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No. 22.

READING FOR

# WINTER EVENINGS;

A SELECTION OF

AMUSING AND INSTRUCTIVE  
STORIES.



GLASGOW:  
PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

1850.

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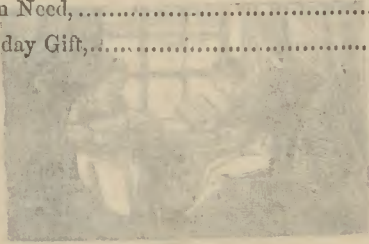
HEADING FOR

# WINTER EVENINGS;

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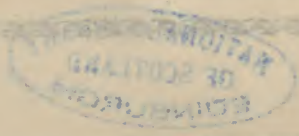


DEAR GOW

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## READING FOR WINTER EVENINGS.

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### THE HISTORY AND ADVENTURES OF A CAT.

GRIMALKIN, Mrs. Petlove's favourite cat, died some days ago of shortness of breath, proceeding partly from old age, and partly from fat. As she felt her end approaching, she called her children to her, and spoke as follows:—

“Before I leave this world, I shall relate to you the principal events of my life, as the variety of scenes I have gone through may afford you some instruction for avoiding those dangers to which our species are particularly exposed.

“I was born at a farm-house in a village some miles hence; and almost as soon as I came into the world, I was very near leaving it again. My mother brought five of us at a litter; and as the people of the house only kept cats to be useful, and were already sufficiently stocked, we were immediately doomed to be drowned; and accordingly a boy was ordered to take us all, and throw us into the horse-pond. This he did, with the pleasure boys often take in acts of cruelty, and we were presently set a-swimming. While we were struggling for life, a little girl came running to the pond-side, and begged that she might save one of us, and bring it up for her own. After some dispute, her request was granted; and the boy, reaching out his arm, took hold of me, who was luckily nearest him, and brought me out. I was laid on the grass, and it was some time before I recovered. The girl then restored me to my mother, who was overjoyed to get again one of her little ones; and, for fear of another mischance, she took me in her mouth to a dark hole, where she kