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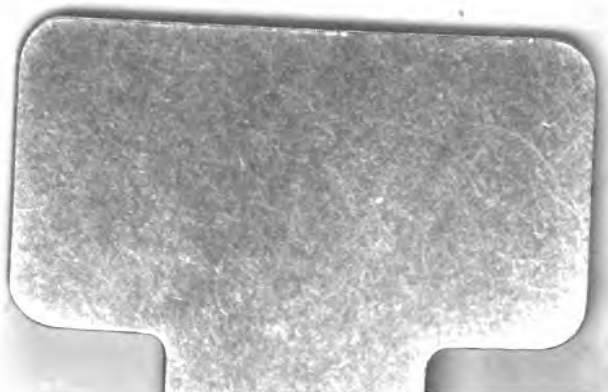


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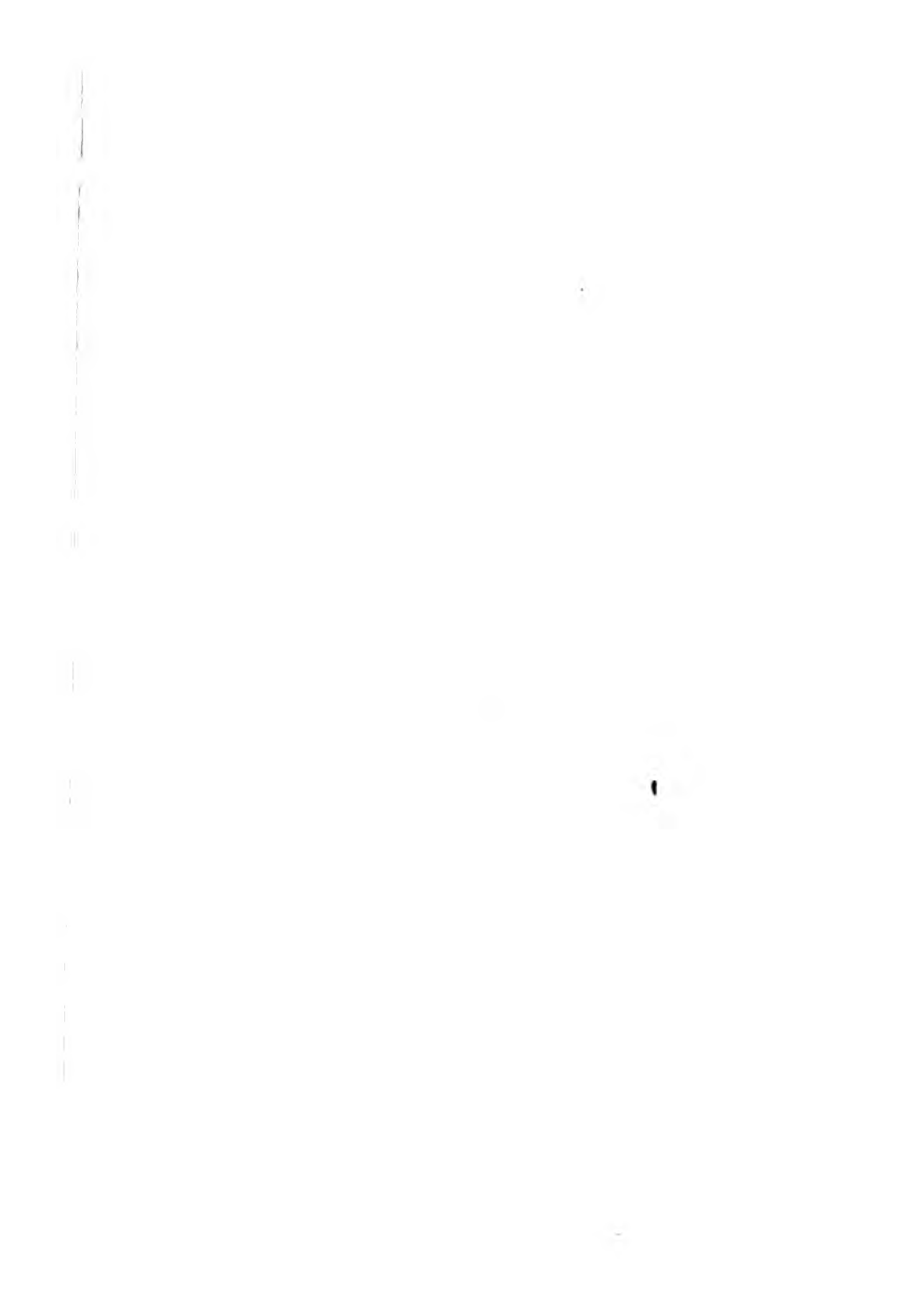
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TALES

FOR

MY GRANDCHILDREN.

LONDON:

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INTRODUCTION.

AMONGST the innumerable variety of works written for the improvement and amusement of children, it has occurred to the writer of the following pages, that a little work suited to the capacities of very young children, that might afford instructive amusement for a Sunday evening, was not to be met with. If, however, there are some such works, they are not very numerous; and the writer ventures to present this little work to her young friends, as a small addition to the "Divinity shelf" of their little libraries.

The writer is fully aware of many defects in the arrangement of this little work, but trusts that the intrinsic merit of the materials will make the defects of the workmanship less apparent.

The repetition, perhaps tautology it may termed, which frequently occur, has been adopted partly by design, as, from attentive observation of children, the writer is convinced repetition is necessary to their perfect comprehension of a subject.

If the blessed truths here attempted to be enforced should, in their *new dress*, render piety more attractive to youthful imagination, or melt one juvenile heart to Christian benevolence, the writer will be overpaid.

T A L E S

FOR

MY GRANDCHILDREN.

FIRST EVENING.

IT was on a cold and cheerless evening, though in the month of May, that Mr. Bertram's family were assembled round the reverend pastor, drawing near a newly-lighted fire which the dampness of the evening had rendered necessary, when, fatigued with the duties of the day, Mr. B. nodded in his chair. The mother immediately made a sign

to the children to drop their voices, that they might not disturb their beloved father's repose ; and the little circle huddling together, in subdued voices began the following conversation. But I think I hear my young readers exclaim, How many children were there, and how old were they? &c. You shall be satisfied, my little friends ; I will give you all particulars. Mr. Bertram's family consisted of himself, his wife, and six children, four boys and two girls ; Mary, the eldest, was fourteen ; Augustus, twelve ; Richard, ten ; Anthony and Maitland twins of eight years old ; and little Lucy, aged four. Mr. B. having been for some time in delicate health, the fatigues of his profession occasionally overcame him, and during his hours of leisure it was the study of his wife and daughter to prevent the children from being troublesome to him. In pursuance of this design, Mary adopted the plan of relating stories suited to a Sunday evening, to

preserve quiet attention in the younger ones while their father dozed.

Mary. Softly, my dears, my father is asleep.

Anthony. But what shall we do, sister? I am sure I do not wish to make a noise.

Lucy. I fear I cannot keep quite quiet; can you, Anthony?

Anthony. No; but I could be very still if Mary would tell us a story.

Mary. I would most willingly, but I do not feel quite well this evening, and fear I should not be able to amuse you.

Mother. Well, then, my dears, I will relate to you a story this evening, as your sister is not quite well. Come close to me, my little Lucy; here, let me put you on my knee. Now, what shall I tell you? I think it must be a simple story, that the little ones may understand it. Well, then, once upon a time there was a great King who had power to do whatever he pleased; he made

a beautiful garden, filled it full of everything nice and pretty, and he also put into it all sorts of animals; there were horses, cows, sheep, dogs, cats, birds, and butterflies, and all sorts of wild beasts, but they were not savage as they now are, but gentle and tractable. When all was complete and ready, the King placed two of his favourite servants in it to live there; he told them that all they saw was their own, that they might enjoy everything the garden produced, that they might gather the flowers, milk the cows, ride the horses, and even eat all the fruit except one single tree, the fruit of which was pretty, but not wholesome. The King charged the man and his wife on no account to touch this fruit-tree; he told them he should punish them most severely if they did. Do you think, my loves, it was possible that people so circumstanced should have disobeyed the King? Alas! they did; a vile and wicked person tempted them to

taste and see what sort of fruit it was, and assured them that no harm would happen to them if they did so ; that the good King was cruel and unreasonable to expect them not to eat it ; and at last, I am sorry to say, he persuaded them to do so. The moment they had eaten the fruit they were conscious of what they had done, and, much grieved and ashamed, they endeavoured to hide themselves from the King ; but he could find them wherever they hid themselves, and he did find them, and reproached them as they deserved, turned them out of the beautiful garden, and would not take any further interest about them.

Children. What a sad story ! I wish they had not eaten the fruit. What a sad pity ! How naughty of them !

Mother. What should we learn from this story, Richard ?

Richard. Obedience, should we not ?

Mother. Yes, my dear, and who were the people, do you think?

Anthony. I think I know; were they not Adam and Eve?

Mother. You are right, my love; now let us pray to God to keep us out of temptation, for even into paradise you see the tempter found his way; how much more, then, should *we* “watch and pray,” who are in a world like this!

SECOND EVENING.

The little family party being all seated as usual, Mary began her tale in the following words:—

“I heard you, Richard, asking this morning the meaning of the word Faith. Now,

as it is not very easy fully to explain the meaning by *words*, I am going to show you by my story this evening what Faith is by *actions*. Long before the time of Christ's coming, there were promises made to men favoured by God, of the arrival of some great and blessed person who should relieve people from their distresses, and benefit them in every possible respect. The men, therefore, in those days were very anxious for children, hoping that this great person might descend from them. One old man, who was particularly religious and good, was assured by the Almighty that from him this great person was to spring. But as he had been married many years without having children, he began to think he should *not* have any. At last, however, after an express visit from angels to foretell the happy event, a son was born to him, and his joy, as you may suppose, was very great, as well as that of his wife. This old man had

several years before had another son by another wife, who disobliged him, and he sent both mother and child into a distant country. The Lord signified to him, that the promise was attached to his younger son ; he therefore set a great value on him, and loved him very much. But it pleased God to try this good old man in a very striking manner ; he was desired to take this darling son into a distant country, and there, on a mountain appointed by God, to offer him as a sacrifice. This dreadful command he instantly obeyed, and accordingly set out on his heart-rending journey, taking his son with him. He also took wood for the fire, and on the third day they came in sight of the mountain where this poor father was to put to death this child of promise. The lad then said to his father, ‘ Here is the wood, and the fire, and the knife, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ?’ And the father said, ‘ God will provide himself with a lamb, my son.’

When arrived at the spot, the father, with a breaking heart, proceeds to bind his son, and laying him on the pile of wood, raised his hand with a knife in it to slay his best-beloved, when lo! a voice from heaven arrested the fatal arm, saying, ‘Slay not thy son, neither do the lad any harm, for now I know that thou fearest God, since thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.’ He then looked up, and seeing a ram caught in a thicket or a bush by his horns, not far off, he catches and kills the ram, and offers him as a burnt-offering to the Lord. We may easily imagine the heartfelt joy with which the old man unbound his son, and returned home to his poor wife.

“Now, my dear Richard, who was this old man, and how did he show his faith?”

Richard. I think I must be right in calling him Abraham; but I do not feel so sure about the instance of faith; do you, Augustus?

Augustus. Yes, and great faith it was, for if he killed his son, how could any of the promises be fulfilled? how could he be the father of a great nation? and how could the Messiah spring from his family when Isaac was destroyed? But how, Mary, were the promises fulfilled?

Mary. Isaac was, as you may remember, the father of Jacob, and from him and his son Joseph there was a regular string of descendants down to the birth of Christ. Abraham was ever called the most faithful of men, since he withheld not his son, his favourite son, when the Lord demanded him.

Mr. B. Mary leads your attention, my dear children, to dwell on the most striking example of faith upon record. Abraham must have believed that God could do what he pleased, and, as the Bible says, "Out of the stones raise up children unto Abraham." Our faith is not exercised in so

formidable a manner ; we have, however, plenty of employment for it even in these times, and, perhaps, in some respects, even greater than Abraham had, as no direct communications now proceed from heaven, and miracles are no longer permitted.

Let us now, my children, join in prayer to the God of all mercy to “ increase our faith,” and exclaim with the man in the New Testament, whose son Christ healed, “ Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.”

THIRD EVENING.

The children being seated as usual, Mrs. Bertram observed some little commotion amongst them, as if something unpleasant had happened ; she watched them a few

minutes, and heard Anthony exclaim, "I hate to be cheated ; ask and have, but tricks I can't bear."

Mother. What is the matter, my dears ? we have no cheats here, I trust ; but speak, low, do not disturb your father.

Anthony (in a low voice.) The truth is, Richard has been sly with me, he has cheated me out of my skipping-rope.

Mother. How so ? Explain yourself.

Anthony. Why, mamma, the way was this : I bought a new skipping-rope, and Richard wished to have it ; of course he knew that I wanted it, but he thought it better to get it by a trick than to ask me for it ; well, so he said to me, " I have a very pretty thing in this parcel, far prettier than your rope, and more valuable ; I will give it to you, if you will give me the skipping-rope." It was a nice little parcel, neatly tied up, and so (foolishly perhaps) I believed him, and gave him my rope ; and what do you think

was in the parcel? Why, my own silver knife, that I lost last midsummer, and Richard, it seems, had found it in the garden near the peach-tree, where I suppose I dropped it. Now was not this a cheat?

Mother. Alas! Richard, I am sorry to hear this of you. Your conduct has been artful and deceptive; you must restore the rope immediately, and take pains to retrieve your character with me, for I regret to say I have not near so good an opinion of you as I had before, and therefore you cannot be allowed to dine with your father and me for a week to come. But now for our story, in which you will see that advantages gained unfairly are seldom real or lasting.

It was formerly allowed to “the men of old time” to be gifted in their last moments with a species of prophecy.

Maitland. Pray, mamma, what is prophecy?

Mother. It is the power given by God of foretelling future events.

It was, therefore, a matter of great moment to their families to be near them, and to receive their blessing before their death. There was an old man who had two sons, the youngest of whom was his mother's favourite. The father desired the eldest to procure him some venison, of which he was particularly fond, and then he told him he should be rewarded with his blessing. The mother heard the request, and, anxious to obtain the blessing for her favourite, dressed him in his brother's clothes, and supplied him with a kid, which she cooked up like venison. The old man was deceived and gave his blessing; but the elder brother returning from hunting soon after with the real venison, was deeply disappointed at finding himself forestalled,—indeed, his anger rose to such a height that he threatened the life

of his brother. The mother then persuaded her youngest son to fly, and was obliged for the remainder of her life to live apart from her favourite son, who by his hardships was taught to remember with regret his artful conduct. He bound himself to serve a master seven years for the sake of obtaining one of his daughters in marriage, whom he passionately loved. When the seven years were expired, the father gave him the eldest daughter instead of the one he loved, and obliged him to serve seven years longer before he obtained his favourite. He was, you see, permitted by Providence to be punished by the deception of others, just as he had attempted to deceive his brother. The prophecy of the old man promised great good to his son as to worldly prosperity; but although his wealth increased, he had sad domestic afflictions, and he had himself the misery of being deceived and distressed by his children.

Augustus. This man was certainly Jacob.

Mother. Yes, my dear, and I think his story very striking, as a proof that crooked ways and deceitful paths seldom lead to happiness, even though they may to wealth.

Anthony. The story seems to apply very well to Richard; I hope he will remember it.

Richard. I will really try not to forget it, and endeavour, my dear mamma, to recover your good opinion, and not be sly any more.

Mother. Do any of you remember in what instance particularly his children deceived Jacob?

Augustus. Yes, mother, with the bloody coat of Joseph, when the old man refused to be comforted, and said, "For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning."

Mr. B. Now, then, my children, to

prayers, and may the God of truth protect you from the sin of artifice and deception.

FOURTH EVENING.

Mrs. B. Come, my dear children, arrange yourselves quietly for your evening's amusement; your father is fatigued, and I too have got a headache from the heat of the weather; Mary will therefore relate a story to you. Ah! what do I see? Richard, Anthony, what are you doing? Yield your seat quietly to Maitland—he fetched it, it is his. Alas! alas! how can you use such violence? See, you have hurt your brother in the scuffle.

Maitland. O never mind, mamma, they will not do so again. Come, shake hands.

Mother. You are a good boy, Maitland, but I am so much displeased with Richard and Anthony that I think they must go to bed, and lose the pleasure of the story to-night.

Maitland. O pray, mamma, excuse them this once,—do, pray, dear mamma.

Mrs. B. acquiesced, and the little group being peaceably seated, Mary began as follows:—

“ There was once upon a time a very old and respectable man who had twelve sons ; ten of them were grown up, and two still lads. The old man had had two wives, and his two youngest sons were the children of the wife he loved the best ; they were therefore his favourites, and, indeed, their dispositions were so amiable that no one can wonder at his partiality. The elder sons were jealous of their father’s fondness for the lads, and on many occasions showed great unkindness towards them, but the boys never

behaved unkindly to them, or in any way merited their displeasure ; it was, therefore, evident to all that their aversion arose from envy. It was the usual and regular employment of these men to attend the sheep. One day they were so employed at some distance from home, when the father, thinking they had been absent longer than usual, sent one of his younger sons to seek them. They no sooner saw him approaching, than these wicked men laid schemes for his destruction—some even went so far as to propose putting him to death.

“ You see what a dreadful thing it is to give way to hatred and jealousy ! At length, after various plans suggested and rejected, one of them proposed to put him alive into a deep pit, intending, when the others were gone, to draw him out. He then left them to return to his flocks, while the brothers were still near the spot where they had put the poor lad ; some foreign merchants at

that moment passed that way, and they agreed to purchase the poor lad for a slave of his cruel and unnatural brothers. The money was paid, the lad drawn up out of the hole, and mounted on a camel belonging to one of the merchants, and, crying sadly, he was carried away into a far distant country. His unnatural brothers next invented a wicked story to deceive their father as to the fate of this favourite son ; they told him that a wild beast had devoured him, and, to give the story a greater appearance of truth, dipped his coat in blood. You may imagine the grief and anguish of the poor old man ; he wept and lamented for a long time the loss of his favourite, and attached himself still more strongly than before to the youngest boy, who was own brother to the poor lad who was sold for a slave. Years passed on, and nothing particular happened, until a time of scarcity came on, and corn could hardly be procured. The old man was

obliged to send his sons to buy corn to a very distant country, and they had a long journey to take, and many difficulties to encounter.

“ At length they arrived at the city, and it was so ordained by Providence, that they bought their corn of their own brother, (though they did not know him,) the same brother whom they sold for a slave, and who by his good conduct and honesty had been raised from a slave to be the confidential servant and steward of his master. And after various reverses of fortune, he was at last raised to be the second person in the kingdom. He, therefore, had to settle with all the people who came to buy corn. At the first moment of meeting *he* knew his brothers, and questioned them about their father and youngest brother. He accused them of coming as spies into the land, and confined them a few days, to show his power and to humble them. He then liberated

them on condition that the following year they should bring their youngest brother with them; after promising so to do, he let them depart, but detained one of them as a pledge for the return of the rest.

“ The year following they returned with their youngest brother, whom they had with the greatest difficulty persuaded their father to trust to them. The heart of the minister was so overcome that he could scarcely contain himself; he gave a feast to his brothers, and to their great surprise arranged them according to their ages, and sent them their food himself, but to the youngest he sent a portion five times as big as the rest. But he found it impossible to contain his feelings of affection any longer, and he declared to his brothers who he was; he fell on their necks and melted into tears, assuring them of his friendship and affection. He then sent the glad news to his old father, who hastened to join his now happy family, and

spent the remainder of his days amongst them, contributing to and enjoying their happiness. This good minister made interest with the king, his master, to let the whole family settle in his dominions, and you can more easily imagine than I can describe the extreme happiness of the old man at finding his beloved son so well, so respected, and so happy, when he believed him to have been torn in pieces by wild beasts."

Augustus. Thank you, thank you, sister, for this nice long story. I think the hero is Joseph, is he not? How amiable and good he was!

Maitland. Yes, indeed, how friendly to his brothers, though they used him so ill.

Richard. I am sure it makes me ashamed of our foolish conduct on coming in, just now; do forgive me, dear mamma. Maitland, shake hands, my dear brother; I think you have some of Joseph's disposition about you.

Anthony. Pray make it up with me too ; you are my brother, you know, even more than Richard's—we are twins, and so I will try from this time to love you as Joseph did Benjamin.

Mother. After what has been said, I think I need scarcely ask you, my dears, the sentiment most displayed in this story, or, in other words, the virtue which it recommends ?

All. Brotherly affection.

Mother. Now then to prayers.

Augustus. One word more, and I will drop the subject. I said brotherly affection with the rest, but I also think we might draw from this story another useful lesson ; I mean that steady, virtuous conduct, even in a slave, will raise a man into an honourable and a trustworthy situation.

Mother. Very true, my dear boy ; I am pleased with you for making the observation. The steadiness and propriety of Jo-

seph's conduct was remarkable in many instances, and even in this world you see he was strikingly rewarded. Joseph's faithfulness to his master was not to be corrupted: when he found himself in danger, he fled from temptation. May you all, my dear children, have grace so to do.

FIFTH EVENING.

Anthony, appearing extremely busy fumbling in his pocket, Mrs. B. asked him what he searched for; he said he was feeling for a halfpenny to give a beggar-woman who had a child in her arms just by the window.

Mrs. B. Here is a penny, my dear, give it to her; if she is really in distress, it may

be of service to her, but these common beggars seldom are deserving of much relief. We should endeavour to serve *those* who are willing to serve themselves. The poor labourer who falls sick and cannot earn his usual wages to support his family, or the helpless orphan who has no kind father or mother to provide for it. These are objects truly worthy your compassion. There is no feeling in our nature which seems to bring its own immediate reward with it so surely as benevolence ; as one of our greatest poets says of mercy, “ It is twice blessed, it blesseth both the giver and receiver.” But now, Mary, to your story.

Mary. There was once on a time, a great many years ago, a very cruel king who made a very barbarous law, which directed that all the little boys belonging to the Israelites should be put to death as soon as they were born.

Lucy. All the little boys ! dear, dear, how

cruel ! what a wretch he must have been !
I thought all kings were good.

Mary. Alas ! my dear, I wish they were ;
but when you read history, you will find sad
instances of their cruelty and wickedness.
This king was induced to be so cruel from
fearing that the Israelites would, by increas-
ing so fast, become too powerful, and shake
off their subjection to him. This sad decree
being passed, the greatest distress prevailed,
—mothers weeping for their beloved chil-
dren, trying to hide them from the savage
men employed to murder them, imploring on
their knees the lives of the little innocents.
All, all in vain ; the sweet infants' playful
smiles had no more effect on the merciless
wretches than their mother's agonizing
tears.

One tender mother, distracted by grief,
contrived a scheme to save her child, which
succeeded ; she had a lovely little boy, who
was just beginning to smile upon her, and

what would she not do to save him? how willingly would *she* die, could that preserve her son! She had an elder daughter who was almost as tenderly attached to the child as herself; they thought of every means of concealing the baby,—what do you think they did at last?

Augustus. I think *I know*, so I will not say.

Richard. I should put the child under my bed, and pretend to be ill, I think.

Anthony. I should hide it in the garden, under the melon frames.

Maitland. That would be too hot, and I think Anthony would suffocate it; for my part, I cannot think of any scheme. What do *you* say, Lucy?

Lucy. Oh! I should put it in my pinafore, and *nobody* should touch it.

Mother. Poor innocent! Even you could not have protected it. (Kissing Lucy.)

Mary. Well, my dears, my poor woman

and her daughter did not follow any of your plans, but got a great many flags and rushes, and wove them into a sort of basket, on which she laid the sleeping infant, after giving him a hearty breakfast. They then carried him to the garden of the palace. Now you must know, that although the king was so cruel, he had a most amiable and humane daughter, who was known to take delight in acts of charity; she was fond of walking in her garden, and of bathing, which is a great comfort, and very healthy in the hot country where all this happened. The princess would sometimes bathe herself in a clear stream which ran through the garden; the poor woman knew that the princess frequently walked in the garden, and she also knew her kind and benevolent nature; she therefore ventured to trust her precious boy to her compassion. The little basket she had made was well defended from the water soaking through, by a strong kind of pitch

and slime, with which she had smeared it, and which she found on the banks of the river where she gathered the rushes. Thus defended from the water, she ventured to place her little basket, baby and all, in the stream ; think ! only think ! what must have been her feelings, on seeing it floating along, the chance that it might sink, the chance that after all the princess might not see it ! This intense degree of anxiety was too much for her, and placing her daughter behind a tree to watch the event, she returned home. After watching anxiously for some time, the sister saw the princess and her attendants walking in the garden ; they seemed conversing gaily, and preparing to bathe in the stream ; they approached nearer and nearer to where the precious baby lay. Think how the sister's heart must beat ! One of the women goes to the bank, the rushes grew thick just where she stood, and the little basket floating down was caught and en-

tangled by them. The woman stops, she starts, she looks surprised, she advances nearer, the princess close behind her, both evidently attracted by some unusual sight. The sister's heart now beat so much, she could hardly remain in her concealment; the princess exclaims, "Heavens! what do I see!" "Something floating in the water," says the attendant, "may I bring it to show you?" "By all means," replies the princess; but what words can express her surprise, when on looking into the basket she saw a lovely smiling infant just awaking from its sleep; his little outstretched hands seemed to ask for pity; his little innocent smiles soon found their way to the heart of the princess, and his tears at the sight of so many strangers quite overcoming her, she raised him from his watery cradle, and tenderly kissing him, she from that moment adopted him as her own son: her first care was to provide a nurse for him, and on her

inquiring for one, the delighted sister came forward from her hiding-place, and offered to procure one. You may guess, I think, whom she procured.

All the Children. The mother, I dare say ; what a good thought !

Mary. You may easily imagine the delight with which the mother nursed her own child. He lived to be a great and good man, and was employed by God to be of the utmost service to his countrymen. He ever loved his sister for her care of him, and grew up a virtuous and excellent character.

Anthony. Well, I am sure now his name was Moses ; I began to guess it was, when you said about the princess ; it is a pretty story. Will you tell us another ?

Mary. Not now, my dears, as it is time for prayers ; and see, my father is rising to get his book. Against next Sunday I will try to recollect another story ; and in the mean time be sure you do not forget the

gratitude you owe to God for letting you live in a country where such cruel characters as Pharaoh would be unable to murder innocent children. But before we rise from our seats, just tell me who the people were of whom we have been speaking?

Anthony. The baby was Moses.

Mary. Who were the mother and sister?

Richard. Jochebed and Miriam.

Mary. And what should we most admire in the story?

Maitland. The compassion of the princess.

Mary. Very well, my dears; and now let us, when we say our prayers to-night, add a few words, (if it is only a few, and they come from the heart, they will be accepted,) to thank the Almighty that such misfortunes cannot be ours, and that our mother may safely love us all, and fear no tyrant's cruelty.

SIXTH EVENING.

Mary. Now, my dears, I am ready to fulfil my promise. I am going to tell you about a king who was very tyrannical and cruel; he employed some poor people to make bricks, and was very unkind to them, and set cruel masters over them, who beat them and ill-treated them very much; indeed his cruelty was so great that they resolved to run away from him. They requested him to permit them to make a holiday, not in the sense of the word as we now understand it, but a holy day to sacrifice to their God. The king refused repeatedly, but at length, after much entreaty, he gave a reluctant consent. However, before the day came, he went back from his word, and would not let them go. Now it was the will of God that

they should go to make this sacrifice, and he inspired one of those poor people with so much courage that he went with his brother into the presence of the king, and told him that the Almighty commanded him to let the people go, or that he would send great plagues and miseries upon this obstinate king and his subjects, if he refused. They even were permitted to show some miracles in the king's presence, to convince him that they came from God.

Richard. What is a miracle ?

Mary. Anything which cannot be accomplished by human means alone.

Richard. I do not quite understand, Mary.

Mary. Well, then, I will try to explain it. You know how anxious we have all been that our dear father might be strong and healthy, but you see that he is delicate and weak. Now medicines or care may make him better, but they never can make him young again. Suppose for a moment, that

when he awakes he was to appear as young and hearty as one of us, that would be a miracle, for no human power could make him so. Or, suppose that my dead favourite, the canary bird, were to start up alive again, that would be equally extraordinary. These sort of facts are in themselves so extraordinary, and so striking, that the gift of working miracles has generally been granted by the Almighty to his servants, when he has wished them to command the attention of the multitude.

Augustus. Are miracles permitted now ?

Mother. No, my dear, we Protestants conceive the necessity to have ceased, and that since the time of our Saviour and his immediate followers, no such power has been given.

Mary. But to proceed with my story. This obstinate king, although he could not help believing the message came from God, yet he would not allow the people to go, since

they were of use to him. But their entreaties only served to increase the burdens and misery of the people, for the king ordered the same number of bricks to be made, and refused to let them have straw given them, so that they were obliged to pick up and collect straw where they could. Upon this the Lord sent him word that dreadful plagues should come upon the land. The first was changing all the water of the country into blood, so that all the fish died, and all their water stunk intolerably. When he saw the misery of the people the king relented, and said, "If these good men would pray for the removal of this plague, he would let the people go; but he failed in his word; the danger and distress removed, he forgot his promise. The next plague the Almighty sent was the immense number of frogs, which filled every room, every bed, and every man's plate and cup, so that the inconvenience was

indescribable. The king promised that if the plague was removed he would let the people go, but as soon as the frogs disappeared his promise was again forgotten.

So it went on, and the Almighty was induced repeatedly to bring on these plagues, and remove them at the earnest prayers of his servants. The next misery was the dust of the land becoming lice; every particle of dust became a living animal. Next came dreadful diseases amongst the cattle and people, and then tremendous hailstones which covered all their cattle and gardens. But none of these plagues came upon the good but oppressed people; their houses were free from frogs, lice, &c.; their cattle and families were not harassed by illness or pain, neither did the hail destroy their gardens. After the herbage of the other people had almost disappeared, the Lord threatened to send locusts to devour the rest.

Anthony. I am sorry to interrupt ; but pray what are locusts ?

Mary. Insects, something like large grasshoppers, which devour every green leaf they can find. Still this tyrant's heart was hardened, and the locusts came, and not a single blade of grass, flower, or leaf was to be seen. The king again promised, again the locusts were removed, again he broke his word. Once more, and for the last time, the king was threatened with a heavier evil than all the rest, which was that the eldest child in every house should die, from the palace of the king to the meanest cottage. The agonies of grief arising from this last affliction at length induced the king to let them go ; but scarce had they departed when he repented, and ordering his chariot to be got ready, he set out with all his horsemen and servants to try to overtake them and bring them back. The dreadful obstinacy and wickedness of his conduct, however, did not

go unpunished, for as he was attempting to cross an arm of the sea, (which the poor oppressed people had crossed in safety, even without wetting their feet, through the immediate interposition of Providence,) he and all his followers were overwhelmed by the sea and drowned, whilst his oppressed slaves were landed on the other side free from his tyranny, and able now to serve their God, and attend to the warning voice of the leader he had appointed them.

Augustus. Thank you, sister. This tyrant was Pharaoh, I am sure, for his obstinacy I shall never forget. I remember the story of the escape of the Israelites being once told me by a friend I much loved, nearly in the same words that you have told it to-night, and I am sure I cannot forget the wicked obstinacy of Pharaoh.

Mary. Let us then, my dear brothers, ever take warning by his fate, and earnestly pray that God would give us grace always to obey

his commands, and also to pay immediate attention to the desires of our dear earthly parents.

SEVENTH EVENING.

Richard. Why, my dear mamma, do you desire little Lucy to say her prayers? she cannot understand the words she says; had she not better wait till she is older?

Mrs. B. Good habits cannot be begun too early. I will tell you this evening of a good little boy whom God called to be his servant when quite a child. There was once a man and his wife very respectable, and very happy together; the only drawback to their happiness was their not having any children. The wife prayed most earnestly one day in the temple of the Lord, that she might have a son, and vowed that if she had one, he

should be dedicated to the service of God from his birth. Her prayer was heard, and she became the happy mother of a son; as soon as he was weaned, she took him to the high priest and had him taught the service of the temple; and when quite a little boy she left him entirely to reside with the old priest, that he might tread early in the paths of piety she had planned for him. One night, when fast asleep, this little boy was awakened by a voice calling to him; he started up, and ran to his old master, and asked him if he called him; he told him no, and the little boy retired once more to his bed. He was a second time awakened, and a second time came to the old priest; but he assured him that *he* did not call, and told him it was probably the voice of the Lord, and that if he heard it again, to say, "Speak, Lord, thy servant waits to hear." He once more returned to his bed, and the voice calling him, he answered as he was desired. It

pleased God to make a communication to him of what he intended to do. The boy grew, and his mother brought him a little coat once a year, when she came to see him. He first assisted the priest, and then became a priest himself, and in the end was one of the most eminent prophets on record.

Richard. I know who he was. Samuel, was it not ?

Mother. Yes, my dear ; and I hope you see in his history the advantages of early piety.

EIGHTH EVENING.

“ I wish Aunt Archer had not wanted Mary this evening,” said Augustus ; “ it is very tiresome we cannot have our story.”

Mrs. B. Why, my dear Augustus, would you deprive your poor aunt of your sister’s

society at a time like this? You know how distressed and out of spirits she is at the loss of her son; and Mary, by reading to her and remaining near her, makes her feel less lonely and less disconsolate; as to your story, I will be Mary's substitute.

“Thank you, my dear mamma,” said all the children, while little Lucy fondly kissed her hand, whispering, “Good mamma!” though she hardly knew the particular act which called forth her tender feelings, she merely knew that her mamma was good and dear to her.

Mrs. B. There once was an old woman whose two sons married young women, and settled in their own country with every prospect of happiness. The old woman took great delight in the prosperity of her sons, but unexpectedly they were both carried off by sudden and severe illnesses. The poor old woman, finding herself desolate, set out on a journey to join some of her relations

who lived at some distance. She was at first accompanied some part of the way by her daughters-in-law. But the thought struck her that they had better return to their own friends and relations, and not follow the fortunes of a miserable old woman. One of them took an affectionate leave of her, and returned to her own people; and the other, in a most affecting manner, professed her entire attachment to her mother-in-law, and would not quit her. Her expressions were most tender and affectionate, "Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following thee," said she, "for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." After such strong expressions she gave up the point, and her daughter-in-law went on with her. At last they came to some fields where the people were gathering in the harvest. The young woman went into the fields to glean; she gathered barley

enough to support her mother and herself, and the master of the field showed her great kindness, desiring his servants to let her glean amongst the sheaves, and to treat her kindly. On inquiring who she was, he found that her husband was his relation, and therefore showed her the greatest attention and affection, and in the end married her, which was strictly according to the law of that time of day. You may easily imagine the pleasure of the old woman at seeing her beloved daughter rewarded for the constant duty and affection she had shown her. When their first child was born the old woman became nurse to it, and loved it as much as if it had been her own, so that she felt her lost son restored in this baby. Can you tell me who this woman was?

