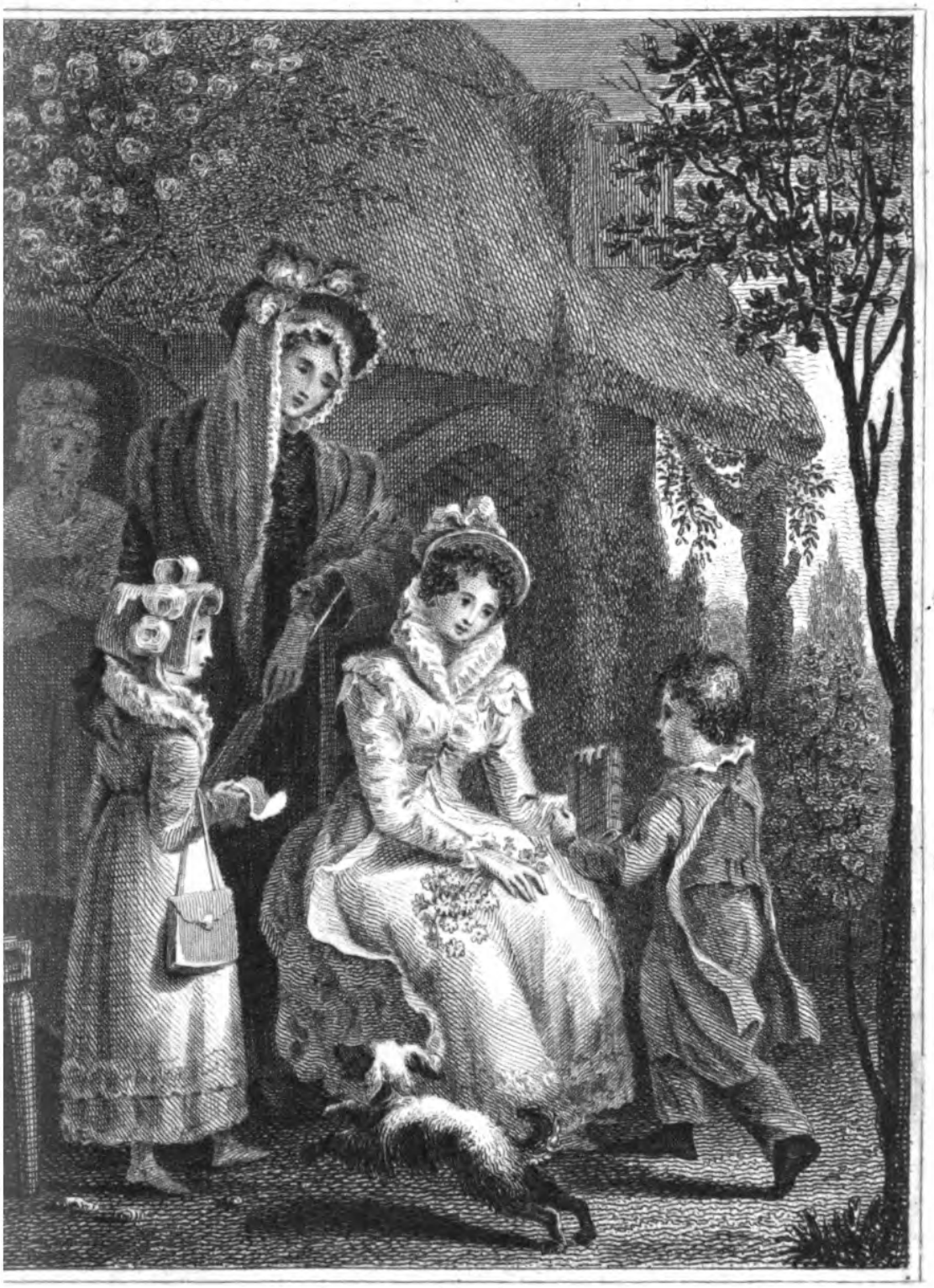
Salvage

Salvage

Frontispiece to The Youthful Travellers.



These are all we have, but I give them to you," said
e, throwing the flowers into my lap, and taking in
eturn the long-desired Bible.

see page 146.

London: William Darton, 58, Holborn Hill. 1823

THE

YOUTHFUL TRAVELLERS;

OR,

LETTERS

CHIEFLY DESCRIPTIVE OF SCENES VISITED

BY SOME

Young People

DURING

A SUMMER EXCURSION,

DESIGNED AS EXAMPLES OF THE EPISTOLARY STYLE FOR CHILDREN.

London:

WILLIAM DARTON, 58, HOLBORN HILL.

1823.

G. SMALLFIELD, *Printer, Hackney.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

Children are become so much accustomed to prefer fact to fiction, that they will probably peruse the following Letters with additional interest when assured that the incidents which they relate are most of them real, and that many of the Letters, with slight alterations, were actually written by some young people engaged in the pursuits and enjoying the delightful little tour which they describe.

INTRODUCTION.

In the summer of 1822 a gentleman, who was travelling with his children in the south of England, spent a few weeks at the house of a particular friend of mine in the neighbourhood of London. This gentleman had likewise a large family of young people, who were educated beneath the paternal roof, and under the superintendence of a fond mother who devoted her time entirely to their improvement; therefore it is not surprising that they made rapid progress in the various branches of education, and experienced at an early age the benefit arising from maternal instruction. They were taught to consider the acquisition of knowledge and virtue as more desirable than any thing else, and were ac-

customed to prefer those pursuits in which amusement and instruction are blended together.

Every field flower which they gathered in their walks, every pebble which they picked up in the road, was a source of new ideas to their tender minds. They would examine it carefully, discover its name, nature, and properties, and while engaged in contemplating the admirable skill displayed in its formation, their thoughts were insensibly directed to the Great Artist whose finger formed every pebble and every green leaf. Curiosity was thus awakened, turned to its proper objects, and so judiciously gratified as to lay the foundation of a love of knowledge, the first step to all improvement.

Thus engaged, sometimes in acts of benevolence, and at others in rational pursuits, the young people at Carwood

spent their time, happy in themselves, and beloved by all around them.

About this time, as I said before, the family of Mr. Lloyd spent a few weeks at Carwood, while their father was making a little tour upon the Continent, and, being equally desirous with the Stanleys of gaining information and knowledge, they soon assimilated together, and began to take a lively interest in each other's studies, so much so indeed, that on Mr. Lloyd's return they parted with mutual regret, and a promise of punctual correspondence was made by all parties, in the hope that this would compensate in some degree for the pain of separation.

Being acquainted with each family, I had permission to look over the letters that passed between the children, and as those of the Lloyds describe the objects and the scenery they saw on their jour-

ney, and those of the Stanleys their favourite amusements and pursuits, they are here transcribed in the hope that some of my juvenile friends, who are not unfrequently heard to exclaim, "Oh, it is impossible! quite impossible!—indeed I cannot write a letter!—I do not know what to say!" with many similar lamentations, may be convinced that it is neither so very difficult, nor so very impossible as they are apt to imagine, to heighten their own pleasures by communicating them to their friends at a distance.

ELLEN, LOUISA, *and* CLARA STANLEY, *resident at Carwood.*

CAROLINE, EMILY, *and* CHARLOTTE LLOYD, *upon a tour in the South of England.*

THE YOUTHFUL TRAVELLERS.

LETTER I.

CAROLINE LLOYD *to* ELLEN STANLEY.

Hastings, July 1st.

I PROMISED to write to you, my dear Emily, and indeed I have so much to say, that I scarcely know what to begin with.

We enjoyed our visit to Carwood exceedingly, and although it was such a beautiful morning when we left you, yet I could not help feeling melancholy as I looked for the last time upon the shrubberies in which we had so often rambled together, and at the favourite nut-tree walk where first we agreed to be friends, and then at the green-house, where the little rose-bay I watered so regularly is left to remind you of me.

Papa says that the rose-bay is a native of Karamania, where it grows in luxuriance upon the banks of the rivers, and is as common as the willow-herb is with us. You cannot think how fond I am become of botany. Emily and I mean to send you all the fresh flowers we find, as well as all the new poems we meet with. Pray send us a very particular account of your pursuits; tell us what books you are reading, what drawings you are about, and what are your favourite amusements. Do not forget to mention Bucephalus. Has he yet taken you to Burton Farm; and have you spent the day at the hermitage upon the top of the hill?

I have so many questions to ask you that I had really almost forgotten to say any thing about our own journey. You will see by the date of my letter that we are now at Hastings; it is but a poor

town, in the midst of a very delightful country; the cliffs are extremely grand, and rise to an immense height on each side of the valley in which it is situated. We went yesterday to visit the ruins of Pevensey Castle, supposed by some to have been built by William the Conqueror, who, you recollect, landed in Pevensey Bay when he invaded England. Papa told me that nearly eight hundred years ago a battle was fought at Hastings, between the people of France, assembled under the direction of William Duke of Normandy, and the people of England, and it was agreed that whichever army gained the victory should have a right to the English crown. Harold, who led the English, was shot by an arrow from the enemy, and from the moment of his death all courage seemed to forsake his people, they gave ground on every side, and

were pursued with great slaughter by the Normans, who in the end proved successful, and William received the English crown as the reward of victory, whence he was styled William the Conqueror. We found the marsh-mallow in a salt marsh near Pevensey; it grows very tall, and makes a showy appearance. We are to travel along the coast till we get to Southampton, and then papa means to strike across the country into Wales, and to go to Abervale to spend a few weeks with my dear grandmamma. I am quite delighted with the thought of going into Wales, because my brother Edward enjoyed being there so much; he used to ride about the mountains upon a little Welsh mule. Mamma says that she does not think she can trust us young *ladies* upon mules, but papa tells her that they are very sure-footed. However we shall gain a little experience by

riding upon the donkeys when we get to Malvern, and when we are there, and indeed before that time, we shall write to you again.

Give my love to your sisters, and believe me

Your affectionate CAROLINE.

LETTER II.

EMILY LLOYD *to* LOUISA STANLEY.

Hastings, July 1*st.*

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear Louisa, while we were sitting upon the beach at Worthing, and gazing upon the magnificent ocean,

> "Now brilliant with sunbeams, now dimpled with oars,
> Now dark with the fresh-blowing gale."

You have never seen the sea, and I can give you but a very faint idea of what

it is, or of the delight I felt when first its "billowy boundlessness" opened before me. We frequently stand upon the esplanade, watching wave after wave roll up and recede from the shore, when the sun is shining upon them, and tinging them with all the colours of the rainbow. We saw a few of the "silver-winged seafowl" one day, and an intelligent sailor, who rowed our little boat in the bay, told us that they build many nests about Beachy Head, but are seen more frequently towards the end of autumn. Beachy Head is a bold promontory, jutting out into the English Channel, from whence we have a delightful view of the surrounding country interspersed with little rural villages, as well as of the coast of France. My sisters and I often amuse ourselves with scrambling among the grey cliffs, which rise to a great height on each side

of this town, and with searching for shells and sea-weeds upon the shore.

We have had many curious adventures since we came here, and I shall describe one of them because I know it will give you pleasure.

We, that is, papa, Edward, Caroline, and myself, rambled one day to some distance from the town to see the country, and to look for some rare plants which my brother expected to find in the rough shingles near the sea-side; but, almost before we were aware of it, the beauty of the morning was overcast, the sun was obscured by thick, dense clouds, and a violent storm came on. Now, in order to have some idea of a storm at sea, imagine to yourself an immense body of water, higher than your house, and a chasm of equal depth just before you, both so dangerous that you could hardly determine which to ven-

ture, and both so near as not to allow you a moment's time to choose; for in the twinkling of an eye, the little light skiff of the fisherman descends into the pit which is gaping to receive it, and with equal swiftness ascends to the top on the other side, before the mountain that is behind can overtake it. We staid for some minutes beneath a projecting rock, watching the little boats play over those hills and dales, till at length the storm began to abate, and we ventured forth in hopes of finding a hut or house where we might beg some refreshment. However, neither hut nor house was to be seen; so we scrambled up some stone steps, cut in the solid rock and which led winding down to the shore, to take a wider survey. For some time no human being appeared in sight, but at last, to our great joy, we spied a boy rather shabbily dressed and

My father went down to him, and begged him to conduct us to some habitation.

see page 19.

London. William Darton, 58, Holborn Hill. 1823

busily engaged in gathering museles from the rocks, which he put into an old straw hat. My father went down to him, and begged him to conduct us to some habitation, where Caroline and myself might dry our shoes. So he led the way and we followed him, along a rugged path and down some more steps in the cliff, till we reached a hut, and such a hut! even more miserable than the Irish cabins we read of; but the inhabitants seemed so contented and happy that I was particularly struck with the truth of mamma's observation, that happiness is not altogether dependent upon external circumstances. It was built of great stones, of no regular form, heaped one upon another without mortar, and the gaps were filled up with sea-weeds, which may be gathered in large quantities after a storm; the roof was covered with peat or turf, and some

poles were placed against one end of the dwelling, on which the owner had hung his nets to dry. As soon as we approached it, Barny (that was the boy's name) ran in and told his father that some *quality* were coming, whereupon the good man came out to meet us, and very civilly invited us to go in and partake of their humble fare. We were very glad to dry our feet at a large peat fire on the hearth, and we felt so hungry that we should have ate even a bit of brown bread with a good appetite. This, however, was not to be had. One large saucepan, placed in the middle of a little deal table, contained the whole dinner of the fisherman and his family: this was potatoes; and as they had neither spoons, nor knives, nor plates, nor dishes, we made use of forks, like themselves, dipping them into the saucepan, and taking

out a bit at a time until we had had enough. We quite enjoyed the novelty of the scene, I can assure you, and whenever I feel inclined, in future, to think that grandeur and wealth are requisite to comfort and happiness, I shall think of the fisherman's hut.

This, however, is not all. There were several children partaking of the homely meal which was set before them, and among the rest a pretty little girl, apparently about five years of age, who seemed quite inclined to be sociable with me. I asked her whether she liked to live in so small a hut, and to have nothing to eat but potatoes, when, to my astonishment, she replied, "*Oui, ah oui*—Emmy love England, because *bon homme, bonne femme,* live here." Papa was as much surprised as myself at such an answer, and, upon inquiry, the fisherman informed us, that this

little girl was not his child, but that a few months before a boat had been wrecked on the coast, and that he had found her lying alone upon the beach, and, supposing her friends had perished, had taken compassion upon her, trusting that Providence would some time restore her to her family and friends. "She is too young, Sir," said the man, "to tell us who she is, or where she was going, but we are very fond of her, and whilst she remains with us, she shall be treated like one of our own children." Papa then took her upon his knee and kissed her; she stroked his cheek and said with a sweet smile, "Emmy go with you,—you like papa."

We are exceedingly interested about the little Emmy. Caroline and I begged very much to be allowed to take her home with us, but my father said we must ask mamma's permission first: so

mamma is going to see my little namesake to-morrow, when the matter will be quite settled, and next time you hear from us you shall know all about it.

For the present, believe me your affectionate friend.

LETTER III.

Ellen *to* Caroline.

Carwood, July 8.

My dear Caroline,

I thank you for your letter, and am not a little anxious to hear again, in order to know what plan you mean to pursue with regard to the interesting little Emily, whom your sister mentioned when she wrote to Louisa.

We were as sorry to part with you, my dear girl, as you were to part with

us; and when your carriage had actually passed the park gate, I sat down upon the mossy stones under the large oak by the road side, and watched it down the hill till the shrubbery intervened and it could be seen no longer. At that moment my heart was quite full, and I wept outright, but the reflection that crying would be of no use soon occurred to me, so I dried my tears and endeavoured to comfort myself by adopting Pope's motto as my own—"Whatever is, is right." I was just considering what I should do to prevent my thoughts from dwelling too much upon the separation, when my brother George came running towards me, calling out that the pony was put in the chaise, and that we were going to spend the afternoon at Burton Farm. And now I shall relate the whole history of our excursion; but, in the first place, I must tell

you of whom our party consisted. Papa rode on one horse, Edward on another; and George drove Clara and myself in the pony-chaise. (Louisa staid at home to bear mamma company.) It was, as you may recollect, a very fine day; the sun shone in the clear blue sky; the hedges on each side of the road appeared of a brighter green than usual; and the little birds, as they warbled in the trees, seemed to be singing songs of joy and gladness. At last we reached the farm; it is in a very secluded spot, and is surrounded by a large farm-yard, with a little kitchen garden on one side. The farmer, his wife, and their two daughters, came out to meet us, and gave us a very cordial welcome; they led us into the best parlour, a room without a carpet, with a casement window, and with an old-fashioned looking-glass, and a

row of china cups upon the mantle-shelf. After having partaken of some refreshment, papa asked them to conduct us over the farm, and Clara and myself were much pleased with seeing the poultry-yard, pigeons, &c. Then, as tea was not quite ready, George said that, if we liked, he would go with us to a chalk-pit at a little distance; for he knew that I wished to find the bee-orchis, a curious plant which generally grows in chalk-pits, and the blossom of which bears such a resemblance to a bee, as to be sometimes mistaken for one. So thither we went, and were well repaid for our trouble by finding the object of our search, although it was rather late in the season for it. Mamma shewed me a few lines upon the bee-orchis when we got home, which I copy for you:

See on that flow'ret's velvet breast
  How close the busy vagrant lies!
His thin-wrought plume, his downy breast,
  Th' ambrosial gold that swells his thighs:

Perhaps the fragrant load may bind
  His limbs;—we'll set the captive free—
I sought the *living bee* to find,
  And found the *picture of a bee!*

As we returned to the farm, we crossed a damp, marshy field, where we found another curious flower, the leaves of which are of such a nature, that if a fly happen to alight upon them, they instantly fold up and crush the poor little creature to death. This plant, called the sundew, reminded me of the sensitive plant which you know we used frequently to touch, when we went into the green-house, in order to see it shrink back and curl up its leaves, as though afraid we should hurt them. Now we cannot suppose that these plants have *real* feeling, but they certainly seem to

be a sort of connecting link, as George says, between the animal and vegetable kingdom: indeed, my dear Caroline, the sundew has awakened my attention, and taught me to observe the actions of plants, some of which certainly bear a slight resemblance to animals. For instance, the convolvolus closes its blossoms at night, instead of going to sleep; and the evening-primrose does the same at the approach of rain, instead of getting under shelter. How one subject springs out of another, and how much we see to admire, how much to instruct, even in a little insignificant flower! George and I next went to a quarry to look for some petrifactions to put in the cabinet: he had brought a small chisel in his pocket, and, with the assistance of one of the labourers who was at work just by, he managed to procure a perfect *madrepore* and *cornu-ammonis*, as well

as several spines of the *æschines*, or sea-egg. These led us to talk about petrifactions, and, when we got home, my father explained the whole process by which shells, fish, and other substances, are transformed or changed into stone, and remarked, that the petrifactions of wood and various animals, which are frequently found in the earth at a great distance from the sea, may convince us of the truth of the flood, when the waters covered the earth, and, as they subsided, left a number of marine productions behind, which in the course of a few centuries became petrifactions, and are now silent proofs of that awful event.

I must really bring my long letter to a conclusion, but I knew you would like to hear the particulars of our visit to Burton Farm. We had some syllabub and new milk before we left, and enjoyed a charming ride home through the forest

in the evening, when George, who was again charioteer, told me a great deal about different forest trees and their various uses, which may serve as a subject for some future letter.

Adieu! I am, my dear Caroline,

Yours affectionately,

ELLEN.

LETTER IV.

LOUISA *to* EMILY.

Carwood, July 16.

THANK you! thank you, my dear Emily, for your entertaining letter. I should like to see the beautiful scenery you have beheld in reality as well as in idea, and to tread upon the pebbly beach where your feet have so often trod. However, while you have been enjoying the beauties of nature, I have been enjoying those afforded by art, which,

though far inferior in themselves, are not without interest.

As I did not go with the rest to Burton Farm, mamma said one morning that she would make me amends by taking me to Town with her, in order to see the Exhibition of the Royal Academy at Somerset House. You may suppose I was delighted with the project, as I had never been there before. But how shall I describe my astonishment when we first entered the large picture-rooms! I felt almost bewildered by the variety and number of paintings which, in massy gilt frames, were hung upon all sides. Among those I liked best were, a Gipsey scene on Hampstead Heath; the midnight alarm; the remains of an old castle in one of the valleys of the Pyrenees; a beautiful view of a cascade in Wales; a portrait of a little girl; and, above all, a picture

of Mr. Benjamin West, by Northcote, which seemed to attract the admiration of most of the spectators. I need scarcely tell you that Mr. West was one of our most eminent artists, and that his paintings are considered as very beautiful productions. When we were seated in the coach in the evening, mamma, who is always ready to give me pleasure, said she would relate some curious anecdotes respecting West when he was a little boy, which she thought would amuse me. Well, what do you think was his first attempt? How I laughed when mamma told me! One day, when he was about six years old, his mother left him to take care of her little granddaughter, who was asleep in the cradle, while she went a walk in the garden, and gave him a fan to flap away the flies that came to the baby. I forgot to say that West was a native of

America, and that this happened in that country, where the climate is very warm, and the flies much more abundant than they are in England. Presently, the child happened to smile in its sleep, and little Benjamin was so delighted with its appearance, that he jumped up and reached some paper that was lying on the table, and some pens and some red and black ink, and began to take its portrait, although he had never before seen either an engraving or a picture. However, it was so good a likeness, that his mother knew it directly, and was very much pleased with her little son's ingenuity. After this time, he accustomed himself to take drawings of flowers and houses, and was not a little pleased to find that he could imitate the form of those things that pleased his sight. However, poor fellow! he had as yet no other materials than red and

black ink; for the people of the family never thought of supplying him with paints. In the course of the summer, a party of Indians came to pay a visit at his father's house, and, being amused with the sketches of birds and flowers which Benjamin shewed them, they taught him to prepare the red and yellow colours with which they painted their ornaments. To these, his mother added blue, by giving him a piece of indigo, so that he was now in possession of the three primary colours. But the poor little artist had no pencils; indeed, he was so much accustomed to draw with a pen, that he scarcely knew what pencils were, until somebody told him that they were small brushes made of camels' hair fastened in a quill. Unfortunately there were no camels in America, and he could not think of any thing that would do instead, till he happened

to cast his eyes on his father's favourite black cat, when, in the tapering fur of her tail, he discovered what he wanted. He soon reached his mother's scissors from her work-box, and, laying hold of poor Grimalkin, cut off the fur at the end of her tail, *sans cérémonie*, and with this made his first pencil. But the tail only supplied him with one, which did not last long, and he soon stood in need of a further supply. He then had recourse to the animal's back, and his depredations were so often repeated, that his father began to be concerned at the altered appearance of his favourite, supposing it the effect of disease. The young artist, however, frankly told him the true cause, and the old gentleman was so much amused with his ingenuity, that he forgave the injury.

I have written a long letter, my dear Emily, and chiefly upon one subject,

but I was so much pleased with the account, that I wished you to hear it too. It shews, as mamma says, that real genius will not be baffled by those little difficulties which a mind of less energy and activity than that of Benjamin West would have considered as insurmountable. I must not omit to mention, that, before long, the ingenious little fellow received a present of a nice paint-box, as well as of several engravings, with which he was quite enraptured, having never before seen any picture but his own drawings; and that he mproved, by degrees, as he grew older, until he became celebrated as one of the first artists either in England or America.

Do not forget to write soon to your affectionate

LOUISA.

LETTER V.

CLARA STANLEY *to* CHARLOTTE LLOYD.

Carwood, July 20.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

ALTHOUGH I am but a little girl, and cannot write such clever letters as Ellen and Louisa, mamma says she thinks you will like to hear from me; so here I am, *perched* up at Isabel's desk, with a pen in my hand, and a sheet of paper before me, about to write a very long letter.

I have been busy in my garden almost every day since you went, and have presented mamma with two dishes of peas from my own little garden, one of potatoes, and one of French beans, as well as with a basket of nice ripe strawberries, and some roses and mignionette to fill the flower-baskets in the hall. From this account you may suppose that I

have not been idle; indeed, what with my French and music, and common English lessons, I have no time for that. I was employed great part of yesterday in collecting flower-seeds for mamma, that she might be able to raise other flowers from them next spring. I set to work early in the morning, and collected a paper bag full of wax-wort and sweet-william and speedwell before dinner; after which I went to work again, and while I was getting the seed of the hawkweed, that yellow flower just by the garden gate, mamma came out and talked to me about the use of seeds. She told me that the seeds of some plants are provided with the means of wafting themselves to a distance, and that being then buried in the earth till the next spring, they produce similar plants in other places; and this accounts for the great number of thistles that

there are in the rabbit warren, for the seeds of the thistle being, like those of the hawkweed, in the shape of little arrows, tipped with a tuft of down, they are blown about by every gentle breeze, and scattered over all parts of the field. Mamma told me a great deal more that I cannot exactly remember, but enough to convince me that every part of a flower is beautiful as well as useful.

My rabbits are quite well. I fancied Flora looked rather mournful the day after you went, for when she came to eat the bran from *my* hand, she did not run about so much as usual. Papa says that some animals are capable of gratitude, that is, they can become fond of those who are kind to them; therefore I choose to think that our pretty Flora is grateful to my friend Charlotte, and that she would soon become fond of Clara, if she knew she was *her* friend. Good bye.

LETTER VI.

CAROLINE *to* ELLEN.

Brighton, July 24.

MY DEAR ELLEN,

I WAS very glad to receive your letter, and much as I should have enjoyed spending the day with you at Burton Farm, yet this mode of participating in each other's pleasures certainly lessens the pain of separation.

We left Hastings last week, and had a fine hilly ride of forty-two miles along the coast to Brighton; our road sometimes lying within a few yards of the edge of the cliffs. We dined at South Bourne, about half way, and after leaving this place, as we ascended the first ridge of the Sussex South Downs, on the eastern side of which Beachy Head

is the terminating point, we gained the finest view I had ever beheld.

I think you will like to hear the result of our second visit to the fisherman's hut, among the cliffs at Hastings. My mamma accompanied us, and no sooner had she seen little Emily, than she felt as much interested about her as we had been, and so, after some consultation, it was agreed that we should take her home with us; she is a merry little creature, fair and rosy, and very fond of us already. The fisherman and his children seemed as sorry to part with her as we were glad to receive her, and, notwithstanding their extreme poverty, were very reluctant to receive any recompence for their care and attention to our little charge. Charlotte and *Emmy*, for by that name she is still called to distinguish her from my sister Emily, are great friends: since we came to

Brighton they have been making some little nets of yellow cotton, fixed in whalebone hoops, with which they catch shrimps and small fish in the little lakes or pools of salt water which are frequent among the stones and pebbles at the foot of the rocks. One day they found a very curious thing belonging to the zoophytes, which are a sort of intermediate class between animals and vegetables. We brought it home, and shewed it to mamma, who said it was a sea anemone. I scarcely knew at first whether it was an animal or a flower, for it appeared like a carnation or anemone, with a great number of petals of beautiful colours, which were expanded and closed, and closed and expanded all the time we were looking at it, which appeared very surprising, as you know that flowers and plants do not possess the property of moving at pleasure; and

after having made many useless conjectures we were informed by mamma, to whom we always apply when we want explanations, that animals resembling flowers belong to a class called *zoophytes.*

We are making a collection of shells and sea-weeds, in order to form a cabinet like yours, and we find that rubbing and polishing the shells is very amusing work. We spread the sea-weed upon paper to display it to more advantage; this is done by putting a little bit at a time into a saucer of clear water, and opening it with a needle while it floats upon the surface; a sheet of writing paper is then slipped under it, and, when perfectly dry, the little fibrous branches are uncommonly beautiful.

My father said that if we intended to have a cabinet it was quite necessary to know something of conchology, that is, the study of shells; so we procured an

elementary work, and are now almost as fond of it as you are of botany. Mamma says that the carriage is waiting to take us a ride, so good bye, my dear Ellen.

LETTER VII.

Ellen *to* Caroline.

Carwood, July 29.

It is my turn to write to you, my dear Caroline, and to give you some account of our pursuits. Papa has lately presented us with several volumes of Mr. Sydenham Edwards's Botanical Register, which make a valuable addition to our own little library. As Louisa has a book in which she copies wild flowers from nature, my sister Isabel proposed that I should have one in order to copy exotics. So last week I copied the honeysuckle azalea from Mr. Edwards's

book; but when it was done, papa said that he did not approve of my drawing from coloured engravings, and that I ought to draw from nature, adding moreover, that he would take me some day to see the gardens and green-houses at Hackney, which are on a very extensive scale, and contain beautiful plants from almost every part of the world. Louisa and I took care not to let him forget his promise, and yesterday we went to Hackney. The hot-houses and conservatories are very large, and the plants they contain quite innumerable; but as it would take too long a time to describe all we saw, I shall only mention those which interested me most. First on my list comes the tea tree, which, you know, of course, is a native of China: it was about the size of one of those almond trees on the lawn, with leaves of a very bright green, and flow-

ers of a pink colour, somewhat like wild dog-roses; next to this was a tall shrub, with blue papilionaceous or pea-shaped flowers, which the gardener told me was the indigo plant, and as indigo is a very useful ingredient in dyeing, I will describe the manner in which it is procured. The gardener said that it is a native of the warm parts of Asia, and that when the people wish to procure the substance called indigo, they cut down several whole plants, and lay them in water in a large wooden vessel. In the course of a few days, as the plant decays, the water becomes discoloured, and on being drawn off, a blue sediment is found in the tub, which, when formed into small lumps and dried, is indigo. I dare say you will recollect that indigo was one of West's primary colours.

