

THE
ORACLE;

OR,

THE FRIEND OF YOUTH

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“A Cup of Sweets,” &c.

“Old experience may attain
to something like prophetic strain.”

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THE ORACLE.

No.1

I AM an old woman, though still strong and healthy, owing, I believe, to my having lived a good deal in the country, using constant exercise, and (which has, perhaps, contributed as much as any thing towards it) being of a contented, cheerful disposition.

I once overheard an overgrown boy, (my nephew,) who was reproaching his sister with being cross to him, say, "Look at old aunt, with her nose and chin almost meeting: if she has any wrinkles, they are round her mouth, and only occasioned by her constant smiles; but before you are half her age, your brow will be ribbed all over, like John's Sunday stockings.

Disappointments and losses of various kinds having deranged my fortune, though they neither took from my cheerfulness, nor made me rail at the world, and fly entirely from society, obliged me, on the death of my husband, to seek retirement, and a spot where the necessaries of life were to be procured at a reasonable price. And I was not long in suiting myself, because I had made up my mind not to be difficult. Two years ago, I took up my abode in a neat little cottage, at the entrance of a pleasant village in —shire, accompanied by my amber-headed cane, my velvet cloak, my seventy years, and Martha, my maid; almost as old, but, I am afraid, not quite so good-humoured as her mistress.

My husband was a Polander, his name Pariatinski; but the villagers never attempted to pronounce it, and for some time I was called the *stranger*; then (and I am proud to say I was the better liked the more I was known) the good old lady. At length, perceiving the trouble I took to make up the little quarrels of my neighbours, to oblige and serve them to the utmost of my power, and to give them my advice whenever they asked it; and having been fortunate in my decision on two or three occasions; I have acquired the name of Oracle; and whoever inquires for Madam Oracle, will be shown my house; for Mrs. Pariatinski is no more known in the village of *****, than Hyder Ally.

Thus, instead of living retired, as it was my intention to do, I am as well known as if I had spent my whole life in this place. I am applied to on all occasions, and my opinion asked before any thing is undertaken, whether of a trifling nature, or on matters of more consequence; insomuch, that poor Martha is sometimes a little cross, and says, I shall worry myself to death about other people's business, and that I am not suffered to have a moment's peace. She cannot think, for her part, how I can bear it: it would turn her brain, if she had half as much to think of. Notwithstanding Martha's fears, however, I never shall have the heart to refuse my advice to any of the simple inhabitants of my village, whenever I *clearly* feel myself a competent judge of the subject brought before me, and that I am qualified to give it to them.

I cannot help thinking it very extraordinary, that I am often addressed by very young people, who, I should have thought, would rather avoid than seek me; for I never spare them, when I see any reason to condemn their conduct. I watch them continually, and speak my mind freely; sometimes, perhaps, more so than they wish. Yet they are often guided by my advice, when any matter occurs which they think of great importance; and notwithstanding my *fault-finding*, as they call it, are well persuaded that I will give them a candid opinion upon it. I can only account for this partiality, by supposing, that they perceive how sincerely I am interested in their welfare, that I am fond of their conversation and society, and never find fault, without taking the trouble to convince them that they are in the wrong; so that they know I am never governed by ill-nature or caprice.

I am sorry I have not preserved the letters I have received since I came to reside in this village, and that I omitted to make memorandums of the numerous entertaining occurrences which have fallen in my way. I might, by making them public, not only have amused, but perhaps have corrected the errors of many young persons who reside at a distance from me; and I am so pleased at the idea, that I am now determined to send a sheet or two to my printer, whenever I meet with any thing which may entertain or improve my young friends; but I faithfully promise them, that their real names shall never appear in print.

No. 2.

Dear Mrs. Oracle,

I HEARD this morning of your intention of publishing all our letters and conversations, and I must say, that if you do, I think it will be a very ungenteeled thing. I shall drop all correspondence with you, when once you begin publishing; and even now, I am afraid to trust you, though I want your advice extremely; therefore, I beg you will put your answer to this, under the broad stone, by the clump of oaks, where, I perceive, you generally rest yourself, when you take your evening walk; and I will steal out early in the morning, whilst mamma is hearing my little sister read, and take it away.

The matter is that, Mrs. Oracle, that though I was thirteen last Sunday; mamma is determined to send me to school another year, and even has the ill-nature to say, that, unless I improve more than I have lately done, I shall stay there much longer. Now, you must know, that there is very little room in me for improvement; and I assure you, this is the opinion of almost every body who comes to our house. One praises my work, another my drawings, some my singing, and *every body* my playing. Whenever I sit down to the piano-forte, I hear nothing but “charming! Charming! Dear, ma’am, how delightfully your daughter plays.”

Well, Mrs. Oracle, the moment they are gone, mamma says that all this is unmeaning compliment, and desires I will not be so silly as to suppose it any thing more; that I play out of time, that my drawing is detestable, and my needle-work such as might be expected from my little sister; that I am a conceited chit, and require instruction a year or two longer, before I can really deserve *half* the praises her unthinking visitors bestow upon me.

Pray now, dear O. let me know whether a girl of my age may not be supposed to have done with school; and whether I should not positively refuse to go; and if my own mother ought to be less polite to me than strangers. Remember the old oaks, for I will not trust you with my address, and believe me sincerely, (though I do not like your idea of publishing,) your friend and well-wisher, Y.Z.

In answer to the Maid of the Oaks, I must request that she will excuse my having given her the trouble of *stealing out*, unknown to her mamma, to fetch my answer to her letter. In the first place, I have no clandestine correspondents; and in the second, I shall find it much easier to send it, with my other papers, to my printer, than to hobble with it to the clump of oaks, whether I am disposed or not to take my evening walk.

I am sorry to be under the necessity of joining with her mamma, in calling the young lady a conceited chit, and voting her being two years, at least, at school, where my good wishes for her improvement will accompany her, and where I hope, she may learn to distinguish the sincerity of a parent, interested in the welfare of her child, from the flattery of strangers; and, by impartial observations on the improvements of her companions, she may get the better of her vanity, and learn not to estimate her talents more than they are really worth.

No. 3.

I HAD not been five minutes seated, last evening, near the entrance of **** Wood, where I often spend half an hour, when I heard the voice of a young gentleman, with whom I am well acquainted, though I shall not name him, calling several times, "Tom! Tom! Come here." And soon after, Tom having left his work, asked his young master what he would be pleased to want of him; when the following conversation ensued.

Edward, (as I choose to call him.) Why, in the first place, you must promise me to keep my secret faithfully.

Tom. That I will do *solemnly*; I never yet betrayed any of your rantipole tricks, I am sure, Measter Edward.

Edward. Very well then, I must tell you, that, last evening, my brother and I took it into our heads to go to old Mrs. N——'s, get over the garden wall, and help ourselves to a few plums.

Tom. Steal a few plums? Well Sir? So?

Edward. Steal! What do you mean by making use of that word?

Tom. I beg your pardon Sir, but I thought that was what you meant. To be sure, I don't understand grammar; but when John Wilkins, down there by the quarry, *helped* himself to a sheep out of Farmer Johnson's field, the folk did call that *stealing*.

Edward. Nonsense! I am talking to you of plums, and you plague me about sheep. Tom muttered something to himself, that stealing was stealing; but Edward, not choosing to hear him, thinking, perhaps, there was too much truth in what he said, continued his communication in the following manner.

Edward. Listen to me, Tom. We filled a good-sized basket, brought it home, without being perceived or suspected, and hid it behind some wood in the corner of the barn; and to-night we are to watch for a good opportunity of carrying the basket into our room, where we shall enjoy ourselves, and eat until we are tired. But after all, I cannot help thinking, that I have been a very great fool, in having made my brother go with me to Mrs. N——'s. *I* was the person who first thought of it, and was obliged to help him over the wall; and even then he could not get up into the tree: so that all he has done, was to hold the basket, and for this great assistance he will expect half the plums. I wish I had been wise enough to have gone alone: I could have done just as well without him, and the basket of plums would have been all my own.

Tom. Sure enough, Sir, you had not got your wits about you, as you generally have; you *mought* have gobbled up all the plums yourself, and your little brother *mought* never have *learnt* steal, (I mean help himself to other people's things,) if you had not been so kind as to put it in his head.

Edward. Well, but Tom, I do not see what right he has to any of them; and, therefore, what I want of you is, to take away the basket, and hide it for me in some other place unknown to him, where I may go and eat whenever I please; for the plums ought to be mine, and no other person's.

Tom promised to do as he was desired; but as soon as Edward was gone, he told the story to a boy who happened to be passing, and said he would bite the biter; for he would eat as many plums himself as he could, and then contrive for Master Harry to catch him removing the basket, and let him take it from him if he chose it.

I returned home, very indignant, and had almost determined to acquaint Edward's father with this unworthy trait in his character; but, recollecting a little French anecdote, pretty applicable to the latter part of Edward's conversation, I thought it might be more to the purpose to translate it, and send it altogether to my printer; trusting, that when he reads it, he will be ashamed of having exposed himself to a plough-boy, who, notwithstanding his inclination to hide his young *Measter's rantipole tricks*, as he call them, appears to know, much better than he does, how to distinguish right from wrong, and to be more inclined to follow the former path than the latter.

THREE men were travelling together, and finding themselves fatigued, agreed to rest themselves under some tall trees at the entrance of a wood. They had not been long seated, before they perceived a bag behind the bushes, and on dragging it out, found it contained a large sum of money.

It may easily be conceived how joyful they were at this discovery: they were poor men, and moreover very hungry, for the contents of their wallets had been consumed the evening before, and they had had no breakfast. It was therefore agreed, that they should immediately hide themselves in the thickest part of the wood, divide the money, each take possession of his own share, and then one of the three should go to the next town to purchase some provisions.

The youngest of them undertook this commission, and walked gaily away; promising to return as soon as possible, and anticipating the pleasure of a good breakfast with his companions, under the shade of the thick trees which surrounded them.

