cannot be a storehouse and a writing-table. Thus we are reminded that it is neither, but only so called by analogy. The principal object in revelation appears to me to be, not so much to represent what God is in himself, as what he is in relation to us his creatures. We now see reflected in a glass dimly, if I may so express myself, what we could not otherwise see at all, something in the same manner in which we might endeavour to convey to a person born blind an idea of light and colours.

Mrs. Gerald. But do not the precepts, as well as the doctrines of Scripture, sometimes appear to contradict each other, as when our blessed Lord tells his disciples to pray, and give alms in secret, and yet to let their light shine before men? I once knew a gentleman, who, absurdly mistaking this latter precept, thought it his duty to publish all the benevolent actions he ever did. It exposed him greatly to ridicule, though I really believe him to have been a conscientious and good man. Now, these precepts appear to me to explain each other when taken in conjunction. Our Lord would discountenance ostentation; but leaves to our own conscientious discretion the mode of performing each action.

Mr. Grant (smiling). Pardon me, dear madam, when I say the gentleman you mention must have been wanting in the ordinary portion of intellect allotted to man. Surely each Christian is left to act according to the dictates of his conscience to cultivate Christian dispositions, his actuating motive the love of that Saviour who died for him. No rules could be given to meet every case; but sublime principles of action are given in their stead.

Mr. Osborne. The Scriptures do not, I think, give us any satisfactory explanation of the origin of evil, or why it was permitted to enter our world.

Mr. Grant. But they teach us how to avoid its effects. And since the inspired writers leave this perplexing question just where they find it, would it not be better for us to leave it also among those secret things which belong unto the Lord our God, and to occupy ourselves with the things which are revealed, and which concern us practically?

Mrs. Gerald. In the world to come, may we not imagine a great part of our happiness will consist in having a more perfect knowledge of many things that appear to us obscure in this?*

* The greater part of this chapter is extracted from Archbishop Wheatley's "Discourses."

Mr. Grant. It is not surprising to me that many subjects in religion should be incomprehensible to us, when in natural things, which we see with our eyes, and handle with our hands, there are a variety of objects which we must confess to be beyond the reach of our understandings; and indeed by the most enlightened of mankind, the sublime mysteries of religion are only to be seen with the eye of the mind. When admitted into the kingdom of heaven, I cannot but think with you, we shall be permitted to understand them more clearly.

Here Mrs. Gerald rose, and went to her sister, who had left the room some time before. They were soon joined by Mr. Osborne and his friend.

CHAPTER XVI.

MODE OF CLEARING WEEDS — THE NOSTOCH — MOSSES — GARDEN OF EDEN — ORIGIN OF GARDENS — SIMPLE PLEASURES TO BE SOUGHT IN THE WORKS OF NATURE.

THE next morning, at breakfast, Mr. Grant said he had received a letter, which he had desired to be forwarded to him. It contained an answer in the affirmative to a request he had made to a friend to supply his pulpit for him on the following Sabbath.

"Oh! that is delightful!" exclaimed Emily. "You will then stay with us over Sunday. Papa, are you not very glad?"

Mr. Osborne. We are all, I think, Emily, as pleased as you are, though we do not express our feelings in quite so exuberant a manner. I am sure your dear mamma will be. You must go and tell her after breakfast. You can now consult Mr. Grant, as well as your aunt and Agnes, as to the best place for erecting the seat in your garden.

Breakfast was soon finished, and after Emily had communicated to her mamma the pleasing intelligence of Mr. Grant's prolonged visit, she

led Agnes to a part of the grounds which her father had given to her to display her taste in. By a gradual ascent, you wound up to an elevated terrace-walk, at the end of which you caught a glimpse of the winding river, the rustic bridge, and a little to the left the busy highroad, while hanging woods skirted the right. Where to have the seat placed, so as to embrace all these, was the subject on which Emily now wished to consult her cousin and Mr. Grant. She saw him with her father ascending the path, and ran down to meet him.

Emily. I think we have nearly fixed on a very good place for the seat. But oh, papa, these weeds! what can be done to get rid of them?