As soon as we had looked as long as we wished at the indigo plant, we exa-

mined the coffee tree, with its white blossoms and scarlet berries, and the sago tree, and the elegant cinamon tree, and the camphor tree, and the cotton tree—oh, the beautiful cotton tree! I wish you could see it: it bears large yellow blossoms, which in time produce pods full of a soft, white, downy substance; this substance is collected together and sent to a mill, where, by means of a curious machine, the little seeds are extracted from the cotton, which is afterwards spun and wove into muslin, calico, &c. While I was talking to papa about the cotton tree, Louisa called me to the other side of the conservatory, to look at a pretty pink flower, a little like an iris or flag flower, which had a very sweet smell, and which we found on inquiry was the plant that produces ginger: then there was the Indian-rubber tree, which exudes the gum we call Indian rubber,

you know, and the palma-christi, with its fan-like leaves, from which castor-oil is extracted, and the quinquinna tree, from which Peruvian bark is procured, and a great many more of all sorts and descriptions, some of which we admired for their use, some for their sweetness, and some for their rarity. I observed that those which attracted our particular notice were generally natives of Asia and of the East Indies, where, papa says, the climate is so extremely warm, that there are not only a greater variety and number of plants than in almost any other country, but they also grow much more luxuriantly.

"Around those shores prolific plenty twines,
Stores the thick field, and swells the clustering vines;
A thousand groves their glossy leaves unfold,
Where the rich orange rolls its ruddy gold,
China's green shrub, divine magnolia's bloom,
With mingling odours fling their high perfume."

The gardener at Hackney was very

obliging, and gave me a great number of flowers, among the rest a beautiful kalmia, tuberose, and flame-coloured azalea, which I have been twining into a group on the back of a portfolio, intended for a dear friend of mine. Can you guess whom?

My canary sings more sweetly than ever, and the starling has caught its note completely, so we have now a full chorus in the hall from morning to night.

I am very anxious to see your little French girl; I trust we shall welcome you to Carwood again in the spring. At all events this delightful hope shall be as a beacon to light me through the winter! I am quite a *castle builder*, and often form many grand projects in my head which are never likely to be realized; but it is all very well, Isabel says, for they certainly afford present pleasure, and if in the end they should prove so

airy and fragile as for a puff of wind to blow them away, this may teach me to endure disappointments.

Adieu, my dear Caroline.

Your very affectionate friend.

LETTER VIII.

Emily *to* Louisa.

Malvern, August 20.

It is quite time for me to address you again, my dear girl, and to beg that, if you have for a moment attributed my long silence to negligence or forgetfulness, you will immediately discard the thought as totally unworthy of yourself and me.

When we got to Southampton it was agreed that our little protégée, Emmy, and myself should leave the rest to make the tour of Monmouthshire, and join my aunt at Malvern. So here we are, en-

joying the beauties of some of the sweetest scenery in England. We came from Gloucester hither last Monday, and found my dear aunt much better for change of air, indeed the air here is so pure and delightful that it seems to animate one with new life. My cousin Fanny and I are nearly of the same age, and are become very fond of each other. I suppose I need not tell you that Malvern is a small village at the foot of a range of hills of the same name, nor how much we enjoy rambling about on these hills. Fanny and I set out directly after breakfast one morning, intending to "scale the aerial cliffs" till we should reach the summit of the highest hill, which is more than half a mile from our lodgings. After ascending about one hundred and sixty steps, and winding along a zigzag path which is cut on the side of the hill in order to render the ascent less difficult,

we came to a very pretty cottage, in Gothic style, and covered with woodbines and roses. This, Fanny said, was the well-house, where company come to drink of the mineral water, for which Malvern is celebrated. As we were inclined to taste it also, we went in; an old woman who was sitting there to wait upon the visiters, and who had a little table before her covered with pincushions and toys and needle-books for sale, got up and filled a glass for us, but we did not much admire it on account of the ink-like taste it has. We then rambled forwards, and being too impatient to keep to the regular path, scrambled up the steep sides of the hill, till at last, just as our shoes were become so slippery that we could go no farther, and we were so tired as to be glad to sit down, we found ourselves on the summit—and oh! what a view then burst

upon us on all sides!—a *real* panorama. On our left we could distinctly perceive several towns, cities, and villages, finely interspersed with wood, while the gently rising hills, and beautiful valleys of Herefordshire, rich in orchards and gardens, and the distant mountains of Wales appearing like faint blue clouds upon the edge of the horizon, composed a delightful view on our right. We wandered along on the top of the range of hills till we came to a summer-house, in which we seated ourselves, and opened the basket of cake and fruit we had brought with us. It was a very fine day, only that the sun was occasionally obscured by some fleeting clouds, which, far from lessening the beauty of the scene, only cast a pleasing shadow upon the gray rocks below us. I longed to have had my dear Louisa by my side, as I know she would have joined me in admiring

the variety and grandeur produced by light and shade on those magnificent mountains, (for I who have never seen *real* mountains certainly think they merit that appellation,) and have been ready to exclaim with Fanny and myself,

> "Who can paint like nature?
> Can imagination boast
> Amidst the gay creation hues like hers?
> Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
> And lose them in each other?"

I think I admire the rich tint that was occasionally cast upon those dark rocks even more than the emerald green which tinged the fields below them—a tinge which you and I have so often admired when we have been walking together on a summer's evening, and watching the sun bid us good night in a cloud of glory!

Since I have been with Fanny I have caught all her enthusiasm, so you must

forgive your Emily if the beauty of the scenes around her occupy her thoughts to the exclusion of most other objects.

Next time I write I will give you an account of a curious donkey expedition we had a day or two ago; for donkeys are to be had in abundance at Malvern, and young ladies, attended only by a girl, ride about the steepest hills without shewing any signs of fear. We lodge in *Paradise* Row, so you may think we are happy.

Believe that you are ever dear to your affectionate, &c.

LETTER IX.

LOUISA *to* EMILY, *in reply.*

Carwood, August 27.

MY DEAR EMILY,

Papa put your letter into my hand last evening while we were seated in the

library and painting our flowers. I had just finished the third blossom of the tuberose, so we do not get on very fast you see, but we have had many interruptions lately, and the *originals* are quite faded.

We are very glad to hear you are enjoying yourself so much, and I can assure you that you never need fear describing the beauties of nature in colours too glowing to please me; for I love the hills, the valleys, the clouds, the flowers, the green trees, and the bubbling brooks as much as you do; especially since mamma has taught me "to look through nature up to nature's God," and to say in the words of Cowper,

"My Father made them all."

Apropos of Cowper. I have some good news to tell you. My sister Isabel is just returned from Olney, the place where he lived, and has brought home some slips of ivy from a tree which he

planted with his own hand, against his favourite little green-house. She says that his house is in a deserted and miserable condition, uninhabited and going to decay, and that she scarcely knew how to describe her feelings when she found herself in the very parlour which he had occupied for so many years, and when she visited the dear little green-house, now empty and forsaken, of which he was once so fond. You may think I was delighted with the branches of the ivy tree, and I think I have succeeded in raising two or three. Who can read those lines on the receipt of his mother's picture, without loving the very name of Cowper? I am sure the tears have often started into my eyes when I have repeated,

"I heard the bell toll on thy burial-day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!"

His mother died when he was quite a little boy, only six years old, and this poem was written on receiving her picture more than forty years after.

Then he describes the gardener Robin drawing him to school in his little carriage—

> "And where the gardener Robin day by day
> Drew me to school along the public way,
> Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
> In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap."

Then he tells us that his mother used to visit him every night, to see that he "was safe and warmly laid." Is it not sweet? It makes me think of the time when I was a very little girl, and my own dear mamma used to come up into the nursery every night to see that we were *tucked up* comfortably. What a happy season is childhood! At every period of life it seems that the thought of infantile pleasures and amusements is

sweet and delightful. "Precious beyond rubies are the hours of youth and health. Let none of them pass unprofitably away, for surely they make to themselves wings, and they are as a bird cutting swiftly the air, and the trace of her can no more be found."

Isabel says that we shall be better able to appreciate the beauties of Cowper's Poems when we are older; but I am sure I can never like the Negro's Complaint, the Dog and the Water Lily, or some parts of the Task, better than I do now.

We are having a grotto made in the wood, which employs great part of our leisure hours. You would be surprised to see all of us, *Louisa* among the rest, busy at work long before six o'clock. We are lining it with shells and little bits of spar and coral, and the *curiosities* you were so good as to send us from Brighton are extremely useful. The

grotto is in that retired corner of the wood that we used to call the labyrinth, among the birch trees; it is partly scooped out of the ground, and the little rivulet that trickles down the side of the hill is so contrived as to gush into the fish-pond and make a cascade. As soon as the Olney ivy is ready to move, we shall plant it by the grotto, and endeavour to make it grow round the arch that forms the entrance; and Ellen and I mean to call it *Cowper's Grotto*, in honour of Cowper.

I have begun to learn Italian since you were at Carwood, and I like it very much.

My sister and I are now translating St. Pierre's *Harmonies de la Nature*, a delightful book for those who are fond of nature, so I would advise *you* to read it; but, by the bye, I may as well give you a caution to summon up a little patience and perseverance before you make the

attempt, for the work is in three large octavo volumes, and will take a long time to wade through. Mamma recommended it to us partly for this very reason, and said that when we had read it, she would make us a present of *Les Exiles de Sibéria;* so we have plenty to do.

You see I have been giving you quite a history of our pursuits, as you desired.

Give my love to your cousin Fanny, although I have not the pleasure of knowing her, and believe that I am

Your affectionate friend.

LETTER X.

CHARLOTTE *to* CLARA.

Southampton, August 12.

I THANK you for your letter, my dear Clara, and wish that I could help you to collect your seeds.

I expect to find my own little garden, which has been so long deserted, quite covered with weeds when I get home; and as to the seeds that I set in the spring, it is very likely the flowers never came up, because there was no one there to water them in the hot weather.

The little girl whom my sisters found at the fisherman's hut at Hastings, is become very fond of us all. She begins to talk English very nicely, and talks a great deal too. She has almost forgotten how she came to England, or whom she was with; but she calls my father, *papa*, and Isabel, *ma sœur*. When she was first brought into our drawing-room at Hastings, she stooped down and rubbed the carpet with her hands, repeating several times, "*comme cela, comme cela, comme cela.*" Isabel took her upon her knee and shewed her her watch, and then she said, "Why not ring?"—upon

which papa pulled out his gold repeater; she instantly touched the spring, and, when it struck, jumped about the room with joy, crying, "It rings! it rings! papa's watch rings!"

I wish you could see our dear little Emmy; she is very good-humoured and lively, and mamma says it is quite evident that she has been accustomed to a better way of life than that in the poor fisherman's hut.

I have found some very pretty pebbles and shells on the beach; one of the former is called an *agate*, and mamma means to have it *mounted* because I picked it up: it is of a beautiful red colour.

I am glad to hear the rabbits are going on well, but I dare say Flora will have no recollection of me next time I see her; indeed, for my own part, I do not think that rabbits *can* remember those who are kind to them. Papa says

that the nature of a rabbit is very different from that of a dog; for a dog does really possess gratitude and attachment, and a rabbit does not.

This is the first letter I have written since we left home, and as I have neither very good pens, nor very good ink, nor very good paper, I must defer writing a longer one till we are there again. When we are seated in our own breakfast parlour, and I am once more "perched up" at my own little writing-desk, you may expect a more entertaining epistle from your affectionate

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER XI.

CAROLINE *to* ELLEN.

Chepstow, August 20.

AND now, my dearest Ellen, we are actually in Wales, at least if Monmouthshire may be called such. Papa tells

me that it belongs to the English circuit, but that does not signify to me, and I shall call it Wales notwithstanding.

I will now give you the whole account of our journey from Gloucester, where we parted with Emily, to this place. As we only got there late the evening before we left, we rose early the following morning on purpose to visit the beautiful cathedral, wells, walks, &c. Whilst we were rambling about, some one pointed to a high hill at a distance, and told us it was called Robin Hood's hill, and that there was a spring of water on the top of it, which, by means of pipes, supplied the whole city with water. I was just going to ask why it belonged to Robin Hood, and if it were not remarkable for a spring of water to be found on so high a hill, when one of the servants came to say the carriage was waiting. This drove the subject

out of my head, and I had not thought of it since, till I began to consider what I should say to you.

We had a pleasant ride to Nuneham, where we dined. The country between Gloucester and this place is interspersed with hills and woods, and I was quite charmed with the little white cottages which peeped here and there at every turn in the road:

> "And round the cot's romantic glade were seen
> The blossom'd bean-field and the sloping green."

Indeed, they were generally surrounded by little fields or gardens, and most of them had a little porch before the door, overgrown with roses and woodbines, in some of which the mother of the family was seated at work, while her playful children were running about by her side. Oh, my dear Ellen! how happy you and I could be together in one of

these "safe retreats of health and peace;" for *we* know that wealth and splendour and affluence do not impart such *real* happiness as that arising from innocent and *easily-procurable* pleasures. But I was going to tell you that the road was lined on each side with orchards for miles together, and the boughs of the apple-trees were loaded with such abundant crops of beautiful fruit, that they bent to the earth, as though unable to support their weight; the labourers were busy in the fields, for the corn was just being put into sheaves; the hedges were overhung with large clusters of wild hops and the white cups of the bind-weed, which formed a fine contrast to the bright green leaves around them; and not unfrequently we could discern a village spire among the trees, pointing its "silent finger" into the clear blue sky, as if to remind us of Heaven. All

these little things contributed to form a beautiful *tout ensemble*, and we enjoyed the ride exceedingly.

All that I can say will give you but a faint idea of the scenery that has pleased me so much; so you, my dear, must add your own quota of fancy to make up for my deficiency.

We were much amused with the simplicity of the church at Nuneham, but papa says we shall be still more so with those in Wales: it looks just like a sort of pigeon-house, having a conical roof, and being white-washed all over.

We were also much amused with watching a boat across the Severn, which is of considerable width at this place. You will perhaps smile and say, "What of that?—there is nothing particular in watching a boat." But there was something very particular in it, for it was loaded with passengers intending

to land on the opposite bank; but, alas! no sooner had they reached the middle of the river, than a sand-bank, caused by the low tide, interrupted their progress, and being nevertheless determined to gain the shore, their attempts to do so by paddling along up to their knees in the wet mud, some upon one another's shoulders and some upon horseback, some in one direction and some in another, formed a most ludicrous scene and a novel one too!

We travelled from Nuneham to Lydney through such a romantic country, that I was almost ready to start from the chaise with delight at every turn in the road. Lydney is a little black town amidst salt marshes, and the country just around it is so barren and unproductive, that you could scarcely fancy it near such charming scenery as that of Chepstow. However, we enjoyed the

ride very much, as it formed a contrast to the delightful views the morning had afforded, and every scene is heightened by contrast. Variety and novelty possess a never-ceasing charm, and, to a young and ardent admirer of nature, are particularly welcome. We passed through part of the forest of Dean, which is many miles in extent, and before the sun had sunk behind the western mountains, a turn in the road brought us within view of Piercefield House in the midst of its beautiful park. I cannot describe what I felt when I first gazed upon the spot that was once gladdened by the presence of one whose memory I revere and love, and whose example I would wish to follow as a model of all that is good.

I talked of romantic scenery about Nuneham; now it became of a more grand and sublime nature. We beheld

steep and precipitous cliffs rising above each other, some of them more than three hundred feet in perpendicular height; the river Wye lay below them, winding its serpentine course at the foot of the woods with which they are embowered, and which possessed a peculiar interest for my cousin Lucy, who is now with us, and myself, as we were assured by papa that they were the woods of Piercefield. Yonder was the alcove in which Elizabeth had so often sat, and there was the very grove in which her Llewellyn ap Gryffid was slain!

As we proceeded, the little town of Chepstow appeared in sight: it is built upon the side of a steep rock, and celebrated for the ruins of an old castle, which, being situated on the cliffs just above the river, form a grand and striking object. We crossed an elegant iron

bridge, of five arches, across the Wye, which brought us into Monmouthshire. The people and general appearance of the place were more of an English cast than I had expected; but a good-natured Welsh woman, in a black hat, without shoes or stockings, and with her gown turned up in the style of an old washer-woman, directed us to the Beaufort Hotel, where we have taken up our residence for the present. Lucy, who has travelled in Wales before, says that the women generally go barefoot, and do not consider this any hardship, provided they have a nice black hat to put on their heads.

I suppose, my dear Ellen, that I must give you two letters for one; for although this is so long, I have said nothing of some delightful excursions we have taken since we came here, nor of a curious visit we paid one moonlight night to an

old woman who lives in the castle; however, this will form a subject for my next epistle, and I shall get Lucy to write to you and to tell you *why* we are so much delighted with Piercefield, and *who* the Elizabeth was that used to live there.

It is now after eleven o'clock, and we are just retiring to rest in a comfortable room, where I dare say we shall slumber as soundly as though we were in our own nice beds at home.

Good bye, my dear girl, believe me

Yours truly.

LETTER XII.

LUCY GRANVILLE *to* ELLEN *and* LOUISA STANLEY.

Chepstow, August 22.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

ALTHOUGH we can scarcely claim the pleasure of a personal acquaintance, yet

I feel myself entitled to love you for Caroline's sake, and therefore comply with her request, that I would give you some particulars of an amiable young lady, who, like Young's Narcissa,

"Early, bright, transient, chaste as morning dew,
Sparkled, and was exhaled, and went to Heaven."

I refer to Miss Elizabeth Smith, whose interesting "Fragments" Caroline has lately read, and whose home was once at Piercefield. Now, that you know why your young friend was so much interested in seeing that delightful spot, I will proceed to my narrative. The subject of it is one whose memory will be long and deservedly dear to those to whom genius is an object of emulation, and piety of affectionate esteem.

She was born at Burnhall, in Durham, in the year 1776; and in 1806, after she had been a year gradually declining, she resigned her pure spirit into the

hands of God who gave it. Her person and manners were particularly pleasing, and a pensive softness on her countenance indicated deep reflection; indeed, under the veil of timidity and modest diffidence, lay concealed talents and acquirements which, as Mrs. More says, would have been distinguished even in a university. With scarcely any assistance, she taught herself the French, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, as well as a little Arabic and Persian. She was well acquainted with astronomy, algebra, geometry, and other branches of the mathematics. She was a very fine musician: the harp was her particular favourite, and she often touched its strings while gliding about in a little pleasure-boat on the Wye, which runs along the valley just below the woods of Piercefield. She drew correctly from nature, and the

beautiful views with which Monmouthshire abounds furnished a continual variety for her pencil.

Notwithstanding her uncommon talents and great acquirements, she excelled in every feminine virtue; was elegant, modest, gentle, and affectionate; neglected nothing which a woman ought to know; and omitted no duty of which her situation in life required the performance. But the part of her character which is most worthy of admiration is that exalted piety which displayed itself in her early youth, which always seemed to raise her above this world, and which taught her at sixteen years of age to resign its riches and its pleasures almost without regret, and to support with fortitude a very unexpected change of situation. Yes! when only sixteen, Elizabeth and her family, by a distressing reverse of fortune, were obliged to quit

Piercefield, where they had resided for some years; and this very circumstance renders it doubly interesting to us. Her favourite pursuits were thus interrupted; the delightful scenery of her once happy home, the harp, the pianoforte, the romantic walks, the retired alcove and the library, were sacrificed together.

Mr. Smith and his family quitted Piercefield for ever at this melancholy era, but the resignation with which Elizabeth bore so severe a trial, the patience with which she sustained the long and painful illness that preceded her death, the sweet and unceasing attention which she always shewed to the feelings of her parents and friends, and the heavenly composure with which she looked forwards to another state of existence, are worthy your admiration, and may convince you that piety alone can shed that softened lustre on distinguished talents

which renders their possessor happy here, and ensures her happiness hereafter.

As the preceding account, brief as it is, was my chief object in addressing you, I will not enlarge, but leave Caroline to describe the scenery of Piercefield, and to *rhapsodize* on the pleasure she enjoyed there.

Believe me, with every wish for your welfare and improvement in all that is good, Yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

CAROLINE *to* ELLEN.

Chepstow, August 24.

AGAIN, my dear Ellen, I venture to address you, being assured that a second letter from your absent friend will not prove an unwelcome visitor.

I promised in my last to give you some account of our moonlight visit to Chepstow Castle, so now for it.

A few evenings ago, papa, Edward, my cousin Lucy, and myself, set out directly after tea and rambled along a narrow lane till we came within view of the eastern side of the ruins. A beautiful scene they indeed presented! for the moon, just breaking through the clouds, shed a soft silvery light upon the battlements and round towers, and gave them an air of awful and melancholy grandeur.

We opened a little gate that led us into a field, and another from the field that brought us into the path leading to the entrance of the castle, whose strong barred door, assailed in many places with musket-balls, reminded us that there had been a time when an entrance through it was a more difficult under-

taking than even what we found it. Papa tried to open it and Edward tried too, but they could not succeed, for it was strong and heavy, and at last we concluded that it was barred up for the night, and that we must give up the hope of exploring the winding galleries, the deserted towers, and the dreary dungeons, till day-light should favour such an exploit. So we were turning away in despair, when Lucy exclaimed, "Oh, I have discovered it! I have found an entrance! Here is a little door that I can open and shut without difficulty!" She was not mistaken; there *was* a little door, contrived within the large one, which papa said had probably been made for the porter of the castle to give and receive messages, &c. without opening the great massy gate, for fear of an assault from the enemy. With some little difficulty we got, one by one,

through this *wee-wee* door, and entered the great court, which is quite surrounded by chapels and halls and watch-towers, the roofs and windows of which are generally gone, but the walls are above ten feet thick, and seem as if they might stand some hundred years longer. The court is large and kept in nice order. We peeped in at one door-way and then at another till we came to a narrow arched passage, along which we ventured. We then ascended a few steps, which brought us to a sort of gallery. Just at that moment the light of the moon bursting through one of the long narrow loop-holes in the wall, directed us to a door, which we opened. This door led us into a great hall, without a roof, consequently not quite dark. After looking and groping about for some time, we found another little arched door-way at the opposite corner of

this great hall, and were repaid, in one way at least, for all our rambling, by what we found in the little room beyond it, which I have since heard is called the keep-tower, and which is not very far from the covered gallery near the entrance. What do you think we saw there? An old woman! all alone—sitting by a few half-burnt embers, which emitted a faint glimmering light, just sufficient to shew what sort of place she was in: a tabby cat, her only companion, lay beside her on the hearth, and a mess of pea-porridge stood on a little table before her, no doubt for her supper. She was dressed in a blue quilted petticoat and coloured bed-gown, and had a white handkerchief tied round her head. A warming-pan, two wooden chairs, a deal dresser, a bureau bedstead, and a three-legged table, composed the whole of her furniture. She appeared

to be quite contented with her mode of life, which papa said was not to be wondered at, considering she had lived there for more than twenty years; but I really think that if *I* had lived for *forty* years in that dismal little keep-tower, *I* should not have been reconciled to it. I forgot to say that this is the almost only habitable part of the castle, and that the old woman resides there in order to conduct strangers over the ruins. She was rather disconcerted at our intruding upon her solitude at so late an hour, but was civil enough to inform papa, what he of course knew very well before, that Chepstow Castle was supposed by some to have been built by Julius Cæsar, but that this was mere supposition, as it was more probably erected by some of the Earls of Pembroke, and that one of the chief political events connected with its history is, that it was the place of

confinement to which Harry Marten, one of the judges of King Charles the First, was sent after the Restoration, and that he was confined for twenty years in one of the towers, which still goes by the name of Marten's Tower.

"But," added she, "if you want to visit this tower, it must be in broad daylight, when I can see you and you can see me."

So we took the old lady's hint and departed. She followed us, whispering to herself, along the dark passages and down the court, till we found ourselves again at the strong latticed gate, which is fastened with iron bolts within and covered with iron plates without. Instead of allowing us to make our retreat, by getting through the little door at which we had entered, she undid the great iron bolts. We wished her good night, and in a moment after heard the

great bar clapped to with a noise that made me shudder, and I congratulated myself on our escape, though I really enjoyed the adventure.

We afterwards scrambled, on the outside of the ruins, over broken fragments and among underwood and ivy till we found ourselves at the top of a craggy cliff just above the Wye, where the whole scene was so charming, that I longed for my dearest Ellen. The water below us was gently agitated, and the surrounding mountains were partially shrouded by the clouds that every now and then obscured the light of the moon: no sound was heard but the flapping wing of the returning bird, who had chosen this for her solitary residence, or the distant oar gently striking the waters. I was lost in silent admiration, and silence in such a place is more eloquent than words. But it

was getting late; we knew that mamma would be anxious for our return, and therefore it was necessary to be gone.

Before I conclude my letter, I must just tell you that we visited the castle again the next morning, and, being by "broad day-light," found our old woman really rather intelligent than otherwise. The ruins are magnificent and extensive; they are overgrown in many parts with ivy and wild flowers, among which I found broom-rape, snap-dragon, and red valerian.

I have filled my paper, and have neither room nor time to say any thing, but that I am, as ever, Yours sincerely.

LETTER XIV.

ELLEN *to* CAROLINE, *in reply.*

Carwood, September 1.

I RECEIVED your welcome packet,

containing two letters from yourself, and one from your cousin Lucy at the same time, my dear Caroline, and they gave me sincere pleasure. Though so many hills and woods and valleys lie between us, we can still carry on an interchange of thought and feeling, and in this delightful way both lessen the pain of separation, and, I would hope, prove of mutual benefit to each other. Louisa and myself are particularly obliged to Lucy for her letter; we were so much pleased with her account of Miss Elizabeth Smith, that mamma has bought her "Fragments" for us, and we are now reading them aloud, for an evening book. We are just got to the period of her quitting Piercefield and its enjoyments for a very different mode of life, and all that you can tell us about Piercefield will of course be interesting.

I am of your opinion, my dear girl,

that we might be very happy in a little white-washed Welsh cottage, in a *peasant's nest*, as Cowper calls it, because I think, as you do, that happiness is only to be found *within ourselves*. I recollect writing a copy when I was a little girl, of which, till very lately, I could never discover the meaning:—*Contentment is a kingdom*. I perfectly remember saying to myself over and over again, "Contentment is a kingdom—Contentment is a kingdom—a kingdom is a country, and how can contentment be called a country?"

I have often laughed at the curious ideas I once had. I now quite comprehend the meaning of that copy; it is meant to imply, that contentment or peace of mind will impart more real happiness to its possessor than all that wealth or riches, or even a kingdom, could purchase.

I shall here transcribe a sentence I lately met with respecting happiness, which I know you will like, as our sentiments on this subject are so similar:

"Happiness in this life certainly depends in a great measure on our readiness in acquiring a taste for innocent and easily procurable pleasures. Those, therefore, who possess a relish for literature and knowledge will seldom complain that time hangs heavy on their hands, but may in general affirm, with Dr. Aikin, that, excluding pain and sickness, 'with books no day has been so dark, as not to have its pleasures.'"

What book do you think I am reading? Even that dry, dull, uninteresting looking book, as you used to call it—the Iliad of Homer. Far from being dry and dull and uninteresting, it is full of life and animation, delightful stories, and great and noble actions, like the

Grecian history. I could dispense with some of the dreadful wars and battles certainly, but the account of Hector (a brave Trojan who defends Troy against the invasion of the Greeks) parting with his wife Andromache, when summoned to the field, is so delightful, that it makes amends for all I do not like. She endeavours to represent to him the uncertainty of his return, reminds him of his little son, the young Astyanax, and tries to prevent his going:

"Too daring prince! ah whither dost thou run?
Ah too forgetful of thy wife and son!
And think'st thou not how wretched we shall be?
A widow I, an helpless orphan he!
For sure such courage length of life denies,
And thou must fall thy country's sacrifice.
Greece in her single heroes strove in vain,
Now hosts oppose thee and thou must be slain!"

But Hector is resolved, and replies,

"My early youth was bred to martial pains;
My soul impels me to th' embattled plains:

Let me be foremost to defend the throne,
And guard my father's glories and my own."

Then comes the parting scene:

"Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy
Stretched his fond arms to clasp his lovely boy.
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
And Hector hastened to relieve his child,
The glittering terrors from his brows unbound,
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground;
Then kissed the child and lifting high in air,
Thus to the Gods preferred a father's prayer:
— — — — — —
— — — — — —"

At last he placed the helmit "black with shading plumes" again upon his head, tore himself for the last time from the arms of Andromache, and once more returned to the field of battle, where he fought with courage and bravery, defending Troy against the invasion of the Greeks, till he himself was slain. You

may easily suppose that the affectionate Andromache was overwhelmed with grief when she heard of this event, and her distress is described in such a manner, that the tears involuntarily rushed into my eyes when I read it. Read it yourself, my dear Caroline, and you will be convinced that *we*, who live in the bosom of domestic peace, are happier by far than those who, inspired by the love of fame and glory, endeavour to render themselves, or at least their names, immortal.