He had not, however, advanced a quarter of a league on his journey, before different thoughts found their way into his head; the comfortable breakfast with his companions, gave place to ideas of a more selfish nature; and when selfishness gets the upper hand, who can venture to say how far it may carry a person? In this man, the consequences of his giving way to it were horrible. "I am rich," said he to himself; "but I should have been much more so, if I had been *alone* when the bag of money came in the way. These two men have robbed me of my money: if they had not been there, it would have been all my own. Why cannot I take it from them? I *can* do it very easily: I have only to poison the meat I am going to purchase, and when I return to them, I will say I have breakfasted in town; so that they will not be surprised at my not eating with them: *they* will eat without any suspicion, and they will die. I have only one-third of the money now, but by this means I shall have the whole."

In the mean time, the other two travellers, as soon as the youngest was gone, began to make reflections pretty much of the same nature with his. "What business had we," said one of them, "to suffer this young man to join us upon the road. We were much more comfortable before we met with him, and so we should have continued to be. It was an unfortunate hour in which he came in our way, for we have been obliged to divide the money with one who would probably never have found it. I doubt much whether he was looking that way, when my eye caught the corner of the bag. I fancy, if right took place, it ought to be all mine; for I do not believe any one saw it until I pointed it out. However, I am very willing to share it with you; but as to that boy, I cannot bear to think of it. His share, divided between us, would make us really rich: what we now have is scarcely worth having. "You are very right," replied the other, "and we can easily settle the matter. People do not travel in such a country as this, where there are so many robbers, without having a poignard about them." "I understand you," interrupted the first, "the money is ours: he will soon be here and there."

The young man returned very soon after his companions had settled his fate, as he had, two hours before, determined on theirs. They assassinated him the moment he had set the provisions before them, made a hearty breakfast, and died.

No. 4

GOING out, a few evenings ago, to take my accustomed walk, I met in the lane leading from the village to the high road, a boy with a small cart, drawn by a poor, miserable-looking horse, and loaded with some articles of ordinary furniture. Perceiving some of the things leaning against the side of the cart, and partly hanging over the wheel, I stopped him, that he might observe it; and pointing with my amber-headed cane, "That little corner-cupboard," said I, "will fall over, my good boy, if you do not remove it to the middle of the cart."

"So it will, sure enough," said the boy, stopping his horse, and running up to the cart. "My grandmother would break her heart, if any accident were to happen to her cupboard. She has had it ever since she was married—a hundred years ago, as far as I know. I would rather carry it upon my back, than have it damaged."

I told him he was a good boy, and asked him whither he was going, and where his grandmother lived.

"She is just coming behind, madam," replied he, "with my uncle and aunt, and little Ben." He then proceeded to inform me, that his uncle Andrews, with whom he and his grandmother lived, (for he was the orphan of an elder brother,) having been found unable to pay his rent, on account of the failure of his crops, on a small farm he rented in the neighbourhood, and having at the same time had the misfortune to lose his two cows, and meeting with other disasters, he had been turned out of the farm. This was such a heavy stroke upon him, as well as his mother and his wife, that they could no longer endure the sight of the place; and hearing there was a cottage to let in our village, he had hired it, and was removing his family, with the few things they had left, from a spot where he had suffered so much unhappiness, to one where he hoped to be able, at least, to keep them above want, if God gave him strength to work.

The boy told me this tale of distress with the most artless simplicity, and the tears which stood in his eyes whilst he was speaking, now ran down his checks, and called for mine, which I could not refuse. I inquired what part of the village he was going to, and then advised him to continue his way, which he did, as I did mine; and I had scarcely gained the summit of the hill, when I saw, coming towards me, the little group whose history had so sensibly affected me. Instead, however, of meeting with a set of unhappy-looking people, as I expected, I was pleased at seeing them, if not cheerful, at least without any appearance of discontent, but with countenances which showed resignation and patience.

The grandmother was riding on an ass, with a little boy, about four years of age, upon her lap; a stout fresh-coloured young man, with a bundle hung on a stick over his shoulder, walked by her side, accompanied by a young woman very neatly dressed, though as plain as possible, and carrying a cloak on her arm.

I accosted them with the familiarity of an acquaintance, and offered them my services, with an air of sincerity which I saw surprised them not a little. But I soon informed them of the manner in which I had become acquainted with their situation, and repeated the assurance I had already given them, of my wish to assist their industry, and to see them comfortably settled in our village. "Son," said the old woman, "didn't I tell thee that God would not

forsake us!” “You did so, mother,” replied Andrews, “and I trust in Him, that I shall still be enabled to make your old age comfortable; though the heavy losses we have sustained, make us all much otherwise for the present.”

I said all I could to encourage them to hope for every thing from perseverance in labour, and reliance on God; and giving little Benjamin a cake and a piece of gingerbread, (for I never go without some such thing, and, am therefore, in spite of fashion, obliged to wear pockets,) I took my leave of them, with a promise, which I mean faithfully to keep, of calling upon them in a few days.

No. 5

I WAS scarcely seated at my breakfast-table this morning, and had thanked Martha for a smoking hot cake, which she had the attention to rise early on purpose to provide for me, because she knows I am fond of it, when in bounced Miss Patty, our curate’s sprightly daughter, with a message from her father and sister, importing, that I must positively eat part of a nice turkey with them today, and taste the cider which her grandfather had just sent them. I offered her part of my hot cake, but she said she had breakfasted an hour ago; and then gave me an account, but without any ostentation, of what she and her sister had done, since they rose at their accustomed hour; and I will take this opportunity of giving the praise, which is their due, to our worthy curate and his two amiable daughters. Having lost their mother when in their infancy, they were obliged, at a very early age, to learn economy, and to take upon themselves the domestic concerns of their father; for Mr. Woodford’s income was so very small, that one girl, and an apprentice boy to assist him in his out-of-door business, were the only servants he could afford to keep.

His children, however, even whilst yet very young, so well supplied the place of other domestics, that he never felt the want of them. Miss Woodford, always serious and reflecting, managed every thing with the most exact economy; and Patty, although of a gayer disposition, was not behind-hand in diligence and anxiety, to see that every thing was provided for her father’s comfort and conveniency.

They are greatly beloved by all the inhabitants of the village; for, limited as their income is, they contrive to have something to spare, to those who stand in need of their assistance.

Our church is always crowded, for Mr. Woodford is looked upon as the *finest man, in the pulpit*, of any within twenty miles round; and as he lives up to what he preaches, he is listened to with attention and reverence, and his words never fail to make a lasting impression on the minds of his bearers. They often dine with me, and I never refuse an invitation to their house; for I love them sincerely, and am happier at their neat little table, in their snug parlour, than I am in many houses, where my eyes are fatigued with the sight of superfluous magnificence, and where the variety of luxuries placed before me, often takes from me all relish of my dinner.

I promised Patty that I would be with them at their dinner-hour, and was not sorry to have an opportunity of consulting her father, about a plan I had formed, for the relief of my new acquaintance, Dame Andrews, and her family. I have already paid one visit to these unfortunate people; but they were in so much bustle, and so busied in putting their little place in order, that I did not stay long with them, perceiving that my presence only interrupted their work. I, therefore, after asking a few questions of the old dame, took my leave; for she was so occupied with her favourite corner-cupboard, and so anxious to find a proper place for it, that,

although she wished to appear as if she attended only to me, and to show how much she thought herself honoured by my visit, I could not help observing, that her eyes were continually fixed on this old friend, and that she was uneasy, lest any accident should happen to it, before it was fixed in the place where it was intended to remain.

I can easily pardon this fancy in an old woman; for I judge of her feelings by my own. I have a nutmeg-grater, that I would not part with for any price; not because it is a silver one, for I should value it equally if it were made of tin, notwithstanding the different idea it would convey of my great grandmother's elegance; but it has been so long in the family, and was for so many years instrumental in adding flavour to mince-pies, plum-puddings, tankards of sack, and, even in later times, to glasses of negus after supper, that I feel quite an affection for it. And, indeed, I do not see why old women may not be allowed some little whims in the objects of their affection—young ones have foolish ones enough; and, I must beg, that Dame Andrews's cupboard, and my nutmeg-grater, may always be spoken of with the respect due to the age of their mistresses, or it will be found, that Mrs. Oracle knows how to resent an affront as well as any one.

No. 6

I FOUND the two following letters on my tea-table this afternoon, when I returned from a walk in my garden, where I had been detained by the sweet notes of a robin and a thrush, and by the admiration I felt at the sight of my fruit-trees. "I know who shall partake of all this," said I to myself; and then I began to reckon upon my fingers, how many young folks I could oblige. "Why not have them all here," thought I, "some afternoon, when my fruit is ripe. Martha will make a cake. Let me see! Cake and fruit, and tea and coffee; and the table shall be spread in the summer-house, and I will make them as happy as possible."

But I forget my letters. The first is from a farmer, who supposes my knowledge universal, and my judgment not to be disputed on any point.

"Honoured Madam,

"Hearing of your great wisdom, and that you know every thing; also, that you never refuse your advice to those who apply to you, but are always ready to give civil answers to every question; this is to let you know, that I have bought a tidy little plot of ground, behind my house here, at Rosemary Farm, and now that I can call it my own, I don't know what use to make of it. I have been tormented, for more than twelve months, with a longing for this bit of ground, and now I am puzzled to know what to do with it. My wife would have it to dry her linen in, my daughter to make a garden of it, my eldest son says it will do for a hundred purposes, and my youngest for a thousand; though neither of them can name *one* that is to my liking.

"So, good madam, if you will be so kind as to come over and look at it, I'll saddle Punch, and put on my wife's best pillion, and fetch you myself; and what is more, you shall be welcome to the best that our house affords.

"I am cruelly disturbed about it, and beg that you will be pleased to assist me with your oracleship.

I am, dearest madam,

Your humble servant to command,

SIMON HARROW.”

“*Madam,*

“I am nursery-maid at ’Squire —, and have four children to take care of, three of whom are enough to make a wiser woman than I can pretend to be, distracted. Master John is a tyrant, Miss Amelia cross and peevish, and Miss Lyddy so passionate, that she throws every thing at my head—her clothes, shoes, knife and fork, any thing she can reach. I would not stay in my place, if it were not for my youngest little master, who is the sweetest child in the world, and is so ill-used by his brother and sisters, that I cannot think of leaving him.