Mr. Grant. I have got rid of mine, which, when I first went to the Glen, were very deep rooted, by cutting off the top of the weed with a hoe, and sprinkling on the root a few grains of salt; and such is the effect of the saline particles upon that part of the root remaining in the ground, that it decays in a short time, and is no longer troublesome.

Mr. Osborne. You can tell Old John's little grandson to try that experiment for you as soon you please.

Emily. I will. I was speaking to him about the weeds the other day; but he told me he should

be better able to get them up after we had had some rain.

Mr. G. Have you the nostoch here?

Agnes and Emily. I have never heard of such a plant.

Mr. G. It is a sort of moss; its form is very irregular. It is a little transparent, and its colour a pale green. It may be found at any season of the year, but is most abundant after rain in summer. Its growth is amazingly rapid. If there comes a shower, the whole path will be suddenly covered with it, where before there had not been a trace of it to be seen. It is now ascertained to be nothing more than a leaf, which attracts and imbibes a great deal of moisture. This leaf, which appears to have no root, is in its natural state when it is well filled with water. A few hours' wind or sun evaporates the water, and the herb contracts, shrinks, and loses its transparency.

Emily. I shall like to look for it.

Mr. G. When it is touched, it trembles, and is easily broken.

Mr. Osborne. This moss is the very reverse of a tree, in the Island of Japan, I was reading of yesterday, which can bear no moisture. It perishes as soon as it is watered; and the only way to save it in such a case is to cut it down

to the root, dry it in the sun, and plant it in a dry and sandy soil. It is known, I believe generally, that a sort of mushroom moss, and other small plants, swim in the air.

Agnes. I gathered a great deal of earth moss on a barren piece of ground at the back of our house. It is very small; not a quarter of an inch high. Last winter I collected a great deal of it. Emily, you must have some moss to line your seat.

Mr. Osborne. Of all mosses, the feather mosses are the most beautiful; and they may be found almost everywhere: their stems are mostly branched, and covered with leaves. One very common species is used to pack up things, and to make baskets. Another is used by gardeners to bind round the roots of plants when they are removed to a distance. There is another very beautiful species, the branches of which spread out like a feather: this is used for ornamental purposes, by bird-stuffers, &c. Mosses are scattered throughout the world; they luxuriate in the most barren spots. Our own island alone yields three hundred species.

Emily. Here, Mr. Grant, is the place we have fixed upon for the seat. I hope the man will be able to wind dear mamma up here in the garden-chair, when she is a little stronger. You

see we have a glimpse of the highroad: and that is quite enough for picturesque beauty; do you not think it is?

Mr. Grant. I am quite of your opinion. I dare say there was no highroad to be seen from the Garden of Eden.

Agnes. Can you tell us, Mr. Grant, where the Garden of Eden was situated?

Mr. G. Indeed, I cannot. Many conjectures have been held by the learned on that point; but the most rational account seems to be that which places it in a peninsula formed by the main river of Eden, on the east side of it, below the confluence of the lesser rivers which emptied themselves into it, and which are now swallowed up by the Persian Gulph,—an event which some have thought might have happened at the Deluge.

Mr. Osborne. We have some splendid gardens in this country. I remember once visiting those at Stow, in Buckinghamshire. They were laid out by Lord Viscount Cobham, and afterwards came into the possession of his nephew, the Marquis of Buckingham. The whole circuit of Stow Gardens comprehends nearly four hundred acres.

Mr. Grant. On my way here, I was struck with the truth of Cowper's remark, "How close-

pent man regrets the country! With what ardour he contrives a peep at nature, when he can no more!" It was curious to observe the contrivances at some of the windows, through the towns where I passed. There were broken boxes of mignionette, and poor withering roses in glaring red pots, reminding one of many a sickly beauty in the gay world.

Mr. Osborne. A cottage, and a slip of ground for a cabbage, and a gooseberry-bush, such as we see by the side of our common, were, I suppose, the first commencement of gardens; so that for many centuries, a garden implied no more than a kitchen-garden. As settlements increased, the orchard and the vineyard followed.