Augustus. Ruth was the name of the young woman, and Boaz the name of the man; but I cannot tell who the old woman was.

Mrs. B. She was Naomi. What was the most striking quality showed in this story, my dear children?

Maitland. The affection of Ruth to Naomi.

Mrs. B. Yes, my dear, and very pleasing it is to see such dutiful attachment so rewarded; we must not, however, expect earthly reward for our good actions, but be kindly affectionate one towards another, not looking for anything in return. The peace which reigns in our own hearts, and the approbation of our heavenly Father, are rewards enough.

NINTH EVENING.

Mary. I hope, my dear father, we shall not be disturbed this evening, as we were, last, just as we sat down so comfortably at

our tea. Poor old Jefferson will not want you any more, will he ?

Mr. B. No, my dear, I can do him no further service ; he is gone to his great account.

Augustus. Indeed, father, I am sorry for that ; I fear he was a bad man, and therefore not fit to die. I almost wonder, my dear father, that you were so ready to go and see so bad a man.

Mr. B. The more wicked his life had been, the more reason there was for my visiting to exhort him to repentance ; God sees the heart, and I trust his repentance was sincere—sincerity is the foundation of true religion.

Mary. But I should fear, dear papa, that God would not accept such late repentance as Jefferson's ; he was, you know, convicted of stealing only last summer, and would have been hanged if you had not interfered to save him, so that his penitence is but short.

Mr. B. I grant that his repentance was short ; but had it pleased God to prolong his life, I think he would have become an honest man, for, as I said before, I believe his repentance to have been sincere ; but death-bed repentances are not to be trusted to, and one of our Fathers of the Church wisely says, that only one instance is given of momentary and effectual repentance. “ *That one* is given,” he says, “ that no one may despair, and *but that one*, that no one may presume.” Tell me, Mary, where is that one instance to be found ?

Mary. I think it was the thief upon the cross.

Mr. B. You are right, my dear ; and now attend, for *I* will tell you a story, as mamma is not very well, and Mary has of late had hard duty in relating stories to you.

In the early ages of the world, the rural employments of tending sheep, drawing water, &c., were performed by people of

more consideration than those who now serve us in those respects. The life of a shepherd was a favourite employment for a studious and amiable disposition, even a courageous one sometimes found occasion to call forth its energies. The youth I am now going to tell you of possessed all these good qualities. He was studious, nay, even now what we call accomplished, for he understood music, and played skilfully on the harp. He was prudent, amiable, and extremely brave. Well, my young hero, who, I must tell you, was remarkably handsome and well made, was one day watching his flock, one of the lambs was taken away by a lion, a bear also made an attack at the same time, and my young shepherd fell upon them with so much courage and address that he killed them both. This adventure gave him, as you may suppose, great confidence in his strength, which induced him to accept the challenge of an enormous giant,

who defied the whole host of his countrymen brought out in martial array before him. No one had the courage to meet this monster; he daily challenged the armies of the king of the country, and no one had the boldness to accept his offered combat. But the young shepherd was inspired by almost miraculous courage, accepted the challenge, and having with some difficulty obtained the king's permission, hastened to the field of battle, accoutred by his friends in heavy armour, and a large sword by his side. My young hero, encumbered by its weight, threw it aside, and advanced dauntlessly towards the giant, armed with his sling, a few smooth stones, and his walking-staff in his hand. The giant, who came forward with great pomp, having a man to bear his shield to walk before him, when he saw his blooming, unarmed adversary, ridiculed and defied him, and cursing him by his idols, threatened

to put him to instant death. The shepherd fearlessly replies, "That the Lord whom he serves can give the victory to whom he pleases, and that neither sword nor shield can avail without the blessing of the Almighty." He then instantly made use of his sling, and the well-aimed stone entered the forehead of the giant, who with tremendous noise fell to the earth, whilst his active opponent sprung upon him, and with the giant's own sword divided his head from his body. The king hearing of this bold achievement, inquired for this gallant stripling, and his officers brought him into the royal presence. The youth entered, bearing in his hand the bloody trophy of his victory, and still in his simple shepherd's dress. The king then questioned him as to his family, &c. Now this monarch had a son, a most amiable and excellent man, and when he saw the youth and nobleness of the young

shepherd, he loved him, and from that time became his warm and zealous friend; their friendship was most remarkable, and continued uninterrupted till the end of their lives. The king's daughter also fell in love with him, and she was afterwards given to him for his wife. So much good fortune and public notice soon made him have enemies, and even the king was so jealous of his popularity that he sought every occasion to expose him unfairly in battle, and, indeed, attempted to kill him with his own hand while playing on the harp before him; but his faithful friend constantly warned him of his danger, and ran many personal risks to save his life. It was particularly amiable of this young prince not to feel jealousy towards the young shepherd who won everybody's heart, and even supplanted the prince himself in the love of his people.

Mr. B. paused, and said his story was too long to finish that night; he, therefore, took

up his prayer-book, and after the performance of that duty they retired to rest.

TENTH EVENING.

The following Sunday was anxiously expected, and the kind father, though evidently fatigued, once more resumed the tale in the following words:—

“ So far, the career of our young shepherd was brilliant in the extreme; he was, apparently, the peculiar favourite of Heaven. When the king attempted to fight without him, he was unsuccessful, and therefore gladly employed him in services of danger and difficulty, but his jealousy was so strong that the young man was at last obliged to fly and leave the court. He continued in a sort

of banishment for many years, but still kept up his friendship with the king's son, and several times for his sake spared the life of the king when he was in his power. At length, however, this illiberal monarch was defeated in battle, and his excellent son being killed, he took it so much to heart that he killed himself. Upon this event, though greatly distressed by his friend's death, the young shepherd by unanimous consent became king, and he who had in adversity and difficulty conducted himself so well and with so much propriety, was betrayed by prosperity into the commission of some heinous crimes. His crimes were great, but his repentance was sincere; so sincere that he was still favoured by the Almighty with continual prosperity till a very advanced age. One instance of his crimes I cannot omit mentioning. He took away the wife of a poor man, one of his soldiers, and sent him to the wars, desiring

him to be placed in front that he might be killed in order that he might marry the poor man's wife. This crime appears never to have struck his conscience as it ought to have done, until an old priest, a friend of his, came to him and told him this story :—

‘ There were two men living in one city, the one a rich and powerful man, the other poor and needy. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe-lamb, which was his pet and the plaything of his children ; it ate out of his hand, and drank out of his cup, and was almost beloved like one of his children ; and there came a traveller to the rich man, and he would not take any of his own lambs to entertain his visitor, but took the poor man's lamb, and killed it, and served it up to his guest.’ The king was extremely incensed against the rich man, and said that the man who had done so shameful a thing should surely be put to death, and that the

poor man should have four lambs given him to make him amends, for he showed no pity. The old priest simply replied, ‘*Thou* art the man.’ You have robbed the poor soldier of his wife, you have shown no pity. The king was completely overwhelmed with grief, his repentance was truly sincere and lasting, and he submitted to the loss of the child born to him by the soldier’s wife in a truly penitent and proper manner. Well, now, my dears, who was this king?”

Richard. David, I think.

Mr. B. And who was the jealous old king?

Anthony. Saul, and the prince his son was Jonathan.

Mr. B. And what do you most admire in David’s character?

Augustus. His sincerity and bravery.

Mr. B. His piety might also be admired, it was indeed sincere, and his talents very great. What are his divine songs called?

Mary. The Psalms, are they not?

Mr. B. They are, and no composition, my dear children, can more fully and clearly prove the sincerity of David's repentance, and the firm and constant sense he had of religion; whether as prayers for assistance, supplications for forgiveness, as hymns of praise, or songs of triumph, they stand unequalled. We should learn from the history of David to set a watch over our hearts in prosperity. How bright was his morning sun! His mid-day career was occasionally clouded by passions, but his evening of life was, we hope, rendered serene by the influence of fervent devotion. Jefferson was equally sincere. It is not enough to pray for forgiveness of sins, we are also enjoined to pray not to be led into temptation.

ELEVENTH EVENING.

The little party being assembled round a good fire one cold evening in December, Mr. B., looking round on his smiling family, observed that he did not see Augustus. Mary told her father that he would be with him in a minute, and Mr. B. seemed rather anxious for his arrival. A long minute, indeed fifteen minutes, passed before he joined the little waiting group. His father instantly asked him where he had been.

Augustus, always accustomed to tell the truth, answered, though with some hesitation, "I have been changing my shoes and stockings, father."

"I wonder at your getting wet such a

dry, frosty day," said his father. Augustus blushed. "Come, tell me truly," said his father, "what have you been doing?"

Augustus. My dear father, I know I have done wrong. I have been sliding with Master Lethbridge; the ice broke, and I slipped in above my shoes in the mill-pond.

Mr. B. You have done right to own at once your fault, but I must say that I am much hurt to find you associate with that boy; you know I disapprove it; his habits are bad, he swears, he is insolent, and I cannot depend on his word. O! Augustus, it would break my heart should you in any respect resemble so wicked a lad.

Augustus. Do not fear, my dear father; I dislike his ways too much to copy him.

Mr. B. Then why associate with him even for a moment? Depend upon it, no young person ought to run the risk of bad company. I could tell you numberless instances of the danger of bad companions, but one

will suffice, and as I am not so tired as usual, I will tell it you myself.

There once was, in early times, a good king, who had several sons, some who were his comfort and some his torment, but amongst them he selected the one he thought most fit to succeed him, and after giving him excellent advice, the old king died, and the prince became king in his room. The Almighty was pleased to offer to this young prince, in a dream, (for dreams were, at that time, a common mode of communication from heaven,) I say he was offered in a dream what he most desired. He might have chosen immense wealth, exalted fame, beautiful palaces, handsome wives, (for many wives were allowed in those days,) long life, or great personal beauty. What of all these great advantages do you think you should have chosen, Maitland?

Maitland. I scarcely know, but I am rather inclined to "exalted fame." I should

like to have my name live for ever, like Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar.

Mrs. B. What do you say, Anthony?

Anthony. O, I should like immense wealth. Don't shake your head, dear mamma, not all for myself, but to be able to give away.

Mr. B. Come, now for your wish, Richard.

Richard. I believe it would be long life, that I might have time to do so many things ; now what do you say, Lucy,—should you like to be handsome, have much money, or be a great man?

Lucy. O, I should like to be pretty, that everybody might love me. (Kissing her mamma.)

Mr. B. Well, now all have guessed but you, Augustus ; what do you say?

Augustus. I should have asked to be virtuous, that no sin might overcome me, for money, palaces, a great name, beauty, even

a long life, may all be taken away by death. But virtue lives for ever after death.

Mr. B. True, my dear boy, your choice is wise ; Mary, my love, tell me what the prince chose.

Mary. He chose to have wisdom and understanding, that he might judge between good and bad.