I am told that an Oracle can answer all questions, so pray, dear madam, have the goodness to tell me what I shall do with my three ill-disposed children; and whether you do not think it would be very cruel-hearted in me, if I were to forsake Master Frederic?

From, madam, your dutiful servant,

BRIDGET DOUBTFUL.”

A very few words will suffice in answer to farmer Harrow’s letter. I know nothing about laying out grounds, and should be particularly embarrassed, if I attempted to advise him what to do with a thing which he acknowledges he has no use for. I cannot conceive why he was *tormented twelve months*, with longing for what he could foresee no pleasure in the possession of. If it arose from envy, at seeing it belong to his neighbour, he has a bad heart; and, if it were merely because he had a fancy to call it his, though he had no use for it, he is a silly man. I am afraid he has no good account to give of his motive for having, probably, plagued and teased another for so many months, to relinquish what was useful to him, though not so to its present possessor. Time will show the consequences, and I may, perhaps, in this affair, (notwithstanding my ignorance in agriculture,) prove myself still worthy of the name of Mrs. Oracle, in saying that I foresee he will repent of his imprudence; that, for want of a decided use, for this so-much-desired bit of ground, he will be long wavering and divided, between the opinions of his wife, daughter, and sons; and that, in the mean time, it will be overrun with weeds, whilst his neighbour, laying out the money he received for it to advantage, will reap the benefit of it, and laugh at the foolish longing of farmer Harrow.

I commend Bridge Doubtful’s goodness of heart, and advise her not to forsake her little favourite. When Master John attempts to play the tyrant, let her bind his hands, and lock him up; which will prove to him, that, with all his inclination to tyrannize over others, he is so weak to defend himself against a girl. As to Miss Amelia, when she is cross and peevish, I would take no notice of her; never try to pacify her, but leave her to herself, and when she is tired of whimpering and whining, and finds that nobody attends to it, she will be glad to be quiet. Miss Liddy is indeed a formidable young lady. I think you should receive every thing she throws at you as a gift, and lock it in your drawers. If she throws her shoes at your head, thank her, and let her pass the day without any; if her knife, fork, and spoon, let her eat her dinner with her fingers. But I advise you particularly, to get possession of her dolls and her play-things; and make her feel the want of them, by not doing any thing to amuse her.

No. 7.

DINING, about ten days ago, with my good friends at the Hall, I was surprised to see Miss Emily with a countenance which bespoke discontent, and almost ill-humour; for although she flew to meet me with an appearance of gaiety, it was easy enough to perceive,

that her smiles were affected, and that there was something wrong, or that she fancied so; for in less than ten minutes she relapsed into the thoughtful mood in which, as I walked up the lawn, I saw her, seated near the window, her hand supporting her head, and her eyes contemplating the carpet. When her two brothers came into the room, instead of the good-humour which used to reign among them, I perceived that they could not do any thing to please her. Frederic was found fault with for touching her plants, George for giving meat to her goldfinch; in short, she was cross and peevish, even to her mamma, and I could not help regretting, that the sweet girl should suffer one fault to obscure so many amiable qualities as she is really possessed of.

One fault she has, I cannot deny it, notwithstanding my partiality to her. She has indulged herself in the belief, that no one can be patient under disappointment; and, whenever she happens to meet with any contradiction, thinks herself at full liberty to fret and complain, and to tease her whole family with the hardships of her case.

I must endeavour to make her see the impropriety of this indulgence; for if, at her time of life, when no material *can* have affected her, she is to give way to complaining and bitter regrets, what will become of her, when she will, some years hence, find herself, in common with all her acquaintance, exposed to see her projects fall to the ground, and her best-laid plans overturned, when she least thinks of it? How will she then blush, at reflecting on the manner in which, in her youth, she suffered herself to break out in invectives, on the most trivial occasions? How often will she wish that she had earlier accustomed herself to bear such petty disappointments with more patience and resignation?

A walk being proposed before dinner, I asked the support of my young friend's arm; but, as I foresaw would be the case, she wished to avoid a *tête-à-tête* with me, and offered her brother Frederic's arm, as more likely to be of use to me; whilst she walked by my side, with my clogs in her hand, fearing, she said, I might find the garden a little damp.

She was very gloomy all the time of dinner, and continued so the whole afternoon; so that I began to lose my patience, and ventured to ask Mrs. Aubrey if Miss Emily were ill. "Oh no, not in the least," said she. "Why, then," asked I, "is she so unlike herself to-day? Is she sorry I am come to the Hall? She used to be very happy to see me; at least, I flattered myself so."

"She is always glad to see you," replied Mrs. Aubrey, "and was never more *like herself* than she is to-day. She is never otherwise when she meets with any contradiction. And now, Emily, I am determined to tell our good friend how the matter stands, and leave her to judge whether or not you have any cause of complaint. We are going, to-morrow morning, to my sister's at ****," continued Mrs. Aubrey, turning towards me, "where we shall spend the whole week, and I had promised Emily that she should be of the party; which, you will easily believe, gave her great pleasure, for **** is one of the prettiest places in the county, and the gardens and pleasure-grounds more delightful than any I ever saw.

"Finding, however, by a letter this morning, that our visit is not to be a jaunt of pleasure, but merely to settle an affair of great importance to the family; that the only persons we shall meet will be two gentlemen of the law, and two or three others concerned in the business, I immediately informed Emily of it, and told her, that, had I known it sooner, I should not have proposed taking her with me to a house, where, on this occasion, she could not find the least entertainment, and where she would be, if not an incumbrance, at least in the way; and therefore should defer her visit until a fitter opportunity.

"You are now acquainted with the cause of those gloomy looks and tearful eyes, and will, I am certain, agree with me in thinking, that she had better keep them for more serious occasions."

“Let me intercede for my Emily,” said I, “dear Mrs. Aubrey! Take her with you: she will not interrupt your business—her papa will not allow her to do that—and if she finds nothing better to amuse herself with, she will write me a long letter, with a full and true account of the manner in which she spends her time.

Mamma consented—Emily’s gloom disappeared immediately—and I left them, to make the necessary preparations for their journey. “My dear Emily,” thought I, as I sat musing in my easy chair, “there needs no Oracle to foretel, that you will find more real cause for ill-humour, in the consequence of your mamma’s indulgence, than your having remained at home with your brothers, in the midst of your usual occupations and amusements, could possibly have occasioned you.”

At the end of the week I received a letter from her, which proved my prediction to be true, and it shall serve to fill my next paper.

No. 8.

“My dear Friend,

“I never knew you do an ill-natured thing till now, and I can hardly forgive you for taking me in as you have done. I am sure you foresaw all that would happen; and I recollect the arch look you gave mamma, when you were *so kind* as to beg her to grant my request, and allow me to accompany her to my uncle’s. I never repented of any thing so much in my life, and I hope it will teach me not to fret and vex myself in future, when I meet with little disappointments, as I may often have cause to be glad, instead of sorry; (as in the present case;) for I should be delighted to be at home, rather than moping here, where I have nobody to speak to, and nothing to do.

“At first I was quite happy. We arrived just before dinner-time, and as soon as it was over, we all walked in the pleasure-grounds, where I had so much to admire, that I thought I never could be tired of it. I did nothing but run from one walk to another, examining every shrub and flower; and I am afraid I looked a little exultingly at mamma, as if I would have said, ‘It was not without reason I was so anxious to come with you: I knew very well how happy I should be in this charming place.’”

“My aunt being indisposed, we returned early to the drawing-room, and I amused myself with looking from the windows at the beautiful prospect.

“In the evening arrived two gentlemen in a post-chaise, from London; and from that moment began my unhappiness. I know very well how you will laugh at my making use of that word; but I am sure, when I tell you all that has happened to me, you must and will allow, that I am very unhappy. No creature spoke to me from that hour, and I grew so sleepy and tired, that I was glad to retire very early, which I did, scarcely noticed by any one. I heard two or three voices say, “Good night, Emily,” and the two black gentlemen made me a sort of a half bow; but I was never once desired to stay a little longer.

“When I went down to breakfast, papa said, “*Bon jour*, Emily,” as he always does. “Good morning, Emily,” said mamma, uncle, and aunt; and then began *such* a conversation, about deeds, and mortgages, and conveyances, and I know not what, that the moment I had swallowed my breakfast, I determined to leave them, and seek amusement for myself. But just as I had put on my bonnet, that I might go and ramble about, it began to rain. I waited half an hour in the portico, hoping the weather would clear up; but the rain increased, instead of diminishing, and I was obliged to give up all thoughts of rambling. I then thought I would go

to the library, where I had observed a piano-forte; but the moment I opened the door, I saw the whole party assembled round a table, covered with old parchments, red tape, pens and ink, &c. and I was desired not to interrupt business, but to go and amuse myself elsewhere.

“You know my temper, my dear friend, and I will not attempt to conceal from you that I was very angry, and so cross that I could have quarrelled with any one who came in my way; but I had no one to quarrel with. I saw no creature until dinner-time, and even then, none who seemed to perceive me: they were all taken up with the mighty affair which had brought them together, and I was looked upon no more than a little tame kitten, to be pushed out of the way by all who met me.

“I thought mamma might have made me a little less uncomfortable; but she was so occupied with the two strangers, that she did not appear to think of me. The rain continued all day, and the next morning increased very much; and the fog was so thick, that I could not distinguish any thing two yards from the house. Oh! How I repented of my folly, and (do not be angry) how I did reproach you, for having designedly placed me in such a situation. You knew well enough what would happen; though you could not have foreseen the rain, or you never would have urged mamma to do what you knew she had already objected to. I was so vexed with you, that I could not write, though you had made me promise to do so. I thought it would be humbling myself too much, to confess how I had been disappointed; but to-day I have thought better of it, and hope you will think with regard to me, what you have often said of others: “That a fault confessed is half mended;” and I am very ready to allow that I deserve what I have suffered. This is the last day of my punishment, and I have shortened it greatly, by writing to you and confessing my faults. How happy I shall be once again to see my brothers, and with them to visit my garden, my poultry, and all my little *property*; and I entreat you, most earnestly, my best friend, to allow me to pay you a short visit immediately on my return to the Hall. I will let *you* laugh at me as much as you please; but you must beg papa not to be too hard upon me: if you do not, he will not have done till Christmas. Adieu, I am ever yours, most respectfully,

“EMILY AUBREY”

A very few days after this brought my young friend to my house, when, though I felt no inclination to laugh at her, I could not help laughing with her, at the humorous description she gave me of the three melancholy days she spent at ****. Her situation was really worse than the idea her letter had given me of it, bad as it appeared to me; and so many odd circumstances had occurred to render it ridiculous, that, now the time was passed, she could repeat them to me with good-humour, however she had been mortified and vexed at the moment.