Mr. G. Gardening was probably one of the first arts that succeeded to that of building, and naturally attended individual property. Culinary, and afterwards medical herbs, were the objects of every head of a family, and the culture of them became expedient: thence arose enclosures for rearing herbs. Gardening, in the perfection to which it is now brought in Britain, is certainly entitled to a place among the liberal arts.

Emily and Agnes remained behind, talking about their intended arbour; and as Mr. Grant and Mr. Osborne walked down the path together,

the latter said he wished Emily had earlier acquired a taste for simple pleasures, as her cousin had done. His dear Maria had, he thought, too soon after Emily's return from school, introduced her into general society.

Mr. G. Simple pleasures are less exciting, it is true; but the mind that is capable of enjoying them has always sources of gratification which are closed to others, and they impart an equal and durable joy which are truly salutary. The temperament of the mind, as well as the taste, is spoiled by constantly seeking after dissipating amusements. The best we can do for our children is to accustom them to find their occupations and resources from the vast and interesting laboratory of nature, or rather of God's works in creation. Let us not be too anxious to find them pleasures; they will spring up to the healthful and temperate mind in the every-day walks of life. The tints of flowers, the melodies of birds, the varied and beautiful scenery of nature will supply them in abundance, if in early life we give a taste for these things, and a thirst for information respecting them.

Emily. Papa, I wish you and Mr. Grant would come back, and tell us if you know the note of that bird which is singing so sweetly just at the back of where our seat is to be fixed. We have

been watching it, and once I had a very good view of it; it is larger than a robin, though not very unlike one.

Mr. Osborne. Without retracing our steps, I think I know the bird; it is a redstart. It will soon be leaving us now; for it has been here since April, and it leaves in September.

Mr. Grant. The redstart is an imitator of the notes of other birds. A friend of mine had one that had been taught to imitate the Copenhagen Waltz admirably.

Agnes. Hark! that is quite a different note we hear now.

Mr. G. That is the whitethroat, warbling to us, I doubt not, a parting salutation. Hedges are its favourite place of resort; and it is thanking your papa, in the best way it can, for this comfortable asylum. We may learn many a valuable lesson from the quadruped, the biped, and even the insect. The nautilus has taught us to construct the first frail bark. Geometrical precision we have learnt from the spider's-web. Let us stop, and look at the fine lace-work of silvery threads on this rose-bush. The finest part of a web, which we can scarcely see, is not a single line, but a chord, composed of at least four thousand strands, as a ropemaker would call them. If you examine closely, I think your

young eyes may see, though mine cannot, that these threads are not single. The line spun by the smallest spider, no larger than a grain of sand, is so fine that four millions of them put together would not exceed in thickness one of your hairs, and each of these is formed of four thousand still finer.

Mr. Osborne. Wonderful, indeed, Emily. I wish you would procure a little memorandum-book, and note down some of these things as you observe them, or they are pointed out to you.

Mr. Grant. You see, my dear sir, we cannot trace the wonders even of the thread which the Almighty enables a little insect to spin before our eyes. How can we expect then to understand the unsearchable wisdom of his ways, as revealed in his word?

Agnes. That is the blackbird! I am never mistaken in his song.

Mr. Grant. There certainly is in souls a sympathy with sounds; for the note of that bird forcibly recalls to my mind Mrs. E.'s pretty residence at Yarrell. Have you heard of her lately?

Mr. O. I have not; but my sister is expecting her to spend a few weeks with her, before her return to Devonshire.

Mr. G. We cannot spare her long; she is sadly missed in my neighbourhood. Uniting zeal with judgment, she is indefatigable in doing good to the bodies and the souls of others, and often gains access where I cannot venture. Her deportment is so gentle, so winning. People are not afraid of her disturbing the repose of their consciences.

Mr. O. Dr. H. is very much averse to our spending the winter in London, as we usually have done, and as dear Maria is still desirous of doing. He would strongly recommend a warmer atmosphere. I wish I may be able to induce her to try the air of Devonshire instead. Harry will be at school, therefore he will be no obstacle; and I should like Emily to enjoy the society of Mrs. E., and some of the other families I have heard you mention around Torquay.

Mr. Grant said he would use his influence in persuading Mrs. O., and he had no doubt Mrs. Gerald would do the same.

In the afternoon of that day, they did so; and, after some difficulties were met and obviated, it was finally arranged that, on Mr. Grant's return, he should seek out a suitable residence, and before the severe weather set in Mr. O. should remove with his family to Torquay.

CHAPTER XVII.

ENFEEBLING EFFECTS OF SICKNESS—IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING GOD'S FAVOUR IN HEALTH—HARRY'S RETURN—AIR PUMP—ELECTRICITY—ECHO—TRANSMISSION OF SOUND, ETC.

I HAD intended to give only a slight sketch of my young friends Emily and Agnes, and I have been led to speak more than I had designed of their parents. This I will not regret, if it serves to enforce the importance of seeking, in health and youth, the favour of that God in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Alas! too many, occupied in the pleasures, the business, or the cares of life, defer this till alarming sickness or weakening disease presents to them the startling conviction that this is not their rest, and that they stand on the brink of an eternal world. Mrs. Osborne felt this, and the thought brought with it restless anxiety and regret for the past. The word of God she had often read and heard to no practical purpose,—she had never sought its hidden treasures as one desirous of parting with all besides, to obtain them. The tender sensibilities of her naturally-affectionate temper had been drawn forth to her

husband and children. But towards that God who had implanted them—that gracious Being to whom we are indebted for all the "tender ties that bind heart to heart, and mind to mind," —towards him she had maintained an apathetic coldness; or if occasionally excited, by the numberless sources of happiness around her, to own his goodness, her thoughts rested only on his temporal bestowments, while his unspeakably valuable gift in Christ Jesus had never arrested her attention, had never awakened her devout gratitude. Mrs. Gerald watched by her, and endeavoured to point her to that Saviour whose divine tone of invitation is still sounding in the ears of the weary and the sad, and bidding them again link their hopes and their affections round those blessings which are eternal, and which time can neither wither nor destroy. She reminded her that the flowers of Paradise have their roots in the soil of earth—that meekness, love, humility, must be cultivated here, and the grace of God's holy spirit daily sought to nurture them. She then pointed out to her, in the words of the excellent Gerard Noel, that the "glowing tokens of God's bounty beam upon us on every side. Do we gaze with exhilarating emotion on the sun which hourly refreshes us, and which kindles into beauty, melody, and sweetness the bright-

ening vallies which surround us,—is it not our heavenly Father who maketh his sun to arise on the evil and the good? Do we refer to the gladdening sensations which cheer and embellish the rugged paths of social life,—is it not he who has gifted us with these charities, and who has directed us, through their instrumentality, to imitate the very movements of his own beneficence? But, as if these proofs, rich and varied as they are, still left untouched the vast subject of his liberality, he carries us to the history of the cross, and there displays to us a love which human conceptions fail to reach."

Mrs. Gerald had no sooner put down the book than, on looking up, she saw Harry's bright face at the window. His papa had brought him from Thornton, and he hastened into the drawing-room.

"My dear Harry, we are glad to see you home again," said his mother, as, in return for his affectionate embrace, she imprinted a kiss on his cheek.

Mrs. G. Yes, indeed; and your cousin and sister will be delighted.

Agnes and Emily, coming in at the moment, left little doubt of this, by their animated looks and warm congratulations.

Emily. Have you enjoyed yourself, Harry?

Harry. Oh, yes! very much. And do you know I have seen an air-pump, and an air-gun, and an electrifying machine; and I received a pretty sharp shock too,—such a one as I do not think you would have liked to have had, Emily; and I saw a poor sparrow killed by a shock.

Emily. How very cruel! What could be the use of that?

Harry. Of very great use, when first tried. By such experiments as that, the doctors found out that paralytic limbs might be cured by a shock of electricity.

Agnes. Did you see an air-pump?

Harry. Yes; and I can tell you who discovered it. Otto Gueric, a German, in 1654.

Emily. I do not know what an air-pump is.

Harry. A machine by which we can deprive a glass or any other vessel of the air that fills it.

Mrs. Gerald saw that her sister was too weak to bear Harry's volubility, and therefore whispered to Emily that she thought they had better finish their conversation in the garden.

Emily. Dear Harry, do you not think mamma looks very ill? Did you see how tired she was with our talking?

Harry. I do not think mamma looks ill. That's the worst of girls,—I mean, young ladies,—if they

have not real troubles, they are sure to make them.

Emily. That's very rude of you, Harry. I am sure I do not make troubles. But everybody can see that mamma is *very ill;* and we are not to go to London at all this winter. Papa has taken a house at Torquay, and we are to go there at the end of September; all of us but you, and you will come to us at Christmas.

Harry. I am sure mamma will be very dull there, without the Fortescues, or the Baileys, or some of those gay people.

Emily. I am sure I shall be dull; but Dr. Heberden says excitement—I suppose he means gaiety—is very bad for mamma. She must be kept very quiet; and that is partly why we are to go to Torquay. Papa has taken a house very near Mrs. E.'s.

Harry. Then mamma will not be very quiet, for Mrs. E. is always ——

Here Harry's sentence was interrupted by his aunt kindly putting her hand on his shoulder, saying, "Your sister has been telling you of your papa's arrangements; and I hope, when you come home from school at Christmas, you will be our guest for a time, and we may perhaps go down to Torquay together. The mild

air of Devonshire will, I trust, benefit your dear mother's health.

Harry. Do you think, aunt, mamma is so very ill? I am sure she had not such a nice bright colour in her cheeks when I went away.

Mrs. G. That hectic glow, my dear boy, is, I am sorry to say, no indication of health. But the bracing sea-breeze will, I trust, impart it; so that, when you return at Christmas, she may be strong enough to climb some of the Devonshire hills with you.

Harry. Robert Thornton is going to Mr. B.'s at the same time I am. I wish he had been there before; it is pleasant to have some one who can tell one about the ways of the school, and the characters of the boys.

Mrs. G. You will soon find that out for yourself; and you have, you know, ever present an almighty Friend. You may not always be understood by your schoolfellows, or even by your master; but if you seek daily his favour, and to have your motives right in his sight, you are secure of peace of mind, and of ultimate success.

Emily. I wish, aunt, you and Harry would come. I have been showing Agnes where the echo is in the garden. You cannot think how clearly it pronounces every word of a sentence.

Mrs. G. We will follow you.

Emily. Now, Harry, I will ask you a question.

Mrs. G. I heard it repeat your question. You asked your brother if Mr. Thornton had an echo in his grounds.

Harry. I heard your question; but I did not hear the echo repeat it.

Mrs. G. No; because you do not stand in the line in which the sound is reflected. It was distinctly heard by Agnes and myself, who were standing on one side of you.

Agnes. How is an echo produced?

Mrs. G. By the reflection or rebounding of the undulations of sound from some opposite resisting substance.

Emily. I cannot understand it, aunt.

Mrs. G. You know how the mirror in the drawing-room reflects your image, and that of other visible objects; and just so is the echo produced, by the rebounding of the sound from the wall. This reflected sound cannot take place at less than fifty-five feet; and we must stand in the line in which the sound is reflected, or the repetition will be lost to us.

Harry. When Mr. Thornton rung a bell under the receiver of the air-pump, the sound gradually diminished as the air was exhausted, and at last I could not hear it at all.

Mrs. G. No; for there required some medium between you and the bell capable of transmitting the sound to your ears. Every sound is rendered stronger or weaker according to that elastic fluid by which it is conveyed. Water is found to be a good conductor of sound. Dr. Franklin assures us he has heard, under water, at the distance of half a mile, the sound of two stones struck against each other. Don Gautier, the inventor of the telegraph, suggested the building of horizontal tunnels, widening at the remoter extremity, and found that at the distance of nearly half a mile the ticking of a watch could be heard better than close to the ear; he calculated that a series of such tunnels would convey a message nine hundred miles in an hour.

Harry. And do you think, aunt, that will ever be done? How I should like to whisper a message that would reach you or mamma when at school!

Mrs. G. I cannot think such an idea altogether chimerical. You must read the account of M. Biot's experiments on the transmission of sound through long cylindrical pipes. He proved that the softest whisper might be communicated nearly three-quarters of a mile; and there is nothing but experiment wanting to show that

the ordinary tones of the human voice may be conveyed at least twenty times that distance.