I want to hear from you again, to know what other adventures you have met with, and what excursions you have made, as well as many other particulars which cannot fail of interesting your affectionate

ELLEN.

LETTER XV.

CAROLINE *to* ELLEN *and* LOUISA.

Chepstow, September 2.

I find that it is a very good plan to write a little history of each day's excursion, my dear girls, and so I am going to put the history of yesterday into a letter for you.

We rose at six o'clock, for we like to make the most of our time, and rambled towards the castle, in order to take a slight sketch of the north view. After breakfast we walked down through the churchyard to the water side, and presently found ourselves seated in a little pleasure-boat and gently gliding down the Wye towards Tintern Abbey. You can scarcely imagine what beautiful scenery adorns each side of this river. The rocks, embowered in wood, rise,

almost perpendicularly, to the height of many hundred feet, and, although so early in the season, some of the trees had assumed a little autumnal tint, which, forming a contrast to their green foliage, added in no small degree to their beauty. The Wye is extremely serpentine, and reminded me of some lines of Lord Byron's, in which he describes the Rhine:

> "The river nobly foams and flows,
> The charm of this enchanted ground,
> And all its various turns disclose
> Some new-born beauty varying round.
> The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
> Through life to dwell delighted here,
> Nor could on earth a spot be found
> To nature and to me so dear."

I do not choose to believe that the Rhine with all its beauty *can* surpass the Wye.

At length we came within view of Tintern Abbey, and when first I beheld

its magnificent ruins shrouded in mantles of luxuriant ivy, I was half ready to jump out of the boat with delight. They are in a charming situation; the river glides smoothly along in the valley below them, and the scene behind consists of one range of mountains rising above another; those nearer at hand overhung with wood and interspersed with cottages, and those in the distance resembling faint blue clouds.

We took a second breakfast at the little inn at the village, and then went to survey the ruins, where several parties were already assembled upon the same errand as ourselves. At the further end of the aisle we observed eight or ten ladies seated upon little camp stools and busily employed in taking sketches in various directions. My cousin Lucy, who is very fond of drawing, soon made one of the number, and

I seated myself upon a low wall at the farther end of the abbey in order to make a sketch of the west window, which is a very beautiful one. When this was done, we walked about the ruins, which are very extensive; the walls are almost entire; the roof is fallen in; but most of the columns which divided the aisles still remain; the shapes of the windows are little altered, but some of them are quite obscured by mantles of ivy which winds round the pillars, clings to the walls, and in one of the aisles clusters at the top in branches so thick and large as to darken the space below. Papa told us that Tintern Abbey was a Cistercian Abbey, founded in the reign of King Henry the Third. I, of course, inquired the meaning of *Cistercian*, and found that it was a term given to an order of monks, of which society the convent at Tintern formed a part.

Long before I was half ready, papa shewed me his watch, and told me that it was time to bid adieu to this enchanting spot, which I could not do without reluctance. After drinking a glass of new milk at the little inn where we had breakfasted, we set off, on our return, through the beautiful woods that overhang the Wye. You will believe that they are beautiful when I tell you, that a ramble of eight miles did not fatigue us. The road lies, most of the way, just on the edge of the cliffs which we had seen when we were in the boat, and several fresh botanical specimens gratified the young lover of flowers as she scrambled from one crag to another. After having wandered through the woods for a very long way, we came to a flight of steps, cut in the solid rock, which foretold us that we were at the

foot of the Wind Cliff, a cliff which all travellers ought to ascend for the sake of the prospect that is to be seen from its summit; nor shall we soon forget the kind conductor whom we found at its foot, in a little rustic cottage built for the convenience of travellers, and who led us up three hundred and ninety moss-covered steps, sometimes along a little narrow path just on the edge of a tremendous precipice, and sometimes through a dark cavern scooped in the rock, till we found ourselves among a clump of firs on the top of the cliff, where the scene we beheld—towns, villages, seats, and woody lawns, with the Severn rolling into the ocean—is too grand, too sublime, and too beautiful, to be described—so I leave it. But, benevolent and interesting stranger! though we have parted from you for

ever, yet so long as Wind Cliff can be remembered, the society which rendered its ascent delightful shall not be forgotten!

At length we proceeded through a few fields to Piercefield, and how shall I describe the joy I felt when we entered a little green door that brought us into the park, and the gardener, who came forwards, assured me that he had lived for five years in Mr. Smith's family. He seemed quite pleased to witness my pleasure, and talked with grateful exultation of his former employers. He shewed us a seat which had been hewn in the rock by Mrs. Smith's particular desire, and pointed out Elizabeth's favourite retreats. "There," said he, pointing to a rustic alcove, "is the spot where she used to sit and string the harp that now lies neglected and forgot-

ten, and there is the grotto she used to frequent, forsaken and deserted for ever by her dear footsteps."

The poor man's eloquence reminded me of our favourite song,

> "Here's the bower she loved so well,
> And the tree she planted,
> Here's the harp she used to touch,
> Oh, how that touch enchanted!" &c.

The views about Piercefield form a variety of subjects for the pencil, and we fancied that each little sketch we took was once beheld with similar feelings by Miss Smith, who well knew how to appreciate the beauties of nature. The whole estate consists of 2684 acres, containing timber trees of unusual size, with smooth verdant lawns sloping between them, whilst, at every opening in the shrubberies, romantic views of the Wye present themselves. You may

have some idea of the height of the crags which overlook this river when I tell you, what one of the boatmen told me, that the sun does not shine for three months together, at a particular time of the year, upon those parts which are near the surface of the water.

We reached our hotel at Chepstow about eight o'clock in the evening, and were glad to rest ourselves after twelve hours of constant exertion. We had, however, enjoyed ourselves very much, and Lucy and I both felt the truth of Elizabeth Smith's assertion, that a "happy day is *worth* enjoying."

I thank you for your letter, my dear Ellen, and hope to hear from Louisa soon.

Adieu! believe me yours most affectionately.

LETTER XVI.

Emily *to* Louisa.

Malvern, August 29.

My dear Louisa,

I promised to write to you again from Malvern, and, as we intend to remain here till the month after next, you will probably hear from me a third time as well as a second.

How I wish you were here, my dear girl, to climb the high hills and scramble about the rocks with Fanny and myself, for we have found several fresh flowers, and among the rest a little round-leaved plant, resembling pennywort. The crevices between the dark gray stones were the places *affected*, as Withering says, by this new addition to our collection.

Travellers generally tell you what

they eat, and, although I do not often pay regard to *etiquette* in this particular, I must just tell you that the bread at Malvern is the very best I ever ate, and even surpasses in whiteness the white twists we used to have for breakfast at Carwood. Having considered this circumstance "worthy of note," I may as well just mention the water also; I do not mean the ink-like water at the spa, but the water that is usually drank, which is so excellent, that I fancy I could live very contentedly upon it and the bread together.

I had forgotten till this very moment the history of our grand donkey expedition, which I promised you in my last. You must know then, that the village of Little Malvern is about three miles from hence, and that as Fanny and I had a great desire to see it, my aunt,

who is ever ready to please us, formed a party for the purpose.

Our party consisted of two young ladies with whom we are acquainted, Fanny, I, and one of my aunt's servants.

I believe I told you that donkeys are very common at Malvern; no less than twenty or thirty are continually parading backwards and forwards from the Library to the Belle Vue Hotel, and from the Belle Vue Hotel to the Library, attended only by little girls, who stop every stranger they see, calling out, "Want a donkey, Ma'am? want a donkey, Miss?" We wanted *four* donkeys, and therefore four were hired upon the occasion: and now, my dear, imagine you see us, each mounted, with a little ivory-handled whip in her hand, of no use by the bye, and setting off quite in

style and in high glee, along the road that leads to Little Malvern. But, to make the scene still more ludicrous, imagine to yourself two of the donkeys with a girl between them holding the bridle of each in each hand, and running as fast as she can, while her sister, who is apparently several years younger than herself, and dressed in a blue stuff frock and a straw hat tied carelessly under her chin, is running behind with a stick in her hand, first striking one and then the other, in order to make them canter, —and then you have a good idea of Fanny and myself; fancy you see Georgiana and Harriet on their two donkeys in the same style behind, and then you have a good idea of the whole group.

At length we reached the village of Little Malvern, which consists only of a few scattered cottages; but the church, almost gone to ruins and covered with

ivy, forms a very interesting object, and I must transcribe for you a few lines, (which Georgiana repeated while we were seated upon one of the tomb-stones and taking some sketches,) not merely for their beauty, but because they are so descriptive:

"Just peeping from a woody covert near,
The lesser Malvern stands. Sequestered church!
The spot around thee speaks of quietness.
Down at the mountains' base thou long hast braved,
With unmoved front, the seasons' varying hour,
The vernal tempest and December storms;
Yet, at this tranquil time, most fair thou art.
The aged oaks around and lowering elms,
In wild luxuriance spread their stately limbs;
And, true to friendship, ward each angry blast
That, howling through the valley, sweeps along
To thy dark battlements.
Thou humble church, protected stand
Through many a year of sunshine and of storm,
And may thy sylvan guardians flourish too,
The woodman pass them and the tempest spare."

When we had visited the interior of

the church and admired the remains of a tesselated pavement which are still exhibited there, we left the churchyard and rambled down into an adjoining glen, clothed with bold impending wood, where we seated ourselves in a group on the grass, and partook of some refreshments which the servant had brought in a basket.

When we had staid as long as we wished, we summoned our donkeys and our donkey girls, and, once more mounted, set off on our return home. But instead of coming the regular road, we agreed to return a round-about way in order to make a variety; so we went right across a large open common, called the Chase, and entered a lane quite at the other end. I must just tell you that this chase belonged to William the Conqueror, in whose reign it was so overgrown with wood, as to be called a

wilderness, though it is now as bare of trees as Salisbury Plain itself, and only

"—— the green fern to the breeze gently bending,
With a few stunted trees, meet the wandering eye;
Or the furze and the broom their bright blossoms extending,
With the braken's soft verdure delightfully vie."

Well, we got into one of those narrow lanes with which the neighbourhood of Malvern seems to abound: this lane brought us into another, and that into another, and so on till the road became quite intricate, and we were beginning to despair of finding our way home, had not a sudden turn in the road brought us within sight of a farm-house, which I fancied a little like Burton Farm, as it was in a very secluded situation and surrounded by high trees. Thither we went, and, for something to say, Fanny and I knocked at the door and begged

to be allowed to dip our sketches in milk, as they are so apt to get rubbed out, especially when they are rolled up as ours were. The farmer's wife, who appeared to be a very good-natured woman, led us into the dairy directly and gave us a saucer of skim milk. I, who had never been in a dairy before, was very much pleased with its order and cleanliness: the milk was standing in large earthen vessels upon shelves all round the room, a little latticed window admitted a nice cool air, and a large thing like a barrel, placed upon a stand, and with a handle to it, stood in the middle, and was, as I afterwards found, the woman's churn. I thought Georgiana and Harriet would like to see a churn, and therefore called them in for that purpose. As soon as they entered the dairy, we were surprised to find that they were recognized by the farmer's

wife, as we did not at all know who she was, till she informed us that she had once been nurse-maid in their family. They presently recollected her also, and the meeting seemed productive of such mutual pleasure, that we agreed to comply with her request that we would stay to tea, provided she would have it early, as we had three miles to go before we reached home. The good woman forthwith reached down her best china cups from a sort of cupboard called a beaufet, in one corner of the room, placed the tea-kettle over the fire, and cut a large plate of batch cake. After all this preparation tea was soon ready, and I do not know that I ever enjoyed my tea more. When we had thanked our hospitable hostess for her kindness, and promised to visit her again, we mounted our donkeys, and, being directed by the farmer's son which road to take, found

our way to Malvern, where my aunt was anxiously expecting us.

What do you think of our donkey excursion?

Give my love to Ellen, and a kiss to dear little Clara, and believe me your affectionate

EMILY.

LETTER XVII.

CAROLINE *to her Sister* EMILY.

Abergavenny, September 4.

MY DEAR EMILY,

ALTHOUGH I should have enjoyed our little tour much more had you been with me, yet I am glad that we can participate in one way at least in each other's pleasures. You see we have left Chepstow and are now at the little town of Abergavenny, on the confines of Monmouthshire.

We left Chepstow soon after breakfast last Monday morning, and after travelling about a mile came to the entrance of Piercefield Park, where the carriage stopped for a few minutes that Lucy might take a sketch of the Lodge, of which she has promised to send you a copy. We were both sorry to leave a spot which we had visited with so much interest and delight; we possess one little memorial of Piercefield, however, in the rose-bay willowherb, which we found growing on the wall that bounds the shrubbery.

As we passed through the little village of St. Arvon's, we alighted at the gardener's cottage, as he had told us that he was in possession of some botanical works that once belonged to Miss Smith, as well as several wild flowers which she herself had pressed. You may suppose that we were much grati-

fied with seeing them, and after spending an hour with the intelligent gardener we proceeded forwards, sometimes across stony mountains and sometimes through woody valleys, till we reached Usk, a little town noted for its fine salmon. Lucy and I are become such antiquaries, that we could not think of leaving this place till we had surveyed the ruins of an old castle, but few of which are remaining. We afterwards walked down to the bridge in order to take a sketch of them, as well as of the village church of Llanvatagh, which is seen on the opposite side. The water of the river Usk is so extremely clear, that I could almost count the pebbles beneath its surface as I leaned over the little parapet wall. Many of the people here talk downright Welsh, and one old woman, who was seated on the bridge, amused us exceedingly.

She was dressed, as the Welsh women generally are, in a fustian petticoat and blue cloak, and had, according to custom, a nice black hat on her head; a basket of apples, probably for sale, stood by her side. Papa inquired of her what was the name of the village on our right; she replied, pointing her finger along the road, "That's the way to Car-a-diff, Sir" (pronouncing Cardiff, *Car-a-diff*). "I asked the name of the village, good woman," said papa. "That's the way to Car-a-diff, Sir," continued she, pointing her finger. "Do you not know the name of the church that we see yonder, peeping between those tall poplars?" said my father. "That's the way to Car-a-diff, Sir," she replied, and this was all we could get her to say. "That's the road to Car-a-diff, Sir," seemed the whole burden of her song; indeed papa thinks that it was the only English sen-

tence with which she was acquainted, and that she concluded as a thing of course that *we* could not speak Welsh.