No. 8.

I HAVE spent a week, since my last paper, at the house of a lady who resides in a neighbouring city. I am not very fond of leaving my home, particularly to shut myself up in a town, at this time of the year; but I did not find it so disagreeable as I feared, for the house is spacious, and has a very good garden belonging to it, in which I could walk whenever I pleased. I was received with every mark of kindness and attention by my friend, who presented her three little girls to me, saying, they were all very good children, and she flattered herself would meet with my approbation.

Knowing that mammas are sometimes blind to the faults of their children, I determined to judge from my own observation, rather than from her report, though I was not so rude as to tell her so; and having watched them very narrowly, without appearing to do it, I had not been two days in the house, before I discovered, that, although in other respects, they were very well-disposed little girls, they had each one fault, which, if not attended to and soon corrected, would not only render them very disagreeable women, but make them unhappy all their lives.

Paulina, the eldest, though only thirteen years of age, is a complete gossip. She has no ears for any thing but the news of the day—who and who were at Mrs. P—’s dinner—longed to hear whether Mr. B. danced with Miss D. at the ball—hoped they should be allowed to walk in the middle of the day, because there was always so much company at that time on the walk, that it was quite entertaining; for she could hear a bit of every conversation, as the crowd passed her, and could very often *guess* at what she could not distinctly hear: so that she generally knew what they were talking of, and that was so delightful.

Grace, the second, is eleven, and the prettiest creature I ever beheld. She has a pair of the most beautiful dark hazle eyes in the world; but she appears to have no use for them, but that of looking into the street, examining every coach, chaise, cart, and wheelbarrow which passes, as well as every person, man, woman or child; so that scarcely a creature can go by the house, with whom she is unacquainted. She does not know the names of any of them, but can always describe the person; for she has observed them too minutely, not to be able to distinguish a hundred different people, who either live in the street, or have occasion to pass often through it. One is the man with the sharp nose; another, the man who had his coat let out in the back; then the gentleman who walks on tip-toe, with his right hand in his bosom; the woman who wears a silk handkerchief, patched in the corner with a piece of a different sort; and the child whose frock is half pinned, half buttoned.

I should be sorry to fill my paper with another line of this foolish child’s observations; for I am grieved, when I reflect on her being allowed to waste her sight so frivolously. I endeavoured to draw her attention, as well as her sister’s, to objects that would have afforded them some instruction, and, I should have imagined, more entertainment; but all my efforts were useless, and I have no right to insist.

At the age of ten, Amelia, the youngest daughter, is a perfect glutton: her whole time is spent in thinking of what she shall eat. The moment she is awake, she attacks cakes or biscuits, or whatever she has been able to provide. At breakfast, nothing in the common way will satisfy her; and long before dinner she must have some nicety provided for her, or her displeasure is shown by pouting lips and ugly frowns. I did not perceive that she had an extraordinary appetite; but her eagerness to be helped to the best of every thing, the manner in which she crammed it into her mouth, at the same time that she watched every plate round the table, as if she had been afraid we should eat too fast and leave nothing for her, disgusted me so much that I never opened my lips to her. Wishing, however, to attempt something for their good, and hoping their mamma will open her eyes to their defects, I shall herewith send to my printer, a story which I met with in my great-grandfather’s library; hoping its antiquity will not make it less acceptable to my readers, and that the three little girls, who have been the occasion of my rummaging over two enormous chests of old books to find it, will perceive the danger of improper indulgencies.

THE PRINCESS DILARA, AND HER FIVE
MAIDS OF HONOUR.

“IN a beautiful island in the Sea of China, not very distant from the island of Formosa, there reigned a king and queen, who, by their wisdom, benevolence, and amiable dispositions, were become the idols of their subjects.

“They had been married several years without having any children, but at length, to the great joy of the king, his queen, the dowager queen his mother, the two old princesses his aunts, and, in short, to the court, and all the inhabitants of his extensive and populous dominions, her majesty was happily brought-to-bed of a princess.

“Never was there seen so many delighted faces, as on the day in which the young princess received her name from the high priest Ching-tsi-tsing. A superb palace was immediately prepared for her reception; for she had so many attendants appointed to serve her, that, extensive as was her father’s, it was not sufficiently so to contain half of them.

“Six young ladies of quality were appointed to rock her cradle; six more, to be alternately in waiting with her coral and bells. Twelve cooks were ordered to try their skill in making pap of the most exquisite flavour, for her royal highness; and so many gentlemen-ushers, pages, coachmen, footmen, housemaids, laundry-maids, &c. &c. that I find it impossible to enumerate them; for I have not time to turn over some folio volumes, which contain numerous anecdotes of this princess’s infancy. But, above all, I must not forget her *five* maids of honour: they were appointed the moment she came into the world, though they were for some time of little use to her. In a very few years, however, (thanks to her papa’s and mamma’s indulgence, who suffered her to do exactly what she liked, and never allowed her to be contradicted in the smallest degree,) she became so extremely fond of them, and indulged them so much, that, before she was fourteen years of age, as they did not fail to take advantage of her weakness, she found herself completely under their government, and no one could hope to please her, or to obtain the smallest favour from the princess, but by gratifying at least one of her maids of honour.

“She was once requested to make use of her known influence over the king her father, to procure a pension for the widow of an officer, who had lost his life in the service of his country.

“‘You shall not take a single step in the business,’ said Oculara, ‘unless she first procures me a sight of the jewels of the old princess, your aunt. You know, madam, how long I have wished to see them, but the old lady will not let me have a peep at them, lest my report of their beauty should tempt you to ask for any of her ornaments. I do not want them—I am brilliant enough without diamonds; but I wish to see them, and I will see them, I am determined. The widow is on very good terms with your aunt, and she will not refuse her.’

“‘Her brothers are the first musicians in the kingdom,’ interrupted Aurina, ‘and she shall give me a concert, or you shall not speak a word in her favour to the king.’

“Gusta bounced into the princess’s presence with a huge piece of plum-cake in her hand, declaring that she would insist on having a magnificent collation at the widow’s country-house, composed of all the delicacies in season, and the richest wines that could be procured.

“‘And let the apartments be perfumed with the most costly essences that can be purchased in the island,’ eagerly interrupted Odoranté, ‘and filled with the rarest and sweetest flowers.’

“‘And it should be her particular care,’ added Feelinetta, ‘to see that I am not made to suffer, either from cold or heat. I hope also, that your royal highness will not allow Gusta to indulge in eating of every thing that comes in her way, that I may once have the pleasure of

enjoying an entertainment, without head aches and indigestion. It is very hard that I should always be made to suffer for her faults. A princess of your rank and consequence, should *never* suffer her maids of honour to be exposed to the smallest inconveniency whatever.’

“A little silver voice seemed to whisper the princess, that a poor widow, soliciting a pension, was not likely to have it in her power to satisfy so many demands. But all the five maids of honour assailing her at once, speaking altogether, each endeavouring to be heard, and to influence their mistress, the little silver voice was quite drowned in noise, and the poor princess forgot every thing but the suggestions of her brawling ladies.

“The widow, as may be supposed, lost her pension, because she had not the means of satisfying the maids of honour. She had a favour of much greater importance to ask of the old princess, than a sight of her jewels. Her brothers had left the court; her country-house was sold, and the whole sum she received for it, would scarcely have sufficed to pay the expenses of the collation required of her by the princess, to gratify the unbounded wishes of her maids of honour. She might, indeed, have pleased Feelinetta, by preventing her suffering either from violent heat or cold, had the princess and her attendants condescended to honour her with a visit; and even Oculara might have been gratified, she thought, at beholding a mother surrounded by her little family, and busied in their domestic occupations. But such scenes had no charms for her; she had never accustomed herself to anything so simple, and had no joy but in what was extraordinary, unnatural, and what many would have thought insipid.

“The poor princess was cruelly tormented by her maids: they never suffered her to have a moment’s rest, but were always craving for some indulgence or other, and yet ever dissatisfied; for though she sometimes attempted to keep them a little in subjection, they had so completely made her their slave, that she soon entirely lost the power of remonstrating with them.

“The moment she awoke in the morning, Gusta was sure to be at her bedside, complaining of bad rolls and butter, bad tea, bad cream, and coarse sugar; urging her to dismiss her baker and grocer, and send for others.

“Then would come Feelinetta, whimpering and whining, and complaining of the head-ache; reproaching the princess with having sat up so late, and having occasioned her indisposition; whilst Oculara urged her to disregard the whims of Feelinetta, her head-aches, and her vapours; to rise immediately, order her new coach and her beautiful English bays, and drive round the country, that she might be able to say she had visited every corner of the island, which no Chinese lady could ever have to boast of.

“The princess could not at times help thinking, that she had been extremely to blame, and repented severely that she had not checked in their infancy her encroaching ladies, who, reflection told her, were created to be made subservient to her will, and to contribute to her happiness, instead of destroying it. But the moment she attempted to argue with them, they became so clamorous and noisy, that the poor weak young lady, wanting resolution sufficient to oppose them firmly, was glad to be quiet, and submit to any thing they chose to propose to her. And the more they perceived the weakness of their mistress, the more they presumed upon it, till they had so many whims and ridiculous fancies, that it was utterly impossible to satisfy them.

“Oculara insisted upon having a seventy-four gun ship fitted out immediately, that the princess might take her to see the late emperor of France received at St. Helena; and Aurina determined to be of the party, that she might hear the notes of a robin red-breast of that island, in order to decide whether she should give them the preference over those of her own country.

“Gusta had no inclination to travel, but she had heard so much of English mince-pies, that she declared to the princess, in the most positive manner, that she would never let her have a minute’s rest, either by day or by night, till she had sent to England for a cook, who, by being paid very high wages, might be tempted to come to China to make her some.

“The poor princess did every thing she could to combat this ridiculous idea; pretended not to hear her—danced round the room—talked on other subjects—but all to no purpose: *mince-pies, mince-pies, English mince-pies*, was the constant cry; and it was in vain that she was crammed with tarts and tartlets: nothing would satisfy her but English mince-pies. And there was such a noise in the palace, that Aurina declared she was almost distracted, and would rather be quite dead than live in such company, and see her dear sister Feelinetta suffer so much; for she had constantly the headache, occasioned by the princess’s manner of living, and was always taking emetics, and drinking camomile-tea; that she had caught a violent cold, by driving about with the princess, to please that prying *gaze-about*, Miss Oculara; and that she was quite tired of her life.

“The princess returned to her couch, but not to rest: she no longer knew how to please her maids of honour, for her utmost indulgence could not now content them, and they scarcely knew themselves what they would have. She could not sleep, but was lost in reflection, and determining (as she had often done before, though her determination had hitherto always vanished with the day-light) to make her maids of honour bow to her commands, and submit to her will. ‘Oh!’ exclaimed she, that ‘Resolution would but come to my assistance: I would insist upon their accompanying me to the dwelling of the good old woman on the mountain, and might hope that the sound of her voice, which they never heard in their lives, would enable me to subdue their wayward inclinations.’

“‘I am here,’ said a female figure, whom she knew to be Resolution, ‘ready to accompany you to the mountain where Reason resides: shall I remain with you?’ ‘I wish you *would* remain with me,’ replied the princess, ‘but you slip away from me without my perceiving it, and then I am overpowered by my tormentors. Twenty times, at least, you have served me in that manner.’

“‘I am willing enough to stay with you,’ said Resolution, ‘but you are never serious in your desire of keeping me. Why do you lost sight of me? I shall think myself very happy if—.’

“‘Oh,’ interrupted the princess, ‘depend upon my constancy this time: I am so tired of being the sport of these girls, that I am determined not to let you stir from my side. I was weak enough to believe, that, by indulging them in all their fancies, they would make me the happiest of human beings; instead of which, they are become the torment of my life, and I feel the error of my judgment so strongly, that if you will but promise to assist me, I will use every effort in my power, to put my household upon a better footing.’

“The day began to dawn, and the princess was so afraid of letting Resolution slip away from her, that she arose immediately, and taking her by the arm, which she held with all her strength, walked firmly out of the palace, and in less than a quarter of an hour began to ascend the mountain.

“‘This road is very rough,’ muttered Feelinetta; and soon after, in a louder key, ‘Oh! how the briars scratch my legs! I shall never get up to the top of this abominable hill.’ The princess, in listening to the complaints of Feelinetta, had nearly suffered Resolution to slip from her arm; but she recollected herself in an instant, and drew her still closer to her side.

“They had not proceeded far, before a dreadful scream from Oculara threw the princess into such an agitation, that she withdrew her arm from Resolution, to shield her

attendant from the mischief which seemed to threaten her; when, perceiving that it was occasioned by a very old woman in tattered garments, who, bending under the weight of a large faggot she had gathered to take home with her, had dared to present herself before the young lady, who wished to banish from her view all except pleasing objects, she was extremely angry, and reproached her severely. In the mean time, Resolution had already left the princess's side, and had she not, by a sudden spring, caught her by the robe, would probably have forsaken her; and she would, as usual, have submitted to the will of her ladies, who, each in their turn, attempted to make her relinquish her project, and throw her off her guard, so that she might lose sight of her dreaded companion.

“Aurina was shocked at the discordant notes of the ravens and magpies, which inhabited the tall trees on the side of the mountain.

“ ‘Odoranté said she should expire, if she were any longer exposed to the stench of the muddy ditch, which they had passed at the foot of the mountain; which, she fancied, ascended after them up the hill, and would follow them to the very top—and, poor thing! She had left her smelling-bottle on her pillow.

“As to Gusta, she did nothing but reproach the princess, and grumble the whole way, at having been brought out without her breakfast;—foresaw that Dame Reason would leave her old friend, Moderation, to entertain them; and that she should have nothing but tea and bread and butter, instead of the variety of niceties which the princess was always so indulgent as to allow her.

“In spite, however, of the struggles, which it cost her, their mistress was now resolved to be no longer led by those she was born to govern; but, clinging to her companion, Resolution, notwithstanding the efforts they made to separate them, and though she had two or three times nearly lost her, arrived safely at the dwelling of Reason, into whose arms she threw herself, entreating her to protect and assist her.

“The good woman was delighted to see her;—said she had long expected her;—wondered that, with so good an understanding, she had no sooner claimed her protection;—and assured her, that she was ready to do her all the good offices in her power. The princess gave her a pressing invitation to return with her to the palace, promising that she would, in future, be entirely guided by her advice and direction. Reason readily consented to this proposal, but desired that her friend Moderation might join the party, and be placed as governess to the maids of honour.

“They all returned immediately, and, in less than a month, the princess was the happiest creature in the world. Her ladies were quite reformed, for she would no longer indulge them in their whimsies. Aurina continued to be very fond of music, but she also found great pleasure in listening to the lessons of wisdom which fell from the lips of the good old king.

“Oculara wondered how she had ever felt so much delight in flying about to look at strange sights, and was now never tired of admiring the beauties of nature, that great book, in which all may read and improve; and by this means conveyed so much pleasure and information to the mind of the princess, that she soon lost that listless indifference and ignorance, in which she had spent so many years of her life.

“Odoranté was no longer fastidious, thought she always preferred to smell of sweet flowers to noxious weeds, which was natural; but she grew so extremely fond of fresh air, that she appeared, on all occasions, to prefer it to every thing else.

“Moderation taught Gusta to eat only when she was hungry; and convinced her that though she might be allowed to like one thing better than another, she could not, without

being ridiculous, make so trifling a concern an object of consequence; and Feelinetta found herself under the necessity of supporting patiently the little inconveniences to which our nature is subject; and at length discovered, that fretting and teasing may increase the headache, but will most certainly never cure it.

No. 9

I AM just returned from my second visit to the cottage of my new acquaintance, where I found them quietly seated at their frugal dinner; their scanty furniture all placed, and an air of neatness and order, seldom met with among people in their situation. I was, however, sorry to perceive a cloud on every brow, except on that of little Benjamin, who was eating some mashed potatoes with a wooden spoon, and appeared pleased and contented, as children usually are, who have something to eat when they are hungry, and who are more anxious about the quantity than the quality of their food. His pretty blue eyes followed my right hand to my pocket, and his spoon was dropped the moment he saw me draw from it a nice currant cake, which Martha had made on purpose for him. She loves children, and thought nothing of the trouble; and I was so pleased at her attention, that I have not been able to pardon myself ever since, for sending such a character of her into the world as I have done. If I am accused of vanity, in having said she was not so good-humoured as her mistress, I shall humbly kiss the rod and patiently hear the reproaches of those, who, on a near acquaintance with her, will discover her good qualities. The reflections I have made on the hasty publication of my old servant's weakness, will, I hope make me more circumspect in future, and teach me not to be so ready to praise myself at the expence of others. We are never too old to learn, it is said; I therefore hope my young readers will be less inclined to presumption, when they see that an old woman of seventy is so ready to acknowledge a fault.

When I accused Martha of crossness, I should have said, education had not taught her to support untoward circumstances, with so much philosophy as her mistress does. One proof of mine, however, would have been, to have borne her weakness, without complaining of it.

Having thus done justice to Martha, I will return to little Ben and his cake; or rather to his grand-mother, who, on my questioning her as to the gloom which appeared, particularly in her countenance, told me, with tears in her eyes, that she was extremely unhappy, at finding herself become a dead weight on her son and his wife. That the money which had purchased their two cows, and all their implements of husbandry, had been hers; and the benefit arising from it, she thought, had repaid them the trifling expence she had been to them. Now all was gone—her money sunk—and being infirm, she could be of no use to them and must, consequently eat the bread of idleness, and live upon the fruits of her son's labour, who had other mouths to feed, and wanted no additional burden.

Andrews interrupted his mother, by assuring her, she never would be a burden to him; and that all his grief arose from the impossibility of seeing her as comfortable as she had been; and his wife joined him, in begging her to make herself easy and hope for the best.

I desire them all to be patient, and hear what I had to offer. I had a little sum of money by me, which, as I told them, I had set apart for the use of some worthy person who might stand in need of it. That I had consulted Mr. Woodford, as to the most advantageous manner of laying it out; and it had been agreed upon, that, there being no school in the village, and Dame Andrews being very well qualified to teach the children of the poor, to read, work and knit, I would give her a salary for so doing, *gratis*, to fifteen children; and that if any others wished to receive the benefit of her instructions, and that she could, by the assistance of her

daughter-in-law, receive a greater number, their parents should pay her for the trouble, in money; or, if more convenient to them, in milk, butter, pork, flour, or any other thing which would be useful in the family.

I will not repeat what gratitude prompted them to say, in answer to my proposal, (I am cured of vanity,) suffice it to mention, that it was accepted with joy and thankfulness; that I have left them so gay and cheerful, that my own spirits are exhilarated at having witnessed the change in theirs; and that I have sent to invite the curate and his amiable daughters to drink tea with me, in order to settle the business immediately, by picking out fifteen children, from among those whose parents cannot afford to pay for their schooling, and then to endeavour to procure a few more, who have it in their power to add to Dame Andrews's comfort, either in one way or the other. I was very glad that I had an opportunity of slipping a little parcel of tea and sugar into the favourite corner-cupboard, before I left them; for I am afraid it has been poorly supplied for some time.

I never relished my dinner so well in my life, as I have done today. I fancied every thing was better than usual, but really believe it was only owing to the happy state of my mind when I sat down to it; for my fowl was roasted to rags, and my pudding not boiled enough. I wish those who can afford to do similar little acts of kindness, and who complain of want of appetite, would try the experiment; I really think it would be of service to them. Pray excuse me—old women will give their advice, whether it is desired or not; and of all old women, I am the most loquacious.

No.10.

I NEVER met with so strong a trait of impertinent curiosity, as in a country girl of twelve years of age, in one of my rambles about the neighbourhood, a few days since.