Mr. B. The request pleased the Almighty, and he was pleased to give him most extraordinary abilities, so that he was by far the most learned man of his time. He was a great philosopher, and his learning extended to everything ; he understood the number and motions of the heavenly bodies, and not an insect flew about in summer, not a simple flower sprung up under his feet, but he knew their whole history, and could tell their names, their habits, their properties. Not only these acquirements did this great man possess, but the sentences which he spoke were excellent and wise moral

sayings, and we have even now books full preserved. So far all was brilliant in his reign; queens and princes came to visit him, see his magnificence, and hear him talk. His palaces were beautiful, and he built a temple to the Lord which was the wonder of the world. His piety was great, and, in short, he was nearly perfect; he had, however, one fault, and a dreadful one it proved. He was not content with the wives he had, who were virtuous, good women of his own nation, but he procured other wives who were idolaters, who did not know or fear God, and unhappily their influence over him was so great, that with all his wisdom, virtue, and piety, he turned away from the right road, and became an idolater himself in his old age; and the Lord was very angry with him, and suffered his subjects to rebel against him, and render his latter years very miserable.

Augustus. Well, my dear father, I plainly

see the moral of this tale ; it would, indeed, be vain of me to fancy that bad companions would do me no harm if they tarnished the glory of Solomon, the wisest of men.

Mr. B. being now completely fatigued, the little family joined in their usual prayer, and then retired to rest, each of the elder children deeply impressed with the necessity of choosing their companions with care.

TWELFTH EVENING.

Richard, running into the parlour abruptly, loudly complained of one of the village children for being saucy to him. “ I wish, papa,” said he, “ would turn Dobson out of his cottage, and put a more civil family in. I declare I’ll give the Dobsons no more fruit

or potatoes out of my garden; a naughty, rude child that Dicky Dobson is.

Mrs. B. What is the matter, my dear boy; what has he done to you?

Richard. O, he has been very saucy, and—

Mrs. B. But stay, what have you done to him?

Richard. Why, I only civilly told him to move his wheelbarrow out of my way, when I came by on the pony, and he turned round and abused me, and said he would not stir for me or any such *sprat* of a boy; so, pray do persuade papa to turn them all out, and get rid of the whole family.

Mrs. B. Ah, Richard, so to punish one child you would afflict and ruin a whole family. Mary, my dear, let us hear your story; I dare say you can remember one which will show Richard the rashness, and, I may say, cruelty of his request.

Mary. I will endeavour, my dear mother,

to fulfil your wishes. There was once a powerful king who ruled over a large extent of country; some of his subjects were totally different to others, both in nation, religion, and habits,—some were Jews, and some Pagans. A conspiracy was formed against the king's life, and a good old Jew informed him of it just in time to prevent its proving fatal. The king, however, did not reward the faithful Jew, but showered down his favours on an artful heathen, who tried by every means in his power to please the king. This Jew, however, knew something of the character of this man, and refused to show him any respect. The king ordered all his subjects to bow to his favourite, and to show him the same attention as to himself. The Jew, however, did not, and the favourite conceived, therefore, the greatest possible hatred against him,—indeed, his resentment carried him so far that he wished to massacre all the Jews throughout the

kingdom, and petitioned the king for that purpose, representing them as a troublesome, disobedient, useless set of people, and that the kingdom would prosper better if they were all destroyed. The king weakly consented, and gave his ring as a sign of his sanctioning this dreadful order, and all his officers received directions to put to death on one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all the Jews, old and young, men, women, and children, and to divide their property amongst themselves.

Now, this dreadful day was approaching. The good old Jew knew of it, and was, as you may suppose, very miserable, and he fasted and prayed, and petitioned the queen to intercede with her husband for the Jews. Now, the queen was a Jewess in her heart, and much attached to this old man, who had brought her up when a child, but she durst not own she was a Jewess, for the Jews were much hated in that country, and she was at

first sadly afraid to beg for them; but she took courage, and after having fasted three days, and prayed earnestly for support, she ventured into the presence of the king; he was gracious to her, and requested to know what she wanted from him. She then invited him and his favourite to come and partake a banquet with her on the next day. The king consented, and the favourite was highly delighted, and went out of the palace in high spirits at this (as he thought) great proof of favour, but in the way he passed the old Jew, who, according to custom, made no obeisance to him, which enraged him so that he said "he could enjoy none of his honours or distinctions so long as this old Jew sat at the king's gate." He even, in the pride and cruelty of his heart, had a gallows erected of an uncommon height, intending to hang the old Jew on it when the thirteenth day came.

It so happened that the king could not

sleep that night, and to amuse himself looked over the chronicles of his reign.

Anthony. What are chronicles?

Mary. A sort of book kept in those times like a history, in which every remarkable event was recorded. Well, the king observed in these chronicles the incident recorded of the Jew discovering the conspiracy formed by his attendants to take away his life, and he inquired of his servants what honour had been conferred on the good Jew who had done this, and they told him, none. The king then inquired for his favourite, who was coming at that very moment to entreat that he might hang the old Jew on the gallows he had made ; so when he entered the king said, " What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour ?" Now, the favourite thought in his heart, " Who can the king wish to do honour to more than to myself ?" So he says to the king, " Let the man in whom the king de-

lighteth be mounted on the king's horse, let the crown be put on his head, and the royal robes on his shoulders, and let one of the most noble princes of the land put on his robe and crown, and lead his horse by the bridle through the street, and cry out, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Then the king said, "Go thou, and do all this to the poor old Jew who sits at the gate, and do not omit one particular." The favourite accordingly did so, but with a bursting heart, and after submitting to this severe mortification, he went and hid himself in his house, and mourned over his disappointment until he was summoned to the banquet of the queen. After the second day's banquet, the queen ventured to make her petition, and to tell the king that these Jews, these persecuted people, were her relations. The king then desired to know who was their enemy and the cause of their persecution. The queen then

said, "There sits *their* enemy and mine." On which the king ordered the favourite to be hung on the same gibbet that he had erected for the old Jew. Thus was he justly punished for endeavouring to murder a whole nation for the slight offence of one individual.

Richard. I thank you, dear sister ; it is an interesting story, and I can without much difficulty see the application to myself ; indeed, I was too angry about Dicky Dobson ; I am glad my dear father was not so hasty as this king, for he might have taken me at my word.

Mary. Who can tell me the name of this old Jew ?

Augustus. Mordecai, I think, and the queen was Esther.

Mary. Yes ; and who was the favourite ?

Richard. Haman, my likeness ; no, no, I never will be like Haman.

Mrs. B. What strikes you, my dear chil-

dren, as most remarkable in this story? Think over the incidents of it.

Anthony (after a little pause.) The amazing pride and vanity of Haman.

Richard. The striking cruelty of his conduct.

Augustus. The uncertainty of human plans.

Mrs. B. And why so, Augustus?

Augustus. How little did Haman think, when erecting that gibbet, that he himself would be the first to be suspended from it!

Mrs. B. A very just reflection, and let us close this evening with an additional prayer, that, however unexpectedly it may arise, whenever the hour of death shall come, *we* may be found ready.

THIRTEENTH EVENING.

The weather now began to grow warmer, and spring once more to refresh the earth, the snow melted away, the ice disappeared, the leaves began to appear, and the tiny snowdrop reared its head, its delicate head, in the border, and the crocus gaily sported her gaudy colour in the children's garden. Mrs. B., always attentive to her children's happiness, now walked out with them in the fields, and directing their attention to the wonders and beauties of nature at this delightful season, frequently stopped to observe the half-formed bird's-nest, or the modest violet, while the little ones ran about gathering primroses and cowslips.

As the summer advanced, Mr. B. proposed to relate the stories on a summer evening, in the garden, seated under the acacia-tree, and the children occasionally anticipated the time when the weather would permit them to visit a farm belonging to their uncle, about a mile distant, where they were invited to see the sheep-shearing. The weather, unfortunately for this little excursion, became extremely wet and unpleasant, and day after day was spent in disappointment. At length a fine day appeared, and they all set off for the farm. When they arrived, (all in high spirits,) their disappointment may be easily imagined when they found the sheep had all been shorn the day before. The exclamations of sorrow were long and often repeated, and though everything was done to make them happy, nothing could comfort Richard and Anthony, who repeatedly exclaimed, that never was anything so unlucky, so unfortunate, as *they* were ; to be

sure the strawberries and cream were very nice, and the lambs very pretty, but still the sheep-shearing was all they wanted to see, and they could enjoy nothing as they had lost that.

The next day being fine, and a Sunday, Mrs. B. and her family, seated under the acacia-tree, Mary began as follows :—

“ We cannot be too early convinced of the uncertainty of riches ; it is a possession that is so frequently taken from us, and sometimes so unexpectedly bestowed. There was once an amazingly rich man ; he had superb houses to live in, a great number of servants to wait upon him, and a prodigious number of flocks and herds. He had seven sons and three daughters, and they were all rich, and constantly making feasts and entertainments. One day, when they were all enjoying themselves in feasting at the house of their eldest brother, and the servants were employed in attending to the cattle and

things of that sort, the master of them all, this rich man, was sitting alone, and one of his farming servants rushed into his presence, and told him that ‘ the oxen were ploughing in the field, and the asses feeding beside them, and that some robbers fell upon them and took them away, and that the robbers put the other servants to death, and only one escaped alive to tell thee;’ and before he had done speaking, another came in and said, that the lightning had fallen from heaven, and destroyed all the sheep and servants who guarded them, leaving only the man alive who brought the account; and before he had ended his sad story, another messenger brought the account of a still heavier calamity. ‘ Behold,’ he says, ‘ your sons and daughters were all feasting in their eldest brother’s house, and a strong wind came from the desert, and blew in the walls of the house, and smothered all thy children.’ The wretched father arose and rent

his mantle, shaved his head, and falling on the ground, worshipped God, saying, 'Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I leave it. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!' Here is resignation; here is patience. My dear brothers and sisters, pause a moment in our story, and consider the extent of this poor man's losses. He remained firm and unmoved when they told him of the loss of his property, but when he heard of the death of his sons and daughters, he could contain no longer: but what did he do? Not repine, not reproach God, not exclaim at his ill fortune, but he worshipped God, and acknowledged the perfect right of the Almighty to dispose of himself and all that he possessed. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Remark, he adds "blessed." How should this story teach us submission! How ashamed should we feel of exclaiming

at every trifling inconvenience, How hard it is! How unlucky it is!

Richard. Ah, sister, I am indeed ashamed of my impatience yesterday; I will never repine again.

Anthony (weeping.) Nor will I.

Mrs. B. I am happy to see, my dears, that you are sensible of your fault; hereafter, when you meet with disappointments, think of this good man, and learn to bear them with patience.

Mary. The sufferings of our poor man were not yet over; he was afflicted with a most troublesome disorder; his friends, nay, even his wife, were far from comforts to him; they gave him bad advice, urging him to "curse God, and die;" but his patient resignation did not forsake him, and he never sinned by impious murmurings. After a severe struggle, it pleased God to take the heavy pressure off him; his health returned, and his property improved, insomuch that

he had twice as much as he had before ; he had seven more sons and three more daughters, and the latter years of his life were more prosperous than the beginning. Can you tell me who this great man was ?

All the Children. Job.

Anthony. And his chief virtue was patience, and truly patient and good he was. Yet, mamma, I want to say something, but I am afraid you will be angry with me.

Mrs. B. I dare say I shall not, Anthony ; pray say on.

Anthony. Why, then, mamma, I think it is easier to bear such heavy misfortunes well, than the little tiresome disappointments that we meet with.

Mrs. B. What you say, my dear, is in some measure true, because we exert our fortitude to meet great distresses, but great distresses do not occur very frequently, nay, never to some people, whereas little disappointments are occurring daily. If, then, on

every trifling occasion we give way to very violent discomposure, how shall we be able to bear the real evils with fortitude? I think it was not only wrong, but *foolish* of you to regret the sheep-shearing so much, for you could not enjoy anything else, though you might have been very happy. Let us, then, my dear children, pray for the blessing of God to give us patience under all the great, as well as all the lesser evils of life.

FOURTEENTH EVENING.

Mrs. B., calling her children to their seats, was concerned to see Anthony in tears; she begged to know the reason; Anthony, sobbing, replied, "I cannot bear to go to school to-morrow."

Mrs. B. Why so, my dear boy ?

Anthony seemed ashamed to reply ; Maitland, therefore, answered for him. “ The Master Rowlands are so ill-natured.

Mrs. B. What have you done to them, Anthony ?

Anthony. Nothing that I know of, except once, quite by accident, I trod John Rowland’s shoe down at heel, when running after him ; he had a chilblain on his heel ; I told him I was sorry, and yet he is so spiteful.

Mrs. B. What does he threaten you with ?

Anthony. Oh, he says he will watch for me when I come to school behind the elm-trees, and throw dirt and water at me, and that he will trip me up and toss my hat over the park-wall, and a great many more things ; so pray, dear mamma, do not let me go to school to-morrow.

Mrs. B. Are you a boy, Anthony, and

afraid of a few drops of water, or a handful of dirt? O fie, fie, go to school, and never be deterred by such trifles from doing your duty; the Master Rowlands are extremely wrong, and shall not go unpunished, but do not fear them, they are unworthy of your notice; let them see that you completely disregard them and their malicious tricks; and now for our story. When people are good, they too often become the objects of envy to others who have not their virtues, and you may feel assured that no man rises into eminence without having enemies. The good man I am going to tell you of had many enemies, but his conduct was calm; he never neglected his duty, even though the performance of it exposed him to danger; he was very pious, and used to say his prayers three times a day, with his window open, and his face toward the east. His enemies, who had observed this habit, and wished to bring him into disgrace with the

king, (and had tried in vain to find him guilty of any crime,) petitioned the king to make a decree, that every one who made any prayer or request to any god or man, except to the king himself, for thirty days, should be cast into the lions' den. This good man heard the decree published, but his piety was so sincere, and his trust in God so entire, that he continued undaunted in his religious exercises, without trying to conceal his practice of daily prayer. His enemies found him on his knees praying to God: they brought him before the king, and, urging his contempt of the king's command, obtained a reluctant consent to his being thrown into the lions' den. He was thrown in, and his enemies triumphed.

All the Children. How sorry I am! surely, surely God will deliver him.

Mrs. B. You shall hear, my dears; God never forsakes his faithful servants.

The king was extremely wretched, and

could not rest in his superb bed, nor could his courtiers soothe or flatter him into peace of mind; his splendid banquet was untasted, his sparkling wine was unnoticed, his customary entertainment of music was forbidden, and he remained in the midst of his palace a striking instance of the insufficiency of wealth or grandeur to make us happy when the conscience is disturbed. He rose early from his sleepless bed, and hastening to the lions' den, cried out to the good man, "O good and excellent man, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve so constantly, able to deliver you from the lions? And the good man answered, "O king, live for ever; my God has sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me." You may imagine the king's delight at having this answer from him. He ordered his servants immediately to release him from his

dreadful situation, and that his enemies should be thrown into the den themselves. This was accordingly done, and before they reached the bottom of the den they were torn in pieces and devoured. I think my little Lucy can tell me this good man's name, she has so often admired the picture in Mrs. Trimmer's Book of Scripture Prints.

Lucy. O yes, mamma, Daniel in the lions' den.

Mrs. B. Just so, my dear. And what most strikes you in this good man's character?

Augustus. His piety and fortitude.

Mrs. B. You see, my dear Anthony, a trifling cause would not have deterred him from doing his duty. There is another story connected with Daniel, which exemplifies the constant care that God takes of his servants. Mary, my dear, to what do I allude?

Mary. To his three friends, my dear mother, I suppose, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Anthony. Dear sister, do tell us that story.

Mary. Willingly, if mamma likes.

Mrs. B. nodded assent, and Mary continued.

“ The king of whom my mother has been speaking was Darius, and was what we should call an absolute monarch ; his word was a law, and he could make any law he pleased, however strange or cruel, and no decree that he passed could be changed, so that he seemed to exalt himself into a god ; he, however, with all his faults, was preferable to Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned before him. This king ordered a large image of gold to be made of a gigantic size, and he made a law that when the people heard the sound of musical instruments, “ the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and

all kinds of music, they were all to fall down and worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up." These three good men, who were friends of Daniel and knew the true God, could not place any faith in an image like this, made with the hands of men, and they refused to fall down and worship. The consequence was, that the king was much enraged, and sent for them, and told them, that if they did not fall down and worship the image, they should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. But they were inflexible; his threats had no effect upon them; they calmly replied, "The God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of the burning fiery furnace, and out of thy hand, O king." Their fortitude only increased the king's fury, and he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than it was before, and commanded the strongest men in his army to bind these three men and to throw them into the furnace, and the

flames were so dreadful, that in throwing these men in, the king's servants were scorched to death. The men, however, were seen to fall bound into the midst of the fire, and the king, seated on the throne, was watching the event, when presently he started up in the utmost surprise, on observing the three men walking apparently unhurt in the midst of the flames; he also observed a fourth man walking with them, who, by something heavenly in his countenance, he observed to be the Son of God. But probably it was an angel sent from God to protect these pious men from the fire, as was afterwards done to shut the lions' mouths. The king then called to them to come out, and they came out of the fire unhurt; even the clothes they wore were not scorched, nor the smell of fire about them. The king was so astonished at this evident proof of the power of God, that he immediately ordered all his servants to worship the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego, and denounced dreadful punishments on those who even spoke disrespectfully of him ; he also promoted these men to the first offices of state.

Mrs. B. Do you not think that fortitude and piety were truly conspicuous in these men ?

Augustus. Yes, indeed, dear mother ; and what confidence in the protection of God it gives one !

Anthony. And how ashamed it makes me of fearing John Roland !

Mrs. B. True, my dears ; but you must remember that such great and signal miracles are not now performed, and our fortitude is not called for on such great and trying occasions, so much as in the daily and teasing concerns of life ; such as Anthony's discomfort to-day, and Richard's disappointment about the sheep-shearing. Let us now, my dear children, join in prayer, and implore the Almighty to grant us that patient en-

during fortitude which will “endure to the end,” regardless of the petty grievances and every-day hindrances of our present state.

FIFTEENTH EVENING.

Several weeks now passed without the family of Mr. Bertram being in a state to hear their usual Sunday stories, as they had all been most anxiously engaged in nursing Mrs. B., who had been suffering severely from a rheumatic fever. When first she was taken ill, the symptoms assumed rather a dangerous appearance, and the distress of the children was heartbreaking, particularly the younger ones. The elder, though they felt quite as much, if not more, had the good sense and consideration to conceal what they felt, for their father's sake.

Amongst the expressions of grief the younger ones gave way to, Mary observed Anthony and Maitland frequently to exclaim, "If mamma should die, what would become of *us*? What would become of *Lucy*? We shall die too!"

At length the fever and dangerous symptoms subsided, and the little family met once more for their evening's amusement.

Mary. My dear brothers and sister, how thankful we ought to be that the Almighty has restored our dear mother's health; to lose her would indeed have been a bitter affliction: but, my loves, we must never suppose that God will forsake us, and even dear little Lucy would have been taken care of. I shall tell you a story this evening to show that we ought at all times, and in all places, to rely on the protection of Providence, while we continue to serve him, and more particularly in such distresses of this life as he himself lays on us. There was

once a grievous want of rain in the country of the Israelites, and the want of rain caused a great scarcity of provisions. Now there was an old man of great piety in this country, and the Lord endowed him with great power, insomuch that he could perform miracles. He was desired by God to go and live in the wilderness away from all the world, beside a pool of water, and that he should be fed by ravens. Now this good man did not hesitate, but went and sat himself down by the pool of water, and the ravens fed him. He remained there some time, and these good birds fed him twice every day, and he drank of the pool beside him. But at length the pool dried up, and then God commanded him to remove to another place. He arose immediately, and travelled to the gate of a city called Zarephath. He saw a poor woman gathering sticks, and he begged her to give him a drop of water to drink. The woman was leaving him to

fetch the water, when the poor man, seeing that she seemed compassionate, begged her also to bring him a morsel of bread; and she said "that she would readily give him some, but that she had not a morsel of bread left, not even a cake, but only a handful of flour in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. And behold," she says, "I was gathering two sticks, that I might dress it for my son and myself, and then we must lie down and die, for I have no more." But the good man said, "Be not afraid, your barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall your cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth." She did as she was requested, and she and her house lived many days upon her small store; and the meal did not appear to decrease, nor the oil to be consumed.

Some time after, the son of the woman fell sick, and the poor creature feared he was dead, for there was no breath left in him.

She told her old visitor of her distress. He immediately took the child from her arms, and carried him to his own little chamber, where, having laid him on his own bed, he cried unto the Lord, and entreated earnestly that he would not afflict this poor woman by taking away her only son; and he said, "O Lord my God! I pray thee let this child's soul come unto him again." The Lord heard his prayer, and restored the child; and he called the mother, and showed her the boy quite himself again. We may easily suppose the joy and gratitude of the old woman, and also her respect for so holy and good a man as her visitor must be. The want of rain continued for three years, and the famine was dreadful; and the king of the country, who was an idolater, called his priests together to sacrifice unto their gods, to induce these gods to send rain; but one good man was, as we have seen, a worshipper of the true God, and he begged the king to

let two altars be erected, the one for the priests and the other for him, and he said, "Why are some of your subjects idolaters, and others worshippers of the true God? Let all be of one mind. Do you prepare your altar, lay your victim upon it, and put fuel under it, but *no fire*. I will do the same; I will lay my victim on the altar, put fuel under it, but use *no fire*. Do you call upon your God to send fire down to consume the sacrifice, and so will I, and the God that answereth by fire let him be God." They did so, and the whole assembled multitude watched the event with the utmost anxiety.

The priests of the idol made a great noise, calling aloud to their god, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no answer, no sound, and the sacrifice remained unconsumed. The good man began to laugh at them when they had called from morning until noon, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god;

either he is talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or perchance he is asleep, and you must awake him." The priests then cried louder, and cut themselves with knives till the blood came, and jumped upon the altar, and they continued calling on Baal till the even, but no one answered, and no fire came. The good prophet then called all the people together, and they assisted him to prepare the altar of the Lord, which was broken down. He then dug a deep trench all round, and filled it with water; the bullock was laid upon the altar, and the wood under it, and he had four barrels of water poured over it, till the water ran all about the altar; the prophet then advanced, and earnestly implored the Almighty to show himself to be the true God, and that he was his servant, and as he repeated, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God!" the fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, and the wood and

the stones; and licked up the water; then the people fell on their faces, and said, "The Lord he is God! The Lord he is God!" The false priests were then put to death, and all the people believed in the true God.

This good man had many more adventures, and his history is highly interesting; but I believe I must conclude my account of him. I cannot, however, do so without telling you that this good man was not permitted to die like other people, but was carried away to heaven in a miraculous manner, without dying. He was carried up to heaven in a chariot and horses of fire—unhurt. As he went up he dropped his mantle, which was picked up by a great follower of his, who afterwards became a great prophet also. I dare say *Lucy* can tell me who this great man was who was carried up to heaven without dying?

Lucy. Was it Elijah?

Mary. Yes, my darling, I thought you would remember, as I have shown you the picture of Elijah's chariot in the old Bible.

Mr. B. And what, my dear children, should we learn from this story of Elijah ?

Richard. I suppose we should say, reliance on Providence. From the ravens and the widow's cruse.

Mr. B. Certainly ; and never let us forget that not a sparrow falls to the ground but the Almighty knows it. Of how much more value are you than many sparrows !

Mr. B. then read his usual prayer, but added his fervent thanks for the mercy lately shown to him and his happy family in the restoration of their beloved mother's health.

SIXTEENTH EVENING.

The wind blew hard and rattled against the windows, the snow seemed drifting fast into dangerous heaps, when the little family group assembled as usual round the blazing fire, and shivering with cold requested their sister to commence their evening's amusement. Just as all were seated, the old dog Carlo, who lay apparently asleep on the hearth, started up and growled, as if he heard a stranger. The suddenness of the circumstance, and the tempestuous nature of the night, produced a sort of alarm, and Augustus exerted himself to allay the half-expressed fears of his younger brothers, particularly Richard, who was much frightened. After, however, a few moments of conjecture,

the agitation subsided, and a letter being brought in to Mr. B., accounted for Carlo's growl.

Mr. B. expressed concern on reading the letter, and announced that his attendance on a poor sick man was instantly required, and therefore he must leave his fireside, for no inclemency of weather can deter a good pastor from attending to his flock. The lantern was procured, the great-coat brought in, and the beloved parent wrapped up and defended as much as possible by his wife, and his ever dutiful and attentive daughter Mary; while Augustus, proud to be of some use, entreated permission to carry the lantern before him, and after much pleading on his part, he was allowed to go, while Richard somewhat clamorously urged his request to be allowed to go also. He was, however, silenced by his father, who asked if he had so soon forgotten how frightened he had been by Carlo's growl. Richard hung

his head, and the father set out with Augustus. As soon as they were out of hearing, Richard began vapouring about his courage; he saw nothing to be afraid of—for his part, he should not mind going alone in the dark to a village a full mile of, and many more idle expressions to the same purpose.

Mrs. B. just then returned to the room, and hearing Richard's bragging, said she was very glad to hear he was so courageous, as she should have the opportunity of putting him to the test. "Your father," said she, "has forgotten his prayer-book; you must run after him, and give it him—I dare say they are not out of the courtyard yet."

Richard instantly sprang up and seized his hat.

"You had better take a light and a stick," said his mother. But he declined both, and running out of the room was in the yard in a moment. As far as the yard-gate his courage was admirable, but when he opened

the gate, and saw the dreary darkness of the night, and felt the cold wind and snow batter against his face, he regretted his bragging, and wished himself safe back again. He, however, resolved to try and overtake the light which he saw about twenty yards before him; he made, therefore, a desperate effort, and ran on; but what was his amazement and terror to hear something running after him—as he ran it ran—as he stopped it stopped. Terror suspended his breath, and his feet slipping from under him, he fell in an agony of fright not to be described, and found something instantly breathe close to him. As he felt the warm breath on his face, he gave a piercing scream, which brought the servant out in search of him, who found Carlo the dog standing quietly near him, the cause of all his terror. The servant brought him into the house, not a little ashamed of his valorous enterprise, while another was despatched with Mr. B.'s

book. When once more the family were quietly seated, Mary began her story.

Mary. Of all qualities, we prize courage in a man more than any other; true courage never *brags*. But to our story. There was once a most excellent and amiable man who was beloved by all his friends, and had many followers and admirers, who said they would die with him rather than desert him in any danger. Amongst the rest, one of his friends and servants was very forward in protesting his attachment and fidelity. "Nay," said his master, "be not too positive; in but a few hours you will deny even that you know me." The servant was extremely hurt at this remark, and said, "Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee!" (or deny that I know thee.) They had scarcely done speaking, when a tumult arose, and the enemies of this good man attacked him and carried him away. The servants and friend made a faint show of resistance at first, and

then all forsook him and fled, the bragging servant, who promised so much, among the rest; and when he was asked if he was not one of the good man's servants, denied even a knowledge of him. He was again accosted by soldiers, and asked the same question; he denied his master again. And on a third time being questioned on the same subject, he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man." His master happened just then to be led past the spot where he stood, and he looked at him; he said nothing—but that mild reproachful *look* was enough—enough almost to break his heart. He went out and wept bitterly.

Anthony. This was, I think, St. Peter—was it not? What a look that must have been!

Richard. I will never brag again; indeed I feel ashamed of myself. Whenever I feel inclined to brag again, I will think of that

mild, reproachful look! O how I should have cried had I been him!

Mrs. B. I am glad to see that a tear is in your eye, my dear boy; that tear is no disgrace. What does this story particularly point out?

Maitland. The absurdity of self-confidence.

Mrs. B. Justly remarked. Let us pray, my dear children, that our humility may only be exceeded by our reliance on God through the merits of his Son. O, may that mild, reproachful *look* never be turned on any of us at a future day, for having denied our blessed Saviour; for, remember it is written, "He who is ashamed of me, or of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in his glory with all his holy angels with him."

SEVENTEENTH EVENING.

It was now the cheerful season of the year, when most families assembled to spend their Christmas, and Mr. B.'s children would have enjoyed it as much as any, but that Richard and Anthony were ill with hooping-cough. The lord of the manor had a large young party to eat a twelfth-cake—and a very merry party it was—and he invited all Mr. B.'s family to come. Mr. and Mrs. B., Mary, Augustus, Maitland, and little Lucy, were preparing to go, as Mrs. B. did not think it necessary for her to stay at home, as the boys could amuse themselves, being not ill enough to keep their beds. When the coach arrived at the door, all was bustle and excitement; and Maitland

was running in great haste to get his hat, when Anthony caught sight of him, and called out to him and said, "O how I wish I was going to the manor-house! it makes me quite dull to see you all going to be so merry. I shall have no amusement, for Richard says he has a headache, so he cannot do anything, not even play at chess with me."

Maitland said nothing, but he ran straight to his father, breathless, and with a glowing face, and said, as soon as he could get breath, "Do, dear papa, grant me a favour; allow me to stay at home with poor dear Anthony: he is dull and lonely, for, unluckily, Richard is too unwell to play with him. I would, therefore, much rather stay at home with him, and try to amuse him!"

Mr. B. gave him an approving smile, and saying, "Good boy!" did not oppose his wish.

When they returned home, which was

early, they found Anthony as happy as a king, Maitland playing at chess with him, and Richard well enough to look on. Little Lucy was the first to enter, and she came loaded with grapes and oranges for her sick brothers—having declined eating any herself, that she might bring the more home. Mrs. B. was much pleased with her, and, after receiving many extra kisses, they all retired to bed.

The next Sunday evening Mary undertook to relate the story; and after all were seated, Richard said, “Have you heard how ill Master Thomson is, from having eaten too much cake the other evening?”

Mary. Yes, I am sorry to hear it; but I am not surprised, for he ate so greedily.

Augustus. And Miss Spencer *would* dance a reel, though her mamma told her not; she got overheated, and is now seriously ill.

Mary. Let us now think of our story, my dear brothers and sisters, and endeavour to

forget Squire Thornton's twelfth-cake for the present. The good man I am going to tell you of did not think of riches, or honours, or fine clothes; his chief study was to do God's will, and he travelled about the country doing good, curing people of sicknesses—giving sight to the blind, and even restoring the dead to life; and though he might have had a fine palace to live in, he preferred a retired and industrious life. On one occasion he had been travelling a very long way, and he found himself at a great distance from any village or shops; he had no one near him, and, being nearly overcome by hunger, became faint and weary. When in this exhausted state, a very wicked person appeared to him, and offered him every description of nice food and refreshment; superb palaces to live in, and every luxury this world can give, if he would only submit himself to be guided and directed by him. Now this good man knew that this person

was very wicked, and that God would be very angry with him, if he listened to him or obeyed him ; he therefore told the wicked person to begone and leave him, and that he would rather submit to any suffering of hunger, thirst, or want of clothing, or bed to lie on, than sin against God. When the wicked person saw that he could not prevail against him, or tempt him to do wrong, he left him, and angels came and gave him all he needed, refreshing and cheering him. Now, my dears, who was this good man ?

Augustus. I am sure it was our Saviour, and he was tempted by the devil.

Mary. Yes, my dear brother ; and what should we most admire in this story ?

Augustus. His self-denial.

“ Oh, I see,” said little Lucy, “ if Master Thomson had not been greedy, but had shown more—what is it—‘ self-denial,’ he would not have had the doctor, and so

much nasty physic to take—would he, dear sister ?”

Mary. Very true, my love.

Anthony. And you, my little Lucy, showed some “self-denial” in bringing home those grapes and oranges ; and you, dear Maitland, in staying at home with me that evening, instead of going to Squire Thornton’s ; I am sure I shall always love you more for it. Here the brothers shook hands, and dear little Lucy got an additional caress.

Mr. B. What you have said, my children, is just ; those small acts of self-denial are valuable, and please me as your father ; but they received their immediate reward in the pleasure you saw Anthony and Richard receive by your conduct. I shall look forward with hope, that when your trials are greater, you will be enabled to deny yourselves, and take up your cross, and follow your Redeemer’s steps ; and that we may be enabled

so to do, I must ask you all to join with more than usual earnestness in prayer, that God will mercifully shield you from temptation ; and if *He* condescends to aid you, the devil himself cannot prevail against you.

EIGHTEENTH EVENING.

Mr. B.'s family were returning from the evening church one autumn Sunday, when their attention was attracted by a considerable crowd (at least considerable for a country village) being assembled round the door of the largest inn (or rather public-house) in the principal street or thoroughfare of the village. As they passed the "Red Lion," they heard sounds of grief, surprise, anger, and pity. Mr. B. requested the ladies

to walk on, while he and Augustus stopped for a moment to inquire the cause of this unusual scene. It was, alas! soon explained. One of the principal farmers had just read in the papers the apprehension, trial, and condemnation of a man who had been one of his farming servants some years before. As a lad he had worked for Mr. B., and Augustus remembered him. He was condemned to die—for robbing and murdering his master. A shudder of horror shook Mr. B. and his son as they heard the sad tale of Joe Brandon's crimes, and their awful consequences.

Augustus naturally talked all the way home about Joe, and repeatedly said he could not imagine how a boy, that seemed so decent and regular with them, could turn out so ill; and Richard vehemently exclaimed, when Augustus mentioned it to him, that nothing could ever, he thought, induce *him* to rob, far less to murder any one.

Mrs. B., when the family were assembled expecting their evening entertainment, heard several expressions of the same kind uttered amongst them; and feeling anxious to improve every opportunity of spiritual instruction, she related the following story.

However unbelieving and hardened people may be in health, sickness frequently makes them timid and anxious, and more willing to call on God to aid them in their difficulties. There was once a king who was suffering severely from sickness, and his physicians seemed unable to give him any relief. As his illness increased, he recollected having heard of the great fame of a prophet of the Lord, who worked miracles, and he sent his servant to ask of the man of God (or prophet) whether he should recover from his sickness; the servant also took him valuable presents from the king, for this servant was much liked and trusted by his master. He appeared very anxious for the

king's recovery, and unless the prophet had been especially gifted by God with discernment, he would have been deceived. But he saw what passed in the heart of this wicked man ; he saw the first unholy thought that arose in his mind, and the good prophet shed tears as he looked at him. The servant, not understanding his looks or tears, begged him to explain the cause of his tears. The prophet tells him that he is not weeping for his master, but for *him* ; his master may recover from his sickness, but he grieves to think of all the wicked things that *he himself* will be tempted to do ; he tells him that his ambition will lead him on from one crime to another, till murder itself cannot stop him in his mad career, nay, that he will inhumanly kill women and sucking children. The servant, horror-struck, exclaims, " Am I a dog, that I should do those things ?" The prophet lets him depart, and it appears that this servant so trusted by his master,

and hitherto so respectable a person, suffered the powerful feeling of ambition to drive out every other, so that, on his return, instead of nursing his poor master, who was recovering from his sickness, with care and kindness, as it was his duty to do, took the opportunity—his being so much alone with him gave him—of putting the king to death by suffocating him. After he had murdered his master he got himself proclaimed king, and became the most cruel oppressor the Israelites ever had, killing men, women, and even little children, without mercy. Indeed the expression is very strong which is applied to him, namely, “He thrashed them as wheat!” meaning that he was wantonly cruel in the destruction of the people. Now who do you think this man was? All seemed at a loss but Mary, who replied “Hazael.” And who was the king? “Benhadad,” replied Mary; “Benhadad, king of Syria.”

Mrs. B. And what do you think should most strike us in this history ?

Augustus. The little we know of ourselves.

Mrs. B. Very true, Augustus. I dare say, if you knew all that passed in Joe Brandon's mind, we should find that at first he would have started like Hazael, and exclaimed like him at the very *thought* of the crimes he afterwards committed, so daringly and so barbarously, " Am I a dog, that I should do this great wickedness ?" We should, from his example, my dear children, pray more earnestly not to be led into temptation, and feel deeply with the psalmist, that "*our own strength is perfect weakness.*"

NINETEENTH EVENING.

The news of the condemnation of Joe Brandon soon reached Mr. B.'s quiet little village, and created a great sensation there. The young man was said to be very penitent, and sent a message of strong entreaty to his father, who was living in Mr. B.'s parish, to come and see him, and forgive him for all the misery he had caused him. Old Brandon was so irritated and so disgusted with his son's previous ill conduct, that he at first refused to go near him; and Mr. B. took much pains to persuade him to view it as a duty. The master of the Red Lion set him a good example, for Joe had begun his evil courses when in his service, and had

robbed him of some corn, and sold it. He, however, when he heard of his penitence, went to meet him, and freely forgave him. In speaking on this subject with his family, Mr. B. took occasion to say, "There is no precept of our religion more truly sublime, and more worthy of its Divine Author, than forgiveness of injuries—a doctrine so opposed to all the prejudices of the Jews, that it seemed incredible to their capacities, so much so, that when our Saviour exhorts them—'Take heed to yourselves, If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him; and if he trespass against thee seven times a day, and seventy times in a day, turn to thee again, saying I repent, thou shalt forgive him,—the Jews' answer was, the converted Jews, even his apostles, '*increase* our faith!' as much as to say that such a doctrine was beyond belief." But to return to old Brandon. It so happened that he called at the rectory

just as they were all assembling for their evening amusement, and Mr. B. thought it would be as well to let him hear their conversation ; and perhaps some chance word might work its way into his heart, with more effect than a regular discourse addressed to himself ; he therefore requested the old man to be seated at the further part of the room, as he was engaged with his children, and would attend to him shortly. The old man took his seat, and chose an obscure corner of the room, as his heart was very full of grief, shame for his son's conduct, and resentment for all the misery he had occasioned him.

“ My children,” said Mr. B., “ I am about to tell you of a most amiable and excellent man, who was always doing good ; he was, indeed, a pattern of benevolence and kindness ; he loved his mother, and was dutiful to his father ; he entered into all the harmless pleasures of his friends—sometimes increasing their cheerfulness by his presence

at their rejoicings, and oftener visiting them in sickness and affliction, consoling, comforting, and even weeping with them, spending his life in active usefulness. He was truly, as I said before, a pattern of benevolence and kindness. You would think such a man *could* have no enemies. But, alas! such is human nature, that his very virtues made him enemies—his countrymen were jealous of him—*his* excellence made their faults seem blacker, and, in short, a party was raised against him, who asserted all sorts of falsehoods about him; he was brought up before the governor and magistrate, and false witnesses rose up against him, and the clamour of the people became so loud, that his judge, “although he saw no fault in him, condemned him to die as a seditious person, a disturber of the peace, and a dangerous subject to the king;” whereas he had defrauded no man; he paid his taxes and tribute to the government;

he had not spoken ill of authorities ; in short, nothing could be proved against him. All he had done was to endeavour to reform his countrymen, and he had pointed out their folly and wickedness on some occasions ; he had a great many personal friends and followers, and sometimes, when a great many persons were got together to hear what he said, the public way was obstructed for a short time ; this seemed the heaviest charge they could make out against him ; but, as I said before, false witnesses rose up against him, who perjured themselves, and this excellent man was led to execution like a thief or a murderer.

Maitland. My dear papa, what does perjured mean ?

Mr. B. Swearing falsely, or taking a false oath. But to proceed—

This good man was put to a shameful and most cruel death—(at these words poor old Brandon groaned)—and even in his last

agonies the barbarous multitude taunted and insulted him. Instead of railing at them or abusing them, he died as he had lived, praying for his inhuman tormentors. "Father, forgive them," said he, "for they know not what they do!" and then his heavenly spirit left this earth, and returned to his Father, to dwell in peace and happiness evermore.

Poor old Brandon sobbed aloud.

Mr. B. then asked his children what they thought most remarkable in his story, and who the good man was.

They all exclaimed, without hesitation, "Our blessed Saviour."

Anthony eagerly added, "Forgiveness of injuries."

Augustus. Yes, think what *he* had to forgive, when he left heaven for us, and submitted to a painful and disgraceful death without a murmur—dying to save his very murderers. How wicked it would be for us not to forgive every one who injures us!

Mr. B. Very true, my dear boy, and may God give us grace so to do, and may every one from his heart forgive every one his brother their trespasses.

They all then went on their knees, and when the prayer was over, old Brandon quietly retired without saying a word, and next morning set off at daybreak to visit his son, and just arrived in time to give him his forgiveness before the unhappy young man was executed.

TWENTIETH EVENING.

After a delightful ramble through the cornfields, which were now just ready for the sickle, and rich with their golden har-

vest, Mrs. B. seated herself with her children under an oak, listening to the birds who were singing their evening hymn of praise to their Creator, (or albeit so one might suppose their voices to express,) and uttering the sweet wild notes of innocence and joy; the distant village bells had ceased, and nothing was heard but the occasional lowing of the cattle as they returned to pasture from the well-foddered farmyard, or the short, sharp bark of the sheep-dog, as he folded the sheep under his care. The stillness of the evening was so soothing, so tranquillising, that even the *boys* felt its power, and were for a few moments all hushed into a listening attitude, which much interested their mother, and induced her to propose their singing a hymn before they proceeded to the house. As their young, clear voices ascended to the vault of heaven, the tears came unbidden into Mrs. B.'s eyes—tears of gratitude to the Almighty, and maternal pride;

but when the hymn was finished, the dews began to fall, reminding Mrs. B. how short-lived are our present pleasures, and inducing them to hasten their return home. As they passed through a part of the village in their way to the rectory, they heard, as they passed a Methodist meeting, loud and discordant singing; the boys were induced to laugh, and made several observations on the folly and absurdity of the Methodists preaching as they do in the fields, and singing so noisily, &c. &c. Mrs. B. endeavoured to check their remarks, and to assure them that people of all persuasions should be viewed with candour and liberality; but she found the subject led far and wide, and induced so many curious discussions amongst the young ones, that she rather listened to them than interfered.

“ I wonder,” began Maitland, “ how anybody can go and hear that old prosing

shoemaker Dobbs *preach*, as he calls it, instead of listening to my dear father.”

“And I wonder,” said Richard, “how old squaretoes, Nathan Prime, can like to wear his broad-brimmed hat, and sit with his hands before him, and not hear or speak a word at their meeting for an hour together, when they might come to church, and hear so much to do them good.”

“What silly people they are !” said Maitland.

“And *I* wonder,” said Augustus, “how Madlle. Panâche can like to go to her chapel, and hear nothing but Latin, of which I know she does not understand a word, as I tried her last Tuesday when she came to give a French lesson to Mary. I tried her with many sentences out of the grammar, and a line or two of Virgil, but she was quite *beat* ; she did not understand a word of it ; there is no imagining anything more stupid.”

“ Yet,” said Mary, “ if all these people act up to the *best* of their belief, they do well. Are *we sure*, with all our fault-finding, that *we* do as much ?”

“ Well *said*, Mary,” said her brother ; “ and now you speak, it reminds me that we have not had our story to-night—in fact, we have been so busy talking, I had almost forgotten it.”

Mrs. B. kindly took Mary’s place, and told them that the story must be brief, as the evening was far advanced, and then began the following narrative, having first put little Lucy to bed.

“ Ever since the earliest days of the world there have been a variety of opinions about religion—some believing one thing, some another—each party thinking themselves right, and too frequently persecuting and reviling those who thought differently. The Jews, as you know, were the favoured people of God, for, to them He gave the

Scriptures, and often revealed himself to them and to their leaders. At last, after a very long series of prophets, Christ came, and many of the Jews believed in him. But, alas! many opposed him; one betrayed him, and, finally, those in authority allowed him to be crucified. Many of his first followers remained firm in their belief, and were, in consequence, severely persecuted; these persecutors were urged on by a clever, intelligent young Jew, who had a thousand good qualities, but who did not believe in Jesus, and who thought that, by persecuting the Christians, he was doing God service. We who live in these tranquil times, can hardly form an idea of the cruel persecutions that took place formerly. No language can describe the horrors that were practised on the first Christians; they were crucified, tortured, devoured by wild beasts, and stoned to death. One excellent and pious man, particularly, suffered death by stoning,

and the young man I was describing was present and consented to his death, as he, in his mistaken zeal, considered this good man a dangerous man, and a promoter of false doctrines and heresies. After the death of this martyr, he proceeded actively, taking up and throwing into prison all those who professed the new faith ; and, in short, was the most terrible enemy the Christians ever had. He set forth one day on a journey—well mounted on a fine horse, and well armed—bearing letters from one governor of a province to another to empower him to take up and throw into prison any one he found preaching in the name of Christ. He was hurrying along the high-road at noon at a rapid pace, threatening and boasting of the pleasure he felt in the prospect of persecuting the Christians, when suddenly a light shone from heaven, of so overpowering a kind that it occasioned him to fall from his terrified horse, and deprived him of sight, while a

voice from heaven reproved him for his mistaken zeal, called him by name, and told him how vain and useless his persecution of the Christians was—he was only hurting himself, and not crushing them; also that the Saviour of the world was *He* whom he persecuted. The young soldier was struck with conviction, humbled, and overcome with grief and shame at his error, and felt that his bodily blindness was only a type of that fatal mental blindness which had led him on so far. From that moment he devoted his whole time and his brilliant abilities to increase the influence of the Gospel, and counted all his learning and worldly advantages as dross, when compared to the riches of Christ and him crucified. He continued many, many years to be a pillar of the church, and at last proved the truth and sincerity of his new faith by dying in the cause.

Augustus. Ah, my dear mother, the life

and history of *St. Paul* would be a most interesting publication ! how I should like to read a history of his acts !

Mrs. B. You shall do so ; and I am sure you will admire his energy and right principle. He acted throughout his life in strict *conformity to his principles*. Let us, my children, strive to do the same, and pray for God's assistance to enable us to distinguish *truth* from *error*.

THE END.

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The second part of the document focuses on the specific requirements for record-keeping, including the types of records that must be maintained and the frequency of updates. It also addresses the challenges associated with data management and storage.

The third part of the document provides a detailed overview of the auditing process, from the initial planning stage to the final reporting phase. It emphasizes the importance of communication and collaboration between the auditor and the client throughout the process.

The fourth part of the document discusses the various types of audits and the specific procedures used to conduct each type. It also covers the role of the auditor in identifying and addressing potential risks and issues.

The fifth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions of the audit. It also includes a list of recommendations for improving the organization's internal controls and financial reporting processes.

The sixth part of the document provides a detailed overview of the organization's financial performance, including a comparison of actual results to budgeted figures. It also discusses the factors that have influenced the organization's financial performance.

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