In the afternoon of that day we travelled through a charming country, of hills and woods and mountains, to Abergavenny. The ride was truly romantic, the mountains of Brecknock and Glamorganshire appearing to great advantage in the distance, while the nearer views were enlivened by pretty little villages scattered here and there among the trees. Our postilion pointed out Llangelly, Llanvatagh, Llantigroittre, Llan, Llan, Llan, &c. I want to find the meaning of *Llan;* I think it must be a Welsh word of some particular signification, as most of the Welsh villages have it attached to them.

Abergavenny is a better place than we expected to see. We walked in the evening to survey the ruins of an ancient

castle, which have, unfortunately, for the most part, been modernized by a private gentleman. They are on an eminence overlooking the town, and affording a fine view of the surrounding country. We afterwards sauntered about the town and visited the different book-shops, at one of which the master was a very old man with spectacles on, and as he either could not read at all, or else by candle-light, he got Lucy to go behind the counter with a candle in her hand to read the titles to us. We fixed upon Cowper's Poems for you, and a book full of little pictures, called "The Traveller," for Emmy.

We went the next morning to Crickhowel, a small town in Brecknockshire, intending to proceed from thence by short and easy stages to Abervale. But an unforeseen occurrence put a stop to all our plans: a letter was found at the

post office there addressed to papa, and requiring his immediate attendance in Town upon business of urgent necessity. As this was the case, after some consultation, it was thought best for us to go to Malvern and remain there with you and my aunt during the month which papa may probably be absent, and delay our visit to Abervale until he is at liberty to join us. This sudden event was a disappointment to our whole party, but as regret is of no use, I console myself with the "Pleasures of Hope," and bear it as philosophically as I can.

We are returned to Abergavenny, and leave it to-morrow for Monmouth, whence we mean to proceed to Malvern without delay, and you cannot think, my dear Emily, how glad I shall be to see you again.

Your affectionate sister.

LETTER XVIII.

Louisa *to* Caroline.

Carwood, September 20.

My dear Caroline,

I thank you for your letter addressed to my sister and myself, and as Ellen is gone to spend the day in Town with mamma, and I am left sole mistress of the dear little breakfast room, where we used to sit and chat together, I shall employ myself during their absence in writing to you.

The plants and the birds are about as they were when you left Carwood. The tiger-iris has blossomed three times, and the little buds of the pyrus japonica, which had been closely folded up for so long a time, have at length burst themselves open, and displayed some of the most beautiful flowers I ever beheld, of

a deep crimson colour. We have had several additions to our aviary since you were here; among the rest, a pair of Java sparrows, and a pair of tailor birds, from Hindoostan, which attach their curious nests to the end of the leaves of the banyan tree, instead of building them in some secure spot as other birds do; and as to Ellen's canary, I dare say she has already told you that it sings from morning to night. Talking of birds reminds me of the frog concerts in North America. Last week, a very entertaining gentleman, an old friend of papa's, who had recently returned from America, dined with us, and amused me all the evening by the curious accounts he gave of American customs, manners, &c. He said that many parts of North America resemble large uncultivated forests, but that the rapidity with which the land is cleared, especially in the Caro-

linas, is astonishing, and as a proof of it he told us that the mail stage, by which he was travelling, stopped one morning to breakfast at a very comfortable log-house in the middle of a wood; the land was cleared for about the space of an acre, and, in addition to the house, there were two out-houses, a stable, in which were the four mail horses, and a granary. Thirteen days previously this was the middle of a wood like the rest, and not a tree was cut down! It seems as though the people in America were very industrious: just consider what a long time it takes to build a house in England. But their log-houses are not half so convenient or commodious as our nice stone dwellings. I inquired what sort of habitation this log-house was, being anxious to know how to account for the extraordinary rapidity with which it had been built. "Take this

seat by my side, young lady," said the intelligent old gentleman, "and I will describe the manner of its construction. The trunks of several trees, generally with the bark on, are in the first place laid one on another, indented a little at each end, to form a kind of fastening; and of course the length and width of the building is determined by their length, and its height by their number. The interstices are usually filled with clay, and the roofs are covered with reeds and rafters. Sometimes, especially in barns, the cracks are not closed, in which case they answer the purpose of windows by admitting light. These log-huts are frequently situated in a thick wood, with a little space cleared around them, where the stems of last year's Indian corn are still standing among the stumps of the trees that have lately been cut down, and form as strik-

ing a contrast as can well be imagined to a pretty English cottage in its little garden."

I thought of you, my dear Caroline, as Dr. B. finished speaking, and fancied that you would not feel much inclined to exchange the little white-washed cot with its painted porch, its woodbine and its roses, that we sometimes talk about, for one of the log-huts in the desolate wilds of North America.

Dr. B., seeing I was anxious to gain all the information I could respecting a country in which he had been spending more than three years, said he did not know but what he should call me a little American girl, "for the Americans," continued he, laughing, "carry their *love of knowing* to such a degree, that, strangers or not strangers, their questions are generally put as liberally as yours are; however, I like to gratify

laudable curiosity." And then he gave me a long account of the frog concerts, which was so amusing, that I really long to hear one. He said that his companions were quite delighted with them in the woods, regarding them, as we do the cuckoo, as the harbinger of spring. He told me that he actually opened his window the first night, supposing these choristers were birds, and it was a night or two before he was undeceived; "but," added he, "I have not thought them musical since I discovered my mistake." He said that they passed through several large swamps in South Carolina, where our favourite magnolia made a conspicuous appearance among other beautiful green shrubs, and that as they approached the coast they saw great abundance of the vegetable drapery, which covers the trees like a fine cobweb or hangs from them like streamers. I was at a

loss to know what he meant by the *vegetable drapery*, till he informed me that he referred to a plant, called the air-plant, from its singular property of vegetating for years when suspended by a single thread, destitute of either mould or water; and he added in a very obliging manner, that if I would pay him a visit he would shew me an air-plant which he had in his hot-house, and which had lived there for nine months without any nourishment but what the air afforded.

He gave me also a very amusing account of the manner in which turpentine is procured from the pine trees in Carolina, as well as of the manner in which tar is extracted from them. I suppose you know that tar and turpentine are two of the principal commercial commodities of North America.

I have been very busy lately tran-

scribing some extracts for mamma, and, as I wish to finish them before she returns, I must bring my long letter to a conclusion, without telling you any thing more about my friend Dr. B.

I am glad you are enjoying yourself so much. I am often with you in idea amongst your woods and mountains, and hope some time to be with you there in reality: indeed, I have many hopes and wishes that are never likely to be gratified, but that of seeing my dear Caroline again has so much of probability attached to it, that it cannot be otherwise than delightful to her affectionate

LOUISA.

LETTER XIX.

EMILY *to* LOUISA.

Malvern, September 1.

I HAVE a great deal to tell you, my dear Louisa, notwithstanding I feel in-

clined to be half affronted at your long silence.

I foresee that this letter will be quite a balloon story; for the whole topic of thought and conversation, just now, seems to be about balloons.

We left Malvern early yesterday for Cheltenham, in order to witness the ascent of one. It was a very wet morning, but this circumstance added in no small degree to the amusement of our ride, as the road, most of the way, was literally thronged with people,—cart-loads, waggon-loads, horses, and foot passengers, all hastening towards the scene of action, and attempting in various modes to gain shelter from the driving storm.

However, by the time we reached Cheltenham the clouds had cleared away, the sun shone brightly in the clear blue sky, and we spent the morn-

ing in rambling about the walks, admiring the buildings, and surveying the shops, till towards two o'clock, when Fanny and I were led almost *unknowingly* to a temporary scaffold at the top of an hotel, where more than fifty people were already assembled, to witness the ascent of the "grand pavilion balloon." From this height we had an opportunity of surveying the multitude of spectators who were collected together in order to gratify the same curiosity that had brought us hither.

Houses, roofs, chimneys, walls, streets, trees, and walks, in short, every place possible, was crowded with people. You may have some idea of the enormous size of the balloon when I tell you that it was fifty feet in height, independent of the car, forty feet in diameter, and composed of no less than eight hundred yards of blue and red and yellow silk,

which had been previously dipped in dissolved Indian rubber, I suppose to render it elastic and impenetrable, and containing no less than twenty thousand gallons of carburetted hydrogen gas.

I forgot to say that the car was taken up and down High Street, before it was attached to the balloon, to gratify those who could not obtain a nearer view: it appeared to be made of basket-work, in the shape of a bason, lined with white velvet, and covered with pink silk and a wreath of laurel and artificial flowers.

A little before four o'clock the immense ball was full, the adventurous aeronauts seated themselves in the car, the signal was given, the ropes that detained it were instantly cut, the band struck up, and the balloon ascended majestically into the air amidst the shouts, huzzas, and acclamations, of more than twenty thousand people!

The air really resounded with the voices of the immense multitude, and the balloon rose higher and higher, until at last it appeared so small that you might have imagined it was only a sky-lark soaring to Heaven, or a spot in the deep blue sky.

We watched it with sensations of pleasure and anxiety until it could be seen no longer, and then descended from our own perilous station, and found our way to the inn, where we dined, and in the evening had a delightful ride home by moonlight, having much enjoyed our excursion. The balloon was certainly a grand and novel sight, but I was not sorry to get back again to Malvern, for natural scenery suits my taste far better than all the inventions, balloons or what not, that ever existed.

We are anxious to hear the result of

this aerial flight. I hope the adventurers received no injury in their descent, and I almost hope that they will in future be content to live on *terra firma*, or at least that I shall not be present when they are inclined to leave it.

I omitted to say that the gas with which the balloon was filled was twelve times lighter than the atmospheric air, which was the cause of its rising through it. You know we should always endeavour to trace effects to their causes.

Our little Emmy is well and happy; she talks English so nicely, that you would scarcely suppose she was a French girl. Fanny is as fond of her as I am.

Adieu, my dear Louisa, write soon to your

Ever affectionate friend.

LETTER XX.

Caroline *to* Ellen.

Monmouth, September 4.

My dear Ellen,

From a very unforeseen occurrence our tour in Wales is delayed for the present, and we are going to visit my aunt at Malvern, whilst my father returns to Town to settle some business there. We were just got as far as Crickhowel on our way to Abervale, and are now just arrived at Monmouth on our road back.

We left Abergavenny this morning, as we had found it, in the midst of beautiful mountains, among which papa pointed out as we rode along, the hills near Pont-y-pool, the Blorange, the Bwlch hill, within eight miles of Brecon, the Sugar Loaf, so named from its

conical form, and one of the highest mountains in this part of Wales, the Hatteral hills, where the Monnow takes its rise, and the great Yscarith mountain on one hand; and on the other hand, Craig-y-Dorth, Lanisken *hill*, Gaer Vawr, and Dial Carig, bounding the extensive and lovely prospect.

But as I suppose you will not receive much benefit from hearing these long names, without seeing the places to which they refer, you may, if you please, accompany us to Ragland Castle.

When we had partaken of a second breakfast, at a little village of the same name, we walked through an orchard and two or three pretty fields to the eastern court of the castle, where an old woman came forwards and offered to conduct us over the ruins, which are very extensive. She was *true Welsh*, and seemed not a little proud of her

Welsh origin too; complained that the "quality" wished to make Monmouthshire an English county, only, as she said, because it was such a beautiful one, and declared that it was *true Wales* after all. She was more obliging than the old woman at Chepstow, and invited us very kindly into her little white-washed apartment, which possessed an air of greater comfort than the dismal and dreary room in the keep tower.

I wish you had been with Lucy and myself when we explored the magnificent ruins of Ragland Castle, which stand upon no less than four acres of ground. They are, according to custom, partially shrouded in ivy, and bear evident marks of decay; but

"Th' embattled tower o'ergrown with bearded moss,
And by the melancholy skill of time
Moulded to beauty, charms my bosom more
Than all the palaces of princes."

While my cousin Lucy sat down upon a low wall near the entrance to take a sketch, I, who am fond of seeing all that is to be seen, wandered about the ruins with Edward. We explored the vaulted dungeons—shocking places!—where the poor prisoners used to be confined almost without light or food; visited the little chapels; rambled round the moat that once encompassed the tower, but which is now nearly dried up, and then ascended a geometrical stone staircase of ninety steps to the summit of the citadel, which commands the same beautiful view as we saw on our road from Abergavenny, as well as overlooking the whole extent of the castle. After having looked at Lucy, who was still drawing under the tree, through my little spying-glass, we began to descend the ninety steps, which are in tolerably good preservation. Just as we got to

the bottom we heard a great noise in the court close by, and, peeping in, found the old lady in great consternation because a few wandering sheep had found an entrance into this court, which formed her garden, and had been demolishing her stocks and china-asters while she had been conducting us about the castle: nor was this the whole of the mischief, for a stray donkey, having found an entrance at the same time, had destroyed or broken off all the lower branches of a young beech tree, of which she was particularly fond, as it had been raised from a nut that grew on a tree once in the possession of her grandfather, at Llancaut. She made many and grievous lamentations at the loss of her flowers, but particularly bewailed the fate of the beech tree. "Oh, y fawydden deg! y fawydden deg! y fawydden deg!" said she again and

again, which in English signifies, "Oh, the beautiful beech tree!" Papa tried to comfort her, and gave her some money to pay for a gate, which he told her might be easily affixed to the little arched entrance. When she was pretty well reconciled to her misfortune, she led us across the moat and up some little broken-down steps into the pitched stone court, as it is called by way of distinction, thence through the entrance porch into the chapel and south-west tower, and then under a lofty gateway and over a bridge to the grand terrace,—a nice grassy walk, where you have a delightful view of the surrounding country; then we returned through a long narrow room to the Hall of State, which particularly pleased Edward. "Here," said he, "I see in imagination the Baron feasting merrily with his knights at the upper end, while I view the sides crowd-

ed with esquires and vassals, and looking up to the now ruined gallery hear the music strike up till it makes the very air ring!"

"How materially is enjoyment heightened by fancy!" said papa, laughing at Edward's eloquence. "But," continued he, "there is a sort of melancholy always attached to my pleasure when visiting these mouldering relics of departed grandeur. When I reflect that the hands employed in their erection are laid for ever in the silent grave, and that those who once inhabited them are gone for ever to their long homes, I am strikingly impressed with that conviction which, ages ago, whispered to the wisest of the sons of men, 'All on earth is vanity.'"

We were led away from Ragland before we were half ready, and had a pleasant ride to Monmouth.

The book-shops are some of the first attractions when we visit a fresh place, so directly after dinner we sallied forth in search of one in the market place. Here we met with an interesting girl, who, observing we were strangers, obligingly offered to point out to our notice the beauties of her native town. She first conducted us to the ruins of an ancient castle, which are on an eminence overlooking the Monnow, and then to the Kymin Pavilion, a summer-house upon a high hill near Monmouth, where the views of the surrounding scenery are very delightful. How one kind act from a stranger will endear the remembrance of a place! We shall ever recall with pleasure the *incognita* who conducted us up Wind Cliff, as well as the intelligent stranger who contributed to our enjoyment at Monmouth.

Having parted from her, we went

into a brazier's shop with the intention of buying a tin box in which to send you a few beautiful wild flowers, but as no such thing was to be had, we fixed upon a cake-tin as the best substitute; so with this you receive flowers, letters, cake-tin and all, along with the sincere affection of your

CAROLINE.

LETTER XXI.

ELLEN *to* CAROLINE.

Carwood, September 15.

I AM two letters in your debt, my dear Caroline, and ought consequently to write a long epistle to make amends for my negligence; but I hope you know that I love you just as well as if I had written to you every day for this half year.

Louisa and I have been lately attend-

ing a course of astronomical lectures, and so fond are we become of the study of astronomy, that it almost takes the place of botany; indeed we cannot pursue the latter much longer this season, for the flowers are nearly over, and we have found nothing for a great while except the fluellin, a beautiful little plant bearing a blossom of a deep purple and yellow colour.

Papa calls us his little astronomers, for we go out on the terrace every fine star-light night to look for the different constellations. I suppose you know that by a *constellation* I mean a cluster or assemblage of stars, which, for the sake of convenience, has a name attached to it, and is represented on the celestial globe under the figure implied by that name. The whole starry firmament consists of ninety-four of these constellations, and, in order to become thoroughly ac-

quainted with them, we trace them upon paper from the globe, and then find the situation of each star included in such a constellation, at night, in the heavens, and this is the most delightful work you can imagine.

My sister Isabel is very kind in assisting us, and we already know Lyra or the Harp, Ursa Major or the Great Bear, with which almost every body is acquainted, Serpens, the Serpent, Corona Borealis or the Northern Crown, and, above all, Auriga the Waggoner, which I like the very best because it contains Capella, our favourite Capella! which we used to watch every evening, whilst we were seated at supper, as it rose in full beauty above the guelder-rose trees in the shrubbery. I dare say you have not forgotten to look at Capella, although you are so far away from us, and the thought that we may both be looking

at the self-same object at the same time, perhaps at the very same moment, is delightful to your Ellen.

Isabel says that there are ninety-four constellations, and that these contain altogether three thousand four hundred and seventy-eight stars. Now when we look up on a fine star-light night we feel confident that we can see more than three or four thousand stars glittering in the azure vault of Heaven, and my sister says that what with the seven planets, with the names of which every body is acquainted, the nebulæ or little clusters of stars, and the satellites or little moons which attend the planets, and of which our moon is one, there are, fixed stars, planets, nebulæ, and altogether, six thousand two hundred and seven.

Of all the sciences cultivated by mankind, papa says astronomy is undoubtedly the most sublime, the most inte-

resting, and the most useful, and he repeated a few lines to me the other evening, as we were walking home through the wood after supper, which are so beautiful that I copy them for you. They are translated by Mr. Bowring from the Russian poet Derzhavin's Ode on God:

"A million torches lighted by Thy hand
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss;
They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,
All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss.
What shall we call them? Piles of crystal light—
A glorious company of golden streams—
Lamps of celestial ether burning bright—
Suns lighting systems with their joyous beams?
But Thou to these art as the moon to night!
— — — — — — —
— — — — — — —"

We have lately had a Ladies' Bible Association established in our village, and Louisa and myself accompany mamma every week when she goes

round to the different houses in her district to collect the pence. Louisa carries the bag, and I have the charge of the paper upon which the names of subscribers for Bibles and free subscribers are written, as mamma says she hopes we shall in time be competent to supply her place if we are early initiated into the plan. You cannot think how much we enjoy paying these weekly visits, or with how much pleasure Monday morning is anticipated. We go from house to house, and from cottage to cottage, and are met every where with smiling looks. We generally find the money laid ready for us in a little box or on the corner of the mantle-shelf. Indeed, I believe many of the poor people are as much pleased to see us as we are to see them, for their houses are mostly swept out on the occasion and their children dressed particularly tidy.

I will take you to see some of our cottages next time you come to Carwood. We are acquainted with one family where there are several children, the youngest of whom, a boy about eight years of age, was extremely anxious to possess a Bible of his own, and for this purpose gave us a penny a-week, which he earned by weeding in a gentleman's garden during play hours. Many weeks elapsed, for many pence were wanted. At length, however, his perseverance and industry were well repaid: he obtained his long-wished-for Bible. He was almost overcome with joy when we presented it to him, and, anxious to evince his gratitude, went out into the garden that surrounds the cottage in hopes of finding some flowers of which he might beg our acceptance; but the few roses that grew over the door were above his reach, the sweet peas were faded, and

the lavender had been gathered; nothing remained but a great number of common marigolds, such as poor people put in broth, and before either I or any one else was aware of it, he had plucked most of the marigolds in the garden, at least as many as his little hands could possibly hold, and, running in, he presented them to me: "These are all we have, but I give them to you," said he, throwing the flowers into my lap, and taking in return the long-desired Bible.

This little incident, trifling as it may seem to you, gave me real pleasure. I am sure I had no sort of use for the marigolds; indeed it was with difficulty that I carried them home; but I would not upon any account have hurt the feelings of the grateful boy, who had thus tried to repay me in the best manner he could. Gratitude is certainly one of the best qualities of the heart,

and as my little friend William grows older, he will, I trust, discover that it is not to me he is indebted for the sacred volume, but that he received it from the Source from whence we receive every real blessing; then it will be his

> " ——— humble aim
> To glorify the *Giver's name!*"

I could tell you a great deal more, but the dinner bell rings, and in the evening we are going a long walk; so believe me, as ever, your affectionate

ELLEN.

LETTER XXII.

CAROLINE *to her Sister* EMILY.

Ross, September 5.

WE shall see you again in a day or two, I believe, my dearest Emily, but I

thought I might as well write now, as papa is going to send a packet, to tell you how much pleasure I anticipate from this meeting; so much indeed, that it almost makes amends for not going to Abervale.

We left Monmouth after dinner yesterday, and took tea at the romantic and beautiful village of Whitechurch with a friend of papa's. We like to see all we can, you know, so after tea Mr. ——— proposed that we, that is, Lucy, Charlotte, and I, should take a walk to a spot called the New Wier, accompanied by his little daughter Helen and her cousin Fanny, a lively girl of my own age. Your favourite Bloomfield has commemorated the New Wier in a poem entitled the "Banks of the Wye," and perhaps he refers to it in these lines:

"Forward, quick changing, changing still,
Again rose cliff, and wood, and hill;
Where mingling foliage seemed to strive
With dark brown saplings flayed alive."

I asked our companion Fanny how it was that so many of the trees had assumed an autumnal tint—red, brown, and yellow, while the others were quite green. She said that the last line, "With dark brown saplings flayed alive," refers to the custom of stripping the bark from the oaks while growing, which gives a sort of autumnal appearance to the woods.

The rocks on each side of the part of the Wye called New Wier, overhang the river at the height of many hundred feet, and are partially covered with wood, as they are at Piercefield; whilst the water below, after gliding gently along for some time, makes a precipitate fall and forms a beautiful cascade, the sight of which was something new to us, and

we enjoyed it exceedingly. It was evening, and the roaring of the water as it dashed down the fall, contrasted with the stillness of "declining day," was very impressive. On the right side of the river the bank follows the course of the stream round a projecting promontory; the lower skirts of this promontory are adorned with a few scattered cottages inhabited by the workmen employed in the iron manufactory carried on there; and

"Westward Great Doward stretching wide,
Upheaves his iron embowelled side,
And by his everlasting mound
Prescribes the imprisoned river's bound,
And strikes the eye with mountain force:
But, stranger, mark thy rugged course.
From crag to crag unwilling, slow,
To New Wier forge that smokes below—
Here rushed the keel like lightning by;
The helmsman watched with anxious eye;
And oars alternate touched the brim,
To keep the flying boat in trim."

The scene at this place was certainly

of a very animated description: the noise of the forges, the strokes of the hammers, and the flames and smoke issuing from the different furnaces, had a grand and sublime effect; whilst the little boats moored to the bank on each side of the river, in some of which boys were fishing for salmon, and in others women were washing clothes, gave it an air of picturesque beauty. Evening was now fast approaching, and it was necessary to return. We rambled, arm in arm, back to the delightful village of Whitechurch, through woods overhanging the water, and found the carriage waiting for us. We left Mr. ——— and his interesting family just as

> "——— came still evening on,
> And twilight gray had in her sober livery
> All things clad."

My companions complained that they could not see the scenery, but I, who

am fond of contrast, discovered beauties in the dark grand outline formed by the mountains around us, and amused myself with fancying turrets and castles and towers in the clouds, as the light every now and then broke in between them. I saw our favourite planet Jupiter rise behind a plantation of firs, bright and glorious as ever. Is it not astonishing to think for how many ages each of our "little worlds" has rolled on in an uninterrupted course, save perhaps when "the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon"? As the clouds cleared away, the stars shone brighter and brighter, and at length I discovered Capella, our favourite Capella, shining in all its glory. I need not tell you how much I enjoyed the thought that you *might* be looking at it at the same time with myself.

After a ride of six miles, a steep ascent

foretold us that we had reached Ross: we drove to the Swan Inn, and found we were but just in time to get beds. We are to rise early to-morrow morning to walk to a summer-house about a mile and a half from the town, which was erected by the "Man of Ross," of whom you have doubtless heard; however, in case you have not, read some lines by Pope, beginning with

"But all our praises why should lords engross?
Rise, honest Muse, and sing the 'Man of Ross!'" &c.

He was a very benevolent character, and devoted his whole life as well as his property to charitable purposes.

I must now conclude, my dear Emily, and, in the delightful hope of embracing you very soon, bid you affectionately adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

Louisa *to* Emily.

Carwood, September 29.

Mamma has sometimes told me, my dear Emily, that the best reparation I can make for past faults is to try to do better in future, so I will not make ceremonious apologies for my long silence, but write to you in future more frequently than I have hitherto done.

I suppose your social party is now complete at Malvern, and I thank you and Caroline too for your welcome letters.

We have been very much engaged lately with our various pursuits. The grotto which is called Cowper's Grotto is completed, and has been much admired for its beauty: the ivy flourishes surprisingly well. We have just finished

the first volume of St. Pierre, and like it better than any work of the kind we have ever read. I have heard St. Pierre called "Le Platon de la France," on account of his deep learning. It is certainly a high compliment, for Plato, the *real* Plato, was one of the most illustrious philosophers of ancient Greece.

We begin to look forwards with pleasure to the long winter evenings, which are certainly some of our most agreeable "spots of time." I am always willing, with Cowper, to crown

> "——— as king of intimate delights,
> Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness."

I love the long winter evenings because we have more of papa's company at that time than at any other, as he generally reads to us while we make baby clothes for poor people, or amuse ourselves with drawing. Last winter we read the Grecian History; this win-

ter we intend reading Rollin's Ancient History, which I expect we shall like very much, as papa says it is an excellent and interesting work.

Every season is pleasant in its turn. In spring I fancy I prefer spring. What is so delightful as to work in our little gardens, to dig them, to rake them, to sow seeds, and to watch for the first blossoms of the primroses, snowdrops, and aconites, when they come up, with the smiling faces of old friends, and seem to look cheerfully on all around? How many feelings and ideas are connected with them! Isabel says, with truth, that they offer to the youthful mind a never-failing source of enjoyment. Although it is many years ago, yet I think I shall never forget the delight I felt on finding the first snowdrop of the spring, in the shrubbery border, and presenting it to mamma, who, as a

reward, ordered the gardener to give me an hepatica root for my own and to set it in my own little garden. Nor shall I soon forget the exultation and pleasure with which I afterwards gathered some of my finest primroses, snowdrops, crocuses, and hepaticas, and placed them in a little glass tumbler upon mamma's dressing-table, before she was up one morning, as a tribute of gratitude.

These were innocent pleasures; they were the pleasures of spring!

> "Joys of my early hours!
> The swallows on the wing,
> The bees among the flowers,
> The butterflies of spring,
> Light as their lovely moments flew,
> Were not more gay, more innocent than you."

Summer comes next in succession. What shall I say for summer?

It is the time when every thing seems animated with joy and gladness; nature appears in full beauty; the gayest flow-

ers blossom in the meads; the birds sing in full chorus in every grove; the hay-makers are busy in the fields; the new-made hay fills the air with its fragrance; the evenings are long and fine; we take delightful walks in the country, and look at the trees clothed in their richest foliage and at the fields of "emerald green," and gather the flowers that grow in abundance by the side of the road and by each little bubbling stream, to botanize when we get home.

These are the pleasures of summer.

Then comes autumn, delightful autumn! with gleaners, reapers, corn-fields, and harvest homes. What shall I say in favour of autumn?

Tell me, my dear Caroline, what you can enjoy more than to ramble in the fields that are waving with ripe yellow corn; to see the labourers busy at work, some reaping, others binding the corn

into sheaves, others loading the waggons and joyfully exclaiming, Harvest home! Harvest home! as the last load is carried away; while in another field are to be seen twenty or thirty sun-burnt boys and girls, loading themselves with bundles of the scattered ears of corn, and with good-humoured emulation striving to outdo each other?

And what can be more delightful than the appearance of the country in autumn? The trees are tinged with such a variety of hues—red, green, and yellow, softly blended together; the many-coloured woods are enveloped in deep brown shadows; we tread upon the rustling leaves; and the latest warblers pour upon the ear their faint and farewell music, at once delightful and melancholy.

These are the pleasures of autumn.

Then comes winter, my favourite win-

ter, and with it the long winter evenings, the cheerful fireside, the social pleasures —the pleasures of friendship. But, independent of fire-side enjoyments, is not nature, and are not all out-door objects, then arrayed in beauty? Although the trees have lost their leaves, yet they are surely beautiful, when, on a fine frosty morning, every spray sparkles with little icy diamonds, and every naked bough glitters with shining frost-work; when the trees, the woods, and the hedges, are covered with a white, silvery rime, and the hills and the valleys wear a robe of snow. The flowers are certainly faded and gone, the music of the birds has ceased, and the solitary song of the robin alone is heard near our dwellings; but then, how pleasant it is to give crumbs to the pretty creature, to open the parlour windows and see it hop in, and become tame from kindness!

I have always liked winter better since I read Dr. Darwin's description of a hoar-frost, which I will copy for you:

"Thus when white winter o'er the shivering clime
Drives the still snow, or showers the silver rime,
As the lone shepherd o'er the dazzling rocks
Prints his steep step, and guides his vagrant flocks;
Views the green holly veiled in net-work nice,
Her vermeil clusters twinkling in the ice;
Admires the lucid vale and slumbering floods,
Suspended cataracts and crystal woods,
Transparent towns with seas of milk between,
And eyes with transport the refulgent scene;
If breaks the sunshine o'er the spangled trees,
Or flits on tepid wing the western breeze,
In liquid dews descends the transient glare,
And all the glittering pageant melts in air."

How well these lines describe a fine winter morning! When I first learnt them, papa took me on his knee, and explained to me what was meant by "transparent towns," and "seas of milk," and "or flits on tepid wing the western breeze," and the "glittering

pageant," so that I admired them because I understood them.

Well! are the pleasures of spring, summer, autumn, or winter, the most delightful?

You are as unable to answer this question as I am, because each has so much pleasure attached to it, each is productive of so much gratification and enjoyment. How ought this thought to cause our hearts to overflow with gratitude to Him from whom we receive such unnumbered blessings!

When I began this letter I had really no idea of what it would contain. You see, I write as to a friend; but freedom, mamma says, constitutes the very essence of letter writing. I like to put down my thoughts just as they occur, without considering what I am going to say.

Write soon, and be assured that I am, as ever, your affectionate

LOUISA.

LETTER XXIV.

CAROLINE *to* ELLEN.

Malvern, October 9.

WE have actually reached Malvern at last, my dear Ellen, and I steal a few moments after supper to assure you of my continued affection, and to give you some particulars of a little excursion we made by water, when at Ross, to Goodrich Castle. Summon up all your patience, my dear, and accompany us down to the river side at Ross, where a comfortable little pleasure-boat, with an awning of white cloth to protect us from rain, or screen us from sunshine, a table to sketch upon, &c. &c., is waiting for

our reception. Jump into this little boat, seat yourself by my side, and imagine yourself again on the charming river Wye. But I see it will take a long time to get to the end of our jaunt if we make such slow progress; so you must be content to hear a plain statement of facts without accompanying me. The appearance of the river at Ross is very different from what it was near Chepstow; there, at least near the town, it was quite thick and muddy, owing to the influx of the tide, but here it was pure and clear as crystal, and we could easily discern the pebbles and mossy beds beneath its surface; in some parts the bottom was very rocky, and the little foamy waves, caused by this circumstance, would have given you a very good idea of the sea. The river plays in an amusing manner through green meadows, overhung by wood-crowned

hills; and after gliding rapidly along in our little skiff for upwards of four miles, Goodrich Castle, rising above a thick wood on the right hand, attracted our notice; so we landed and rambled towards it. It is a very strong pile of building, and partly surrounded by a deep trench or ditch, nearly twenty yards broad, hewn in the solid rock; the entrance lies over a little neck of land like an isthmus, near the south-east angle of the castle. I had a most curious adventure in this castle, of which you shall have the whole history in due time, as I think it was quite as terrific a one as that with the old woman at Chepstow.

I must just tell you first that Goodrich Castle was built in the time of the Saxons, though it has since undergone many alterations; and one circumstance which renders it remarkable is, that in

the time of Henry the Sixth, it was the actual residence of the Earl Talbot, celebrated by Shakespeare.

We entered the castle under a long dark passage, and passed through the first massy gate which, I observed, was defended on each side by loop-holes, and overhead, by rows of square holes in the vaulting, through which, papa says, they used to pour hot sand and melted lead upon the heads of the enemy. Then there was a second strong gate which led us into the great inner court. We were not conducted by an old woman this time, but by a grey-headed old man. He led us through long passages, galleries, and chapels, until he brought us into a tower which, tradition says, was the apartment of Earl Talbot. But while he was entering into a long discussion with Edward respecting the probability of this room

being actually that which he inhabited, and endeavouring to convince him that the tower contained three rooms, one over the other, and that he most likely lived in the upper one, I left them to settle the matter as they could and stole away, unperceived by any of the party, to survey the ruins at my leisure, being too independent to stand in need of a guide.

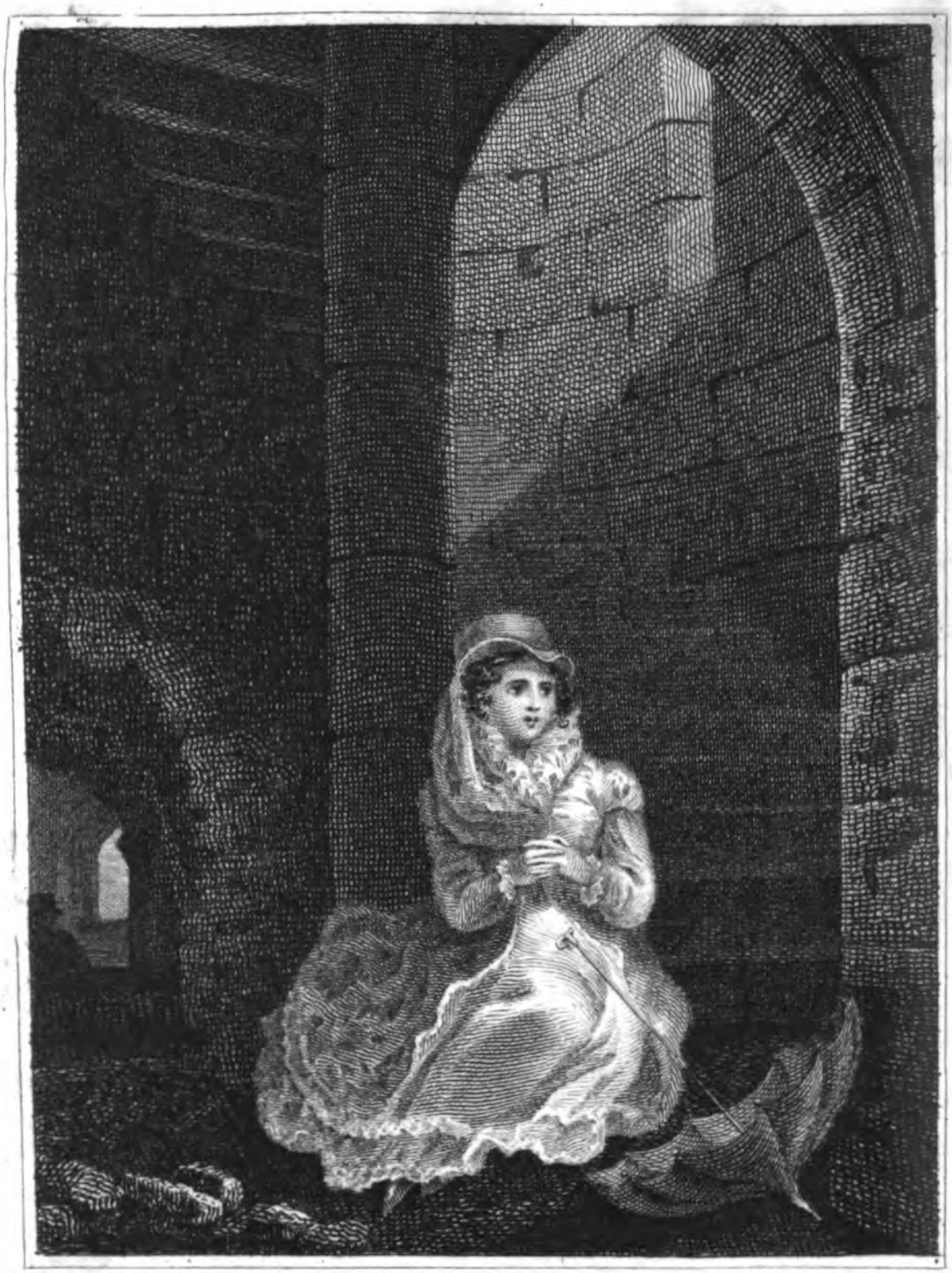
After peeping about for some time, first into one apartment and then into another, I came to a little arched doorway that led down some steps into a sort of dungeon, not covered at the top, but quite open, which I descended. As soon as I was down I saw no other way out than by an old rope ladder in one corner, which I fancied would lead me into some fresh place. I now almost shudder at the thought of having ascended this ladder, for the rope of which

it was made was so old and rotten, that it might easily have given way. However, I mounted it and found myself at the top of a narrow stone staircase on the opposite side, which led to a geometrical staircase in a little tower. I had no idea of the height of this little tower when I began to ascend the steps, some of which were half worn away by time, and no light was admitted except by an occasional loop-hole in the wall. I went round and round, and round and round, unwilling to give it up, and yet half inclined to think I should never reach the top; at last, however, the blue sky appeared, and after winding round once or twice more, I found myself on the summit of the little watch-tower; happily a wooden rail was placed round it, or I might have been in danger of falling from the giddy sensations occasioned by its great height. I was soon sufficiently recover-

ed to enjoy the beauty of the surrounding country, and to look down upon Edward and the rest, who had not yet finished the debate about Earl Talbot, at least, so I imagined, as they were still in his room. I found a pretty flower growing upon the top of the tower, which I think is the hare's-foot trefoil, but you will soon know when you see the specimen I intend sending.

When I had staid as long as I wished I began quietly to descend the broken, dark and winding staircase, and though my foot slipped once or twice, I reached the little passage leading to it in safety. When I got there and looked at the old rope ladder, my courage failed, and I felt as unable as reluctant to descend it. I thought of re-ascending the tower to shout to papa to come and assist me, as this passage was on the contrary side of the castle to the place

where I had seen him; and there was no possibility of his hearing me if I had called ever so loud. I reflected that there would be no probability of his coming down into the dungeon where the rope ladder was, and so I sat down upon the bottom step of the winding staircase, and blamed myself heartily for my imprudence. I began to imagine that they would leave the castle and return to the boat without me, and this only augmented my grief. At last the idea struck me, that I might find my way down by creeping along the little passage which led to the staircase. I did so: it brought me to the top of a broad wall surrounding the chapel, and in rather a ruinous condition. I observed, on the opposite side, a little niche in the wall, from which I fancied I could call to papa, as it was, as I guessed from the direction, near Earl Talbot's tower;



I sat down upon the bottom step of the winding staircase, and blamed myself heartily for my imprudence.

see page 170.

London: William Darton, 58, Holborn Hill, 1828.

for a long time I pined in vain to get into this little niche; at last, however, perseverance conquered the difficulty, and I accomplished it. But Earl Talbot's tower was deserted, and I was again in despair. I was therefore obliged to return to the little passage, and to my great consolation, just as I got there, I heard papa's voice calling out, "Caroline! Caroline!" and Edward's in another direction, repeating, "Caroline! Caroline! where are you?" I joyfully replied, "Here I am, papa! here I am, in the little passage just by the niche above Earl Talbot's tower! — here I am!"

As soon as I had uttered these words I saw papa's head, peeping through the opening above the rope ladder. You may suppose I was almost overcome with joy, I flew into his arms, he assisted me in descending, and the whole

party, who had been dispersed in search of me, were presently summoned together, to congratulate me on my safe return.

I can assure you, I have now had enough of winding staircases and little watch-towers, and I have in consequence made a resolution to which I intend strictly to adhere in future; it is, *never to forfeit prudence through curiosity.*

At length we returned again to the river side and seated ourselves in our little boat; the sail was hoisted, and we had a delightful jaunt back to Ross, which place we left in the afternoon for Malvern.

Here we are stationed for the present, and I am, as ever,

Your affectionate friend.

LETTER XXIV.

Ellen *to* Caroline.

Carwood, October 20.

I thank you, my dearest Caroline, for your entertaining letter, and congratulate you on your safe retreat from the little round tower at Goodrich Castle. I cannot say that we considered your mounting the ladder as a very *lady-like* exploit, but we are well acquainted with the ardour and energy of your disposition; qualities which will, mamma says, sometimes carry their possessor beyond the bounds of prudence and discretion. However, we may all learn wisdom from experience.

You will smile at my gravity and think I am going to turn philosopher,

but experience is indeed, as Miss Taylor justly observes,

> "A costly good that none e'er bought or sold
> For gem, or pearl, or miser's store twice told."

So now laugh as much as you please.

You are settled down at Malvern, and we are settled down at Carwood, where we hope to remain quietly during the winter. Our garden is now strewed with the withered leaves of autumn; a few clumps of mignionette, some Chinese roses, which look as though the rain had washed away their once beautiful colours, a few pale stocks, some Tangier peas, hollyhocks, and Michaelmas daisies, are all that remain of our favourite flowers. But though our usual pursuits in the garden are ended, those within doors have not ceased, nor indeed would you think they had, if you could see the breakfast parlour strewed, as it is,

and as it has been for several days past, with flannel, calico, cotton, and nice warm stuffs. We have been laying in a supply of these useful articles in order to employ our winter evenings in making clothes for the poor. Isabel, who is both our adviser and director, has been assisting us in cutting out frocks, petticoats, and little bed-gowns, for us to make for poor children, whose parents cannot afford to buy them new clothes. We generally work every evening, while papa reads aloud; and I can assure you there is no little emulation amongst us to see who shall first finish a cap or a petticoat. It is not for the sake of the work that we like this employment so much, but for the sake of the pleasure it gives the poor people; we make quite a round in the village every Friday, leaving some little thing at one cottage and something at another.

Oh, my dear Caroline, how I wish you could make one of the happy party when we go our Friday rounds; I am sure you would think that exploring the winding staircases, ruined chapels, and dreary watch-towers, of old castles, is not half so delightful as visiting the poor in their little cottages, and endeavouring to render assistance to those who stand in need of it.

I believe this will be but a very short letter, my dear girl, but Louisa is packing up a little box of shells for you, and I did not like to miss the opportunity of writing a few lines to send by it.

We were much pleased with the flowers that came in the *cake-tin*, which answered its purpose very nicely. I can assure you we shall be equally glad with yourself to hail the return of spring; I long to see the banks by the road sides enamelled with the gay little butter-cups,

primroses, and violets. Notwithstanding the pleasures of our long winter evenings, I must own I felt rather melancholy yesterday, when, while walking in the garden, I observed a number of swallows holding their grave debate, upon the roof of one of the cottages in the lane, and apparently about to take their departure for warmer regions. Was not this a sign that winter is just at hand?

I hope we shall see each other again in the spring, when the swallows return, or, at all events, that some future leaf in the chapter of accidents will have our meeting recorded in it, however faint the present probability of such a circumstance. Let us, at least, hold out to each other the delightful hope, and continue to lessen the pain of absence by a constant interchange of letters: though we are distantly separated, this will enable us to

contribute towards each other's pleasures, to participate in each other's pursuits, and to assist in promoting each other's improvement.

For the present, adieu! my beloved Caroline.

Your affectionate friend.

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