Having promised never to mention any one by their proper name, I shall keep my word in the present case; but if I am not much mistaken, such a character cannot live within two or three miles of any village, without being known, whatever name I may choose to bestow upon her by way of disguise.

Wanting to give a few directions to a poor woman, whom I have employed to knit some stockings for me against winter, I found the sun so warm, that I ventured, as I returned, to sit down on a grassy bank, under the shade of a fine spreading beech; and it was so extremely pleasant and agreeable, that if I had been interrupted, I might probably have staid there longer than would have been prudent. Every way I turned my eyes, I was delighted; an air of industry and plenty appeared in all directions, and a comfortable farmhouse, with its usual appendages of haymows and stacks of corn, added, in no small degree, to the beauty of the scene.

I had, the day before, received a letter from an old friend who lives in a distant county, and who described the place of his residence in such gay colours, that I was struck with the similitude; and having the letter in my pocket, felt much satisfaction in giving it a second reading, but had scarcely time to finish it, when a voice at my elbow exclaimed: "Well! If I could think, for my life, what you were about. I have been watching you this half an hour. What have you been looking at so? If you had a mind to see our house, you might have *comed* up. Do you live hereabouts? I never *see'd* you before, but that's no wonder: I am but just home from school—only a fortnight last Tuesday—and I have had the tooth-ache almost all the time; so I *haven't* been much about. I should like to know what your name is, if you

please, ma'am, and where you live." I told her that my name, perhaps, as well as my place of abode, might be a secret.

"A *secret*," cried she, "oh! then I must find it out. I always do. Dear me, how tired I am. I have been running about all the day; but I spied you sitting here so long, staring about—and then that letter! I should very much like to read it. I can read very well, I assure you. Where do you think I have been? Why, the moment I had breakfasted I ran down to the mill over there, at the back of our house, to know why it was not going. I could not, for my life, think what was the matter; for I saw plenty of water in the mill-dam. And after all, what d'ye think? The boy had broken one of the cogs of the wheel. Well, then away I runs to Betty Barnett's, for I wanted to know where her husband was gone so early in the morning; for I had seen him going towards the common, with a large basket on his arm, covered with a white cloth, when *twa 'n't* about six o'clock. He could not be going to D***, says I, Betty, for he would have gone through the lane which leads to the high road. Perhaps he had something to carry to 'Squire H—'s, and so went the round-about way. No! that can't be it, for the family is at Lon'nen. I suppose you know, Betty, says I, where he is gone? I suppose I do, says she. Why then, do tell me, says I. He's gone to D***, to buy a bridle to put on your tongue, says she. So away I ran, and now ma'am"—

But long before she had finished this elegant account of herself, I had been preparing to get away from her, by putting my letter into my pocket, drawing on my gloves, and settling my bonnet, which I had untied when I seated myself on the bank. And I now left her to continue her discourse to the old beech-tree; happy when I found myself far enough for her, to hear no more of it. But, alas! The first object I saw when I came out of the lane opposite my house, was this tormenting girl, waiting for me at the corner, who very familiarly said, in a loud voice, and accompanied by a still louder laugh: "Well, ma'am, didn't I tell you what a good one I am at finding out a secret? You would not tell where you live, but I knew I had but to jump over the hedge; I was sure I should *nab* you here at the corner, and now I shall see which house in the village you live in."

She kept her word, and saw me enter my own door, which I was, however, pleased at recollecting, that I always had the power of shutting against impertinent intruders.

The next morning brought me the following letter.

"*Dear Madam,*

"As I know not only where you live, but who you be, and what trade you follow, I shan't make no scruple to write to you. I wish I'd a know'd it yesterday, when I'd such a long chat with you up by the old beech-tree; but I don't know that it would have answered, for, after all, I think you was rather crusty, and that the chat was mostly on my side. Howsomever, I mean you no harm, not at all, for I want you to do a small job for me. You must know that here have been two men here, at our farm, three times within this fortnight; that is, since I *comed* home from school. One came riding upon a strawberry mare, and the other upon a grey one; and they be shut up along with father, an hour or two at a time, and I can't find out, by no means, what they are talking about. I've listened and listened, with my ear to the key-hole, but it would not do: I could only pick up a word here and there—once I heard lease—then, bad soil, or saul, or soul, I don't know which—and then two hundred guineas; and once father gived such a rap with his knuckles upon the table, that I thought he had broke 'em all to smash.

"Now I do so long to know what these men came here for, and why they be always shut up together, that I would give you any thing in the world, if you would find it out for me.

I understand that the people in the village think you quite a conjuror, though I do not hear that you ever do any harm; on the contrary, that you be always ready to serve people. So I don't doubt but you will let me know immediately, what is going on between my father and the two aforesaid men.

"I gave Dolly, our maid, one of my best ribbons, for trying to overhear them, but she lost her labour, and I my ribbon; and I bribed Dick, the ploughboy, who brings you this letter, with six-pence, to hide himself, so that he might catch a word or two when the men went away. But all he could hear, was, that one of them said my father was a fine honest fellow; and that was no news to me, for I have heard people say as much a hundred times. My whole dependence is now upon you, and I do not see why you should refuse me more than another; but you'll please to remember, I don't want any *printing*. You are to read my letter, and give me an answer to it, which Dick shall call for next week, (I think I give you plenty of time,) and I will send you something for your trouble; either a fat goose, or a turkey, or a young roaster, you may depend upon it. I always keeps my word, and father he won't miss it; he never troubles his head about these matters; and mother, she's been dead these five years: so no more at present, from your humble servant,

“*****”

I suppose I shall have something to fear from the disappointment and anger of my curious correspondent, when she perceives that, instead of answering, I have made her letter, as well as conversation and impertinent behaviour to me, public. I wish I could say she was the first I ever met with, in whom curiosity had got the better of every other consideration. This girl's want of education, makes her join impertinent freedom to her naturally curious disposition; but I am sorry to say, that in higher life, I have too often met with girls of her age, who, to indulge their curiosity, have been betrayed into such faulty conduct, as I should have supposed, a careful education would have made them ashamed of.

No. 11.

“*Madam,*

“I am waiting-maid to a young lady of thirteen years of age; (I beg her pardon, she is thirteen, three months, and a fortnight;) and having a strong desire to appear older than she is, and to be treated as a woman, announces herself as almost fourteen; so that she would never forgive me, if I were to call her only thirteen.

“I had three young ladies to attend upon in my last place, but had much less trouble with all three together, than I have with my present mistress alone; for though she really is but a child, she thinks more about dress and the fashions, than any grown woman I ever met with.

She has several masters who attend her; but they might just as well stay at home, for she learns nothing, and they are only picking my master's pockets. Her whole thoughts are employed in how she shall curl her hair, how have her sash tied, and how she shall contrive to wheedle her mamma to allow her to be dressed a little more womanly. She says she has no opportunity of showing her taste, as she now dresses. There is no distinction between her and her little sister Anna, except that her hair is curled and Anna's is not. She sees no reason why she may not wear every thing her eldest sister wears. Where would be the impropriety of having drops to her little gold earrings? Why may she not let her hair grow long? Mr.—

would have given her a beautiful comb; but her mamma said it would be of no use to her, so it was given to her sister. You will readily believe, madam, that this affair of the comb was not easily forgotten. She cried the whole morning, and was so very cross, that I really thought I should never have got her dressed for dinner. Her sash was too tight, then too loose. She would have a pink one; then pink would not suit straw-coloured shoes; and when the sash was changed, she objected to her shoes, and would have purple ones and a purple sash.

“Another time, she said I had curled her hair frightfully, and she would not go out with a head like a hedge-hog. But the pleasure of a walk would soon have made her forget her hair, if I had not been so silly as to observe, that her veil would hide it; and then she turned the whole force of her rage against the *nasty, ridiculous, vulgar* green veil, which her mamma had made her wear, but which she declared she never would put on any more. If she must wear a veil, she would have a large, square black-lace one, to throw over her bonnet, such as were worn by all genteel *young women*; and it should be full as large as her sister Matilda’s.

“Dear me, Miss Julia, said I, (like a simpleton again, as I was, for attempting to reason with her,) you do not recollect that Miss Sydney is a very tall lady, and you are rather short for your age: her black lace veil would trail upon the ground.

“I cannot describe her anger, at this unlucky speech of mine. I was called bold, impertinent, I know not what besides; and I am now quite out of favour. But I do not much care, for I am tired of my place. My master and mistress are very good to all their servants, and I see nobody in the house unhappy but myself, There is Mrs. Ellison, Miss Sydney’s woman, always smiling and as gay as a lark, whilst I am wearied and harassed to death by a child. I feel no sort of regard for Miss Julia, and I cannot bear to serve those I do not love.

“I hope, madam, you will be so kind as to let this letter be printed; for, as I am going to leave the family, I shall not care if it is known to come from me, and I hope I have described Miss Julia so well, that she will know herself.

“I am, madam,

“Yours, to command,

“SARAH G.”

No. 12.

AMONG a number of letters received last week, the following is the only one I think worth publishing. I have often half a dozen at a time, on subjects either so trifling that I scarcely have the patience to read them, or to ask my advice about matters with which I am entirely unacquainted, and would not, on any account, venture to give an opinion; so that, however I may be flattered by being applied to on so many occasions, I may at least hope to escape the accusation of vanity or conceit.

“Dear Madam,

“I have been a long time very uncomfortable, but nobody minds me. Clara is my eldest sister, and I do not expect to be put upon a footing with her; but then she should not domineer as she does, and treat me so much like a baby, when she is only a year and a half older than I am, though she happens to be very tall and thin, and I am short and fat. The servants say she is cross and fretful, and it is that which makes her so thin; and that I am always good-humoured, and therefore I grow fat. I do not know how this may be, and the

truth is, I am afraid I do not deserve to be called good-humoured; for when my sister treats me ill, I often feel myself a little cross, though I endeavour, as much as I possibly can, to keep my temper. But, dear madam, is it not very provoking, at twelve years of age, to hear a girl of thirteen and half, ask where the *child* is? and why she does not come to breakfast? and to be made to fetch and carry all day, like a little dog? It is not that I am unwilling to oblige Clara; on the contrary, I would do any thing in the world for her, or run up and down stairs to save her trouble; but I cannot bear the manner in which she asks me, or rather in which she gives her orders. “Sophy, my dear, ring the bell. Sophy, my love, go and fetch my work-bag. Dear child, do move a little faster; do you not see that I am waiting for it?” Then she will new dress me every day. I am quite a fright—my hair is never as it should be; and I am the most provoking little creature she ever saw, for I do not appear to care a straw about it;—and my frock is crooked, and my sash put on shockingly. She never saw such a figure.