Agnes. Why, mamma, I have often heard you say that fifty years ago nobody would have thought of lighting their rooms with an invisible substance produced at perhaps ten miles distant!

Mrs. G. No. We cannot tell what may yet be achieved by the patient investigation of those laws which our gracious Creator has interwoven with the system of our world.

The conversation was here interrupted by the appearance of the servant, who came to say that tea was waiting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROSPECT OF RETURNING—BIRDS' NESTS—GOLDFINCH, LAPWING, AND OTHERS—ARRIVAL AT HOME.

THE time had now arrived for Mrs. Gerald's return home, and, with feelings of sincere regret, the cousins were constrained to part. This regret was, however, mitigated by the promise, on the part of each, to exchange letters every fortnight, though Agnes, smiling, told Emily she did not promise to communicate all her thoughts as well as acts.

Emily. Oh! you ought not to remind me of that silly request. You know I shall be satisfied if you tell me all that makes you glad or sorrowful; and I will tell you about my dear mother's health, and how I like Devonshire, and the people at Torquay; and sometimes I will enclose you, when they are not confidential epistles, one of Harry's funny letters, to make you laugh.

With more subdued feelings, Mrs. G. prepared to leave her sister and brother, uncertain what might be the result of the coming months. Her sister, though not stronger in body, seemed more

composed in mind, and was seeking to find relief, under the conviction of talents misimproved, and religious opportunities too often neglected, in that atoning love, which pleads not in vain for any sincere penitent. Still, had life been improved to its noblest, its best purposes, in promoting the glory of God and the good of her fellow-creatures, how many hours of restless anxiety, of self-reproach, might have been spared to our friend! But she had vainly tried to unite the service of God with that of the world, and the experiment had utterly failed. After many an evening spent in a gay circle, she had found that she had no relish

> "For the worldling's vanity and noise,
> Or any fellow-feeling in his joys;
> Whilst the saints' serener bliss she could not share—
> Her soul, alas! had no communion there."

She had not considered that God declares himself to be a jealous God—that he claims our warmest affections, our best exertions—that his complaint of the children of Israel was, that they offered him the blind and the lame for sacrifice (Malachi i. 8); and his remonstrance, that if such were offered to an earthly governor, it would not be accepted. To such portions of Scripture Mrs. O.'s attention had been directed by her sister; and she determined, should health and

strength be restored, no longer to misspend them in vain pursuits or idle amusements, but to devote them more decidedly to the glory of God. These reflections, and a conversation to which they were leading, were interrupted by Harry, who came to see if Emily and his cousin were in the drawing-room. Not finding them, he turned into the garden, and met them, with his father, just at the end of the shrubbery.

Emily. Oh, Harry! you have been robbing some poor bird of its nest.

Harry. No, indeed I have not; I found it at the foot of the pear-tree, and I wanted to show it to you.

Mr. O. You see, my dear Emily, you should not condemn upon such slight evidence. Where did you say you found it?

Harry. In that hollow trunk, papa, at the foot of the pear-tree.

Agnes. How beautifully it is lined with cotton, fur, and fine silky threads! Only see, Emily, the outside is woven with thick moss, just the same colour as the bark of the tree.

Mr. O. It is the nest of the goldfinch. These birds are natives of our climate; if this were not the case, we should value them more than we do for their rich and varied plumage. In India

they find a ready market, and great numbers of them are sent from this kingdom there.

Harry. When I was riding out with Mr. Thornton, I saw a great number of lapwings running over the common; they are a very strange-looking bird.

Emily. Did you see any of their nests?

Harry. How could I, when we were riding?

Mr. O. The lapwing builds its nest not unlike the blackbird; it plasters it with a thin coat of mortar, and then, before it is dry, it sticks some moss in it, to render it close and warm. But the most wonderful nests I have ever seen are those of certain Indian birds, which they suspend from the branches of trees, to defend them from the ravages of animals and insects.

Agnes. All kinds of birds have a peculiar manner of placing their nests; have they not, uncle?

Mr. O. Yes; some build in houses, others in trees, and others on the ground.

Agnes. I suppose they form their nests hollow that the heat may be better contained in them. They are not mere machines you see, Harry.

Harry. No; they are clever little creatures. I often wonder where the swallows go during our winters.

Mr. O. Many of them hide themselves in

holes under ground, in marshes, and at the bottom of rivers. Swallows are found in every country in the world; but they seldom remain a year in the same climate.

Emily. That is a thrush I hear. Like the rest of the warblers, it will be leaving us soon.

Mr. O. No. The thrush, wren, partridge, sparrow, and raven, with the crow and woodpecker, stay here during our winters; but most of our other songsters leave us. Magpies and jays provide for the winter by collecting large heaps of acorns in hollow trees. Quails, in spring, go from Africa to Europe for the enjoyment of more moderate heat. When at sea, I have often seen them in their flight, looking like clouds, and sometimes through fatigue they have fallen on the deck of the ship. Wild ducks and cranes every winter seek a milder climate than ours.

Harry. There is my aunt coming. I will ask her to go round by the pear-tree, and look at the nest.

Mrs. Gerald was as warm in her admiration of its beauty as Emily and Agnes had been, and remarked on the wonderful instinct of the feathered tribe. In some nests, she said, the hair, and down, and straw are curiously woven together; in others, the parts are neatly joined

with a thread, made by the bird itself, of flax, tow, and horsehair, and not unfrequently of spiders'-webs. That a bird should be capable of uniting so much solidity and neatness, in constructing its habitation, is what we cannot too much admire. She then joined her brother, and, taking his arm, they entered the house together.

Emily. I wish, dear aunt, you were not going away to-morrow. I have been so long with you and Agnes, I shall not know what to do without you.

Mrs. G. We shall miss you, and Harry, and your dear mamma and papa; but instead of sullenly rejecting all pleasure, because we cannot enjoy exactly what we wish, let us endeavour, as far as possible, to keep our minds open to a sense of the innumerable sources of happiness around us, and take care to cultivate every faculty of our minds which may prove a source of innocent delight. You will have much to tell us about when in Devonshire; and we shall look to you for long and circumstantial details, since your dear mamma will not for some time be strong enough to write.

Agnes. And remember, Harry, to write to me, and tell me all about the school, and who you choose for your friend among the boys.

Harry. I do not know that I shall choose any one for a particular friend.

Mr. O. It is not necessary you should; but I hope you will be just, and generous, and kind to all.

Mrs. G. Yet I cannot but wish you may be fortunate enough to find a boy you can make a *particular friend.* I forget who says,—

"What is friendship? Ask the gay—
A mutual scheme to lead astray.
Ask the ambitious,—he replies,
A step by which I mean to rise.
What 's friendship on the Christian's plan—
Heaven's dearest human gift to man?
It is to weep with those who weep;
A watch reciprocal to keep;
Its strength alternate to impart;
To fix on virtue's base the heart;
It is to soothe, instruct, amend,
To guard and guide the weakest friend."

Mr. O. Now, Harry, my boy, that is what I hope you will be to Robert Thornton, who is much younger than you, whether you meet with a schoolfellow whom you like well enough to make your friend or not. But it is ten o'clock; I wish you to take your candle, and go to bed.

Emily and Agnes did the same.

When they were gone, Mrs. G. remarked, "Nothing but the glorious prospects which real

religion offers can secure to us or to our children a fund of real pleasure, and raise us above those trials which are designed as the necessary discipline of our evil natures. The affections which flow from religious principle, as hope, confidence, love, reverence, gratitude, and joy, are all not only favourable to happiness, but really essential to it.

They continued talking on these all-important and interesting subjects till the striking of the clock reminded them that it was more than time to retire to rest.

A night of peaceful and refreshing sleep awakened fresh cause for gratitude and trust; and, after commending herself and those most dear to her to the guidance and care of her heavenly Father, Mrs. Gerald entered the breakfast-room. Soon after which, amid kind regrets, and affectionate injunctions to write soon, herself and Agnes, in Mr. Osborne's carriage, met the train; and a ride of a few hours found them once again in their tranquil and happy home.

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