“Then I am so dreadfully awkward, she cannot bear to see me come into a room. I ought to walk in boldly, as she does, with a firm step and my head erect; instead of casting down my eyes, and looking like a bashful simpleton. Now, dear Mrs. Oracle, I think I really could put up with all this, and in time learn to laugh at it, if she would not interfere with my little studies. She has never had patience or perseverance enough to learn any thing perfectly, though she fancies (or rather wishes to persuade herself) she knows every thing, because she has had different masters a few months; but she showed so very little attention to their directions, that they could do nothing with her, and told papa it would be taking his money for no purpose, if they continued to attend her. She appeared very well pleased to get rid of them, and said she was quite far enough advanced to be able now to go on without assistance, and also to instruct me; the consequence of this is, that she never leaves me a moment’s peace. Conceive, if you can, my grief! yes, my *outrageous* grief, (for I am very fond of drawing,) at finding a group I have been a week or two copying, and had almost finished, spread out before her on the table, and she, with crumbs of bread and pencil, rubbing out, altering, and spoiling my whole drawing; making my figures squint, their mouths crooked, and every limb distorted; and this is the way she has repeatedly served me.

“If I go to the piano, it is just the same. I cannot play a bar, without being interrupted with—‘That will not do. Play that again.’ And when I read, she endeavours to point out the true meaning of the author; though, if I have but patience, instead of interrupting her, to hold my tongue, as I confess I sometimes maliciously do, she gets into a hobble, from which she cannot extricate herself, and has no way of hiding her ignorance, but by pretending to have recollected something of the utmost consequence, which she must do immediately. Then, recommending it to me to read with great attention, that I may understand what I am reading, she flies out of the room, as if the welfare of the whole family depended upon her expedition.

“Advise me, dear madam, how to act. I love my sister dearly, though she really makes my life unhappy; and I am sure, if papa and mamma were to perceive what I have now written to you, they would put a stop to it. But they have so good an opinion of Clara, that they have no idea of her ever doing any thing wrong, or that she can possibly torment me as she does. To complain to them of her I never will: it would be improper in me, to tell them that she is not so amiable as they think she is; that she is ignorant and conceited, which I cannot help perceiving every hour; and that she is too idle ever to be otherwise. Perhaps, if you were to publish my letter, change our names, and not mention our place of abode, papa and mamma, who constantly read all your papers, may be struck with some parts of it, and think it prudent to observe my sister a little more closely. But you must only publish the heads of what I write to you; or you may make a little story out of it, or any thing you like. But you will see that the latter part of my letter must not be seen; so pray destroy it, when you have picked out what you want, and believe me,

“Ever yours, sincerely,
“Sophy.”

I have met with so many Miss Claras in my life, though not in all respects so disagreeable as the young lady in question, that I am determined to publish the whole of Sophy’s letter; hoping it may prove a faithful mirror, to all pert, domineering girls, in which they will see their own deformities, and discover that, before they pretend to direct others, they should endeavour to acquire such branches of useful knowledge as will enable them to do it; and, as that is seldom attained so very early in life, I would advise them to wait until they run no risk of making themselves ridiculous.

Sophy’s sister has no chance of ever seeing the day when she may presume to notice faults, even in the most ignorant, unless her papa and mamma, fortunately for her, should open their eyes to hers, and, by proper firmness, oblige her to correct them, and attend to instruction before it is too late. She must be far behind her sister in every thing; and judging of her heart by her conduct, I am much afraid she never will be an amiable woman.

I once knew a girl of thirteen, who took so much upon her during a month’s absence of her papa and mamma, that she would not permit any one in the house to have a minute’s peace. Her brothers, sisters, servants, all were to submit to her yoke; and because she thought that going on in the accustomed manner, would not give her the air of command she wished to exhibit to all beholders, she changed the breakfast from the house to the garden, all causes to the contrary, of wind or weather, notwithstanding. The dinner-hour was altered from four to six, and the servants were not to dine till she had done. Many other fancies, equally wise and judicious, were put in force; but when papa and mamma returned, and that the old servants had informed them of the new regulations, they, foreseeing what might possibly be the consequence of such a disposition, if not checked, wisely sent her from home immediately, to the care of a lady; who, far from suffering her to have any command, did not allow her the most trifling liberty, not even to walk round the pleasure-grounds, without her permission.

No. 13.

PASSING by a small cottage, in a lane near my house, this morning, I heard an old man, who was sitting at the door, say to some person within: “I tell you, Margaret, young misers make old thieves! I never knew it otherwise; and that boy, who is already capable of standing an hour to dispute about a half-penny, will make no scruple, by the time he is twenty years old, to boast of having saved sixpence, by out-talking a person whom he had employed in his service; when, if so be he was to let his conscience speak a word, he would know that the work deserved sixpence more instead of less. Some folks do call this being clever at a bargain, but I do call it cheating the poor out of their due; for labour ought to be paid according to its value, justly and fairly.”

There appeared so much sense in what my old neighbour said, that I could not continue my walk, without asking him whether he alluded to any particular person, or whether it was a general observation.

“Oh, madam,” said Wilkins, “I was speaking to my old woman (who is there, making ready the oven to bake our brown loaf and a bit of pie) about young Master R—, whom you may have seen jump over the gate into the field, a little further on, just as you came round the corner of the barn. I am vexed to see him so unlike the rest of the family: one would think he

had been changed at nurse. There's Master Charles, his brother, would give the only sixpence he has in the world, to any one he thinks in what of it: but as to this youth!— Why, madam, you will hardly believe that he has been sitting there, upon that stone, ever since breakfast, trying to persuade me to give him back a penny, from sixpence which he had paid me for something I have done to his fishing-tackle; and if you will believe me, as a good Christian, the things I had to buy to do it with, cost me three-pence half-penny out of my own pocket. So I began to think upon all the stories the butler have told me about the young chap, and I determined not to give up to 'un." By this time, I had taken possession of the young miser's seat, by the side of old Wilkins; who, being pleased at the attention I appeared to pay to his discourse, went on to tell me what he had heard from Mr. R—'s butler; that I might not think, he said, that he was prejudiced against him about the penny.

He is, it seems, at a school at ****, but comes home every Saturday to dinner, and stays till Monday morning; (a very bad plan, in my opinion;) and in those two days he contrives to get fruit, and to pocket sweetmeats from the dessert, though he stints himself enough, to satisfy his darling passion, by carrying it with him to school, and selling it to the other boys.

A brother of Mr. R—'s, visiting them some time ago, made a present of half-a-guinea to each of his nephews and nieces. Charles spent part of his, in a few trifles he wished to purchase for himself; but the greatest pleasure he felt, was in having it in his power to carry a three-shilling piece to a poor boy, who had been terribly hurt by the wheel of a cart. His sisters also remembered some of their poor neighbours, before they thought of themselves; observing, that what they wanted could only be objects of pleasure, but what they gave to the poor would be spent in necessaries.

How different was the conduct of the young miser. I can hardly bear to write it, only that I think, when he reads this account, and perceives, as he must do, that he is the person pointed at, he will be ashamed of himself. His half-guinea was wrapped up in twenty bits of paper, locked safely in a small box, and the small box locked in a larger one. The key was put under his pillow the first night of his wealth, which completely prevented his closing his eyes. The second was no better; and the third day he was very unwell, unable to go to school, and fell fast asleep over his tea. An unlucky boy, a cousin, who happened to be in the house, from having watched our miser, with whose disposition he was pretty well acquainted, knew what ailed him. He took the key from under his pillow, some time after he had been put to bed, pocketed the half-guinea, and replaced the key, without disturbing him; for he had been so long without sleep, that a drum at his ear would scarcely have awakened him.

The next morning, being quite recovered, for he only wanted rest, he received an invitation from his cousin, to partake of a treat in the summer-house, in honour of his birthday; and to meet his brothers and sisters, as well as two or three young people of the neighbourhood. He did not require much pressing, for he liked very well to stuff cakes and fruit, so that he was not to pay for them; beside that he hoped to pocket a little, to take with him, to *oblige* some of his school-fellows.

The table was laid out in great order, with every nicety that half-a-guinea could procure; and after eating heartily, our youth did not fail slyly to pocket a little, as usual. But what was his rage, when the wicked cousin, making him a low bow, thanked him for having celebrated his birth-day so magnificently; acknowledging, that it was his half-guinea which had paid the whole; and adding, that wishing to treat his friends, and having no money of his own, he had made free with his, because it did not appear to be of any use to him, unless to torment and make him ill; and that he thought he had done him a very great kindness. No one felt any pity for the young miser; but, at the same time that they were amused by his woful

countenance, they could not do otherwise than blame the person who was the cause of his vexation; for, although he had no ill intention, and only meant it as a good joke, he certainly was not justified in taking money which did not belong to him. We may dislike and despise the avaricious man, but have no right to force him to spend his money, if he likes better to hoard it; and still less to seize upon it, like a robber, in the night, and spend it for him.

No. 14.

“My dear good Friend,

I HAVE been very angry (I will not attempt to hide it from you) at your having my letter printed, and at the freedom of your observations upon it. However, I assure you, I am now very well pleased; for all mamma’s talking, all you could have written to me, would not have had an effect equal to my seeing your good advice in print; and I had not been long at my new school, before I felt the truth of all you said. Indeed, the lady I am now with is not quite so blind to the faults of her young people as my last governess was; she is, on the contrary, very observing, and nothing escapes her notice. At first I was very unhappy, and thought she was the most severe and hard-hearted creature I ever had met with; for, notwithstanding the trouble I took to gain her indulgence, by flattering her, and by a thousand attentions, she did nothing but reproach me with my ignorance and conceit; and at length, by the conversations she held with me, obliged me to perceive that I really knew nothing. I then thought of you, and determined to lose no more of my time—no longer to fancy myself such a charming little lump of perfection—but to go seriously to work, to gain what I found I had at present no pretensions to.

“From that moment, my dear Oracle, I became the happiest girl in the school, and am improving daily. Do not imagine this is any remains of vanity. I know I am still very deficient, and have a great deal to do before I shall like to see mamma, whom it is now become my most earnest desire to please, and that she should find me exactly as she would have me to be. I am so anxious to satisfy her, that I have requested to remain at school all the next holidays; though it cost me many tears, before I could bring myself to give up so great a pleasure as that of seeing my family; and my governess is so pleased with my reason for having made this sacrifice, that she has promised to assist me, as much as possible, and to give me private lessons all the time.

“I have no longer any desire to hide my name from you, therefore subscribe myself, with great pleasure, your obliged and sincere friend, no longer Y.Z. but

“OLIVIA.”

“Dear Oracle,

“I wish you would give a little hint, in one of your papers, to the mammas who wish to keep great girls of fourteen in leading-strings. I don’t see why we should not *come out* at that age, and dress and visit, like young women; especially when we have no elder sisters. What do you think of it?

“Yours, sincerely,

“FLIRTILLA.”

Pray, do you wear pockets?

I shall return no answer to Flirtilla's letter, but advise her mamma to send her to the school where Olivia is in so fair a way of attaining those accomplishments which she ignorantly thought herself mistress of long ago; and where *she* will learn a very important piece of knowledge, that of knowing herself. If she does not approve of this plan, I have nothing more to advise, unless she give her daughter, not only leading-strings, but a go-cart; for she does not appear to me (if I may judge by her letter) to be a child whom one might trust to go alone.

No. 15.

THE weather being very fine yesterday morning, and having recollected that I had been some time without calling on Dame Andrews and her family, I equipped myself, at twelve o'clock, for a walk to their house. I did not choose to go earlier, because I was unwilling to disturb her little scholars; for I am so great a friend to improvement, that I could not forgive myself, if I were to be the cause of the least interruption to any one in the progress of their studies, whether of the planetary system, or A, B, C.

I found the house clear—Dame Andrews just putting their two little benches aside—her daughter-in-law examining a large pillow-case, and two or three parcels which lay on the table.

There was a great appearance of neatness every where, as usual; but what surprised me, as I had not heard a word of the matter, was to perceive the cottage window enlarged, and transformed into a smart shop. The goods, though not very numerous or in large quantities, were yet neatly arranged, and really made their room look very comfortable. Benjamin's eyes glistened with delight while he pointed to a fine new green canister, in which he told me there were heaps of tea; but what he thought much more of, though not so pretty, was a box of sugar which stood beside it.

I found, on enquiry, that several of the parents of the children who had been sent to school to them, found it easier to pay them in milk, eggs, &c. than to part with their money; and that, at the end of the first week, they had found such plenty in their house, that they were quite surprised; not having reflected on the inconvenience of having sometimes too much of one kind, and nothing of another. But they could not very well bargain with the people, or object to what they found it most convenient to bring them; and were afraid they should be under the necessity of desiring to be paid in money, when good Mr. Woodford called to see them, and after a few minutes' reflection, proposed their opening a little shop, for such objects as the poor people in the village would want to purchase; and by that means they might sell any over-plus of eggs, flour, &c. which they found in their house.

The good people were delighted with this plan:—it would be in the room they sat in, which being pretty large, it would not interfere with their business, and would certainly bring in a trifle. Every little would be a help; and whatever was sent them in payment, would turn to account, either for their own use, or for the shop. But, alas! how could they think of a shop, without having even a pound-note to begin with; and, more-ever, the window was so small, that it would not do by any means. Mr. Woodford said he would try to raise friends for them, for which they were very grateful; but made him promise not to mention a word of the matter to *Madam*, (meaning me,) for she had already done so much for them, that they would not, for

the world, have her hear any thing about it. The good curate returned, two days after this conversation, accompanied by a mason and a carpenter, to alter the window. He had called upon their landlord, Mr. ****, a good and charitable man, who was so pleased with their little history, that he gave immediate orders to have the window altered according to Mr. Woodford's direction; to whom, also, he gave two guineas, towards the purchase of a few trifles to put in it; and Mr. Woodford said, poor as he was, he would endeavour to lend them a trifle, which they might repay him by degrees. So the little shop was settled, and every thing very comfortable, without my knowing any thing of the matter.

I returned home, fully resolved not to let these honest people lose by their delicacy towards me; so I went off to the town for a small stock (no matter how much) of such articles as I thought most saleable; and having forwarded them to Dame Andrews this morning early, walked over to the rectory, not to boast of what I had done, but to quarrel with Mr. Woodford, for depriving me of the pleasure I should have had, in joining with him in the establishment of the little shop. I found Patty weeding the flower-garden, of which she is extremely fond; and her sister at work in the parlour with her father, who, when I put my hand on the lock of the door, exclaimed: "Patty, if you do not make haste, I will read it without you; I will wait no"—My entrance put an end to his threats, and I had only time to make him a few reproaches on the subject of the Andrew's, and praise his humanity, which I did with the utmost sincerity, and without the least wish to compliment him, when Miss Patty entered, making many apologies to him, and excusing herself, on account of the weeds which were destroying some of her best flowers.

I requested Mr. Woodford would allow me to be one of his auditors, to which he consented; telling me he had found two anecdotes in an old French book, but that neither of his daughters understanding the language, he had translated them for their amusement. The first appears to have been taken from the journal of an European, which Mr. Woodford read immediately.

"One day, returning from a little excursion with some of my people, we were surprised, near the entrance of a wood, by a plaintive voice, and following the sound, perceived an elderly savage lying under a tree, exhausted by fatigue and want. The poor old man appeared lost to all hope, and waiting submissively to resign his life.

"At first he would not answer, though I addressed him in his own language, which I had learned in the course of my different journeys. At length, however, he said, in a low and melancholy tone: 'Alas! I arose with the first dawn of the morning, in the hope of being able to reach my habitation; but I have lost my way, it is already late, my strength fails me, and I am forced to stay where I am. I have no doubt but that I shall be the prey either of serpents, wild beasts, or of my enemies—My poor wife!—my children!' The poor man then abandoned himself to grief; and I requested him to accompany me to my home. 'But thou dost not know me,' answered the savage. I told him it was not necessary that I should know him, to make me wish to assist him; and at length brought him to my hut, where, after I had made him take some nourishment, I ordered skins and mats to be laid for him near my own bed. A curtain of Indian cloth was the only partition which separated us. He laid himself down, as I did soon after, and in a very short time all was quiet in the hut.

"In the middle of the night, I was awakened from a sound sleep by a noise near my bed. I thought I heard the savage get up, and fear seized upon my senses. I listened quietly, and instantly perceived the injustice I had done him. He was on his knees, and began to pray in the following words: 'O God! I thank thee that thou hast permitted thy sun to shine upon my journey; I thank thee that thou hast not suffered any serpent to sting me, any wild beast to

fall upon me, and that I have not been met by any of my enemies. I thank thee, that thou hast sent this good stranger to conduct me to his hut and save my life. O God! when this stranger, or his children, or his friends, undertake a journey, let thy sun shine upon their path; protect them from serpents, from wild beasts, and from their enemies; and should any of them lose their way, let just another good man meet them, and take them into his habitation.’

Such was his prayer, and when he had finished, I added one for myself, in a few words, as follows:

“Grant me, O my God, when I die, a place in thy paradise near this savage.”

We were all extremely pleased with this anecdote, and were loud in our praises of both the European and the Indian.

Mr. Woodford then began the other, as follows:

“A young painter arriving at Modena very poor, and in want of common necessaries, begged a razor-grinder, whom he saw in the street, to endeavour to find him a shelter for the night; acknowledging, at the same time, that he had no money to pay for a bed. The poor grinder, very good-naturedly, offered him half his own, and the next day endeavoured, by every means in his power, to procure employment for the stranger, but in vain. Not easily discouraged, however, he continued his enquiries; and in the mean time paid his expences, and tried to encourage and console him.

“The painter was taken ill: his disorder increased, and became alarming. The razor-grinder rose earlier, and worked later than usual, that he might be able to provide for the wants of the sick young man, who had written to his family, and hoped in due time to receive some assistance.

“The grinder attended him, and watched over him with the utmost care, the whole time of his illness, which was very tedious, and required great attention.

“Shortly after his recovery, the painter received a considerable sum of money from his friends, and ran impatiently to meet his benefactor, as he was returning from his work, in order to divide it with him.

“ ‘No Sir,’ answered the generous man, ‘do not offer it to me; you have contracted a debt, which you must pay to the first unfortunate person you meet with. I owed what little kindness I have had it in my power to show you, to another. I have paid my debt. Do not forget, when you have an opportunity, to do the same.’”

Mr. Woodford, at my request, gave me leave to take home his translation, and I have transcribed it, for the amusement of my young friends.

No. 16.

BUSINESS in which I am deeply interested, (being nothing less than the prospect of an addition to my income,) obliging me, very unexpectedly, to be absent for some time, I am under the necessity of requesting my correspondents to suspend their communications until my return. This sweet village, and my comfortable home, I should quit with more regret, notwithstanding the agreeable reason I have given for it, if the recollection of the power it will probably afford me, of being serviceable to my poorer neighbours, did not console me for an

absence, which I am predetermined to make as short as possible. I want nothing for myself: my present income supplies every necessary, and luxuries I never had any taste for; so that I have enjoyed by anticipation, ever since I received my cousin Polinski's letter, the delight of being able to comfort and assist many worthy, industrious families labouring under distress, which my present circumstances will not allow me to relieve.

I leave the good curate, with his two amiable daughters, well and happy; Dame Andrews, with her son and daughter, little Ben and his cousin the orphan boy, in a prosperous way; and all my friends in the neighbourhood wishing for my speedy return. No one can desire it more than myself; and I shall look upon it as the happiest day of my life, when I can announce, by means of my printer, that I am once more seated in my little parlour at ****.

THE END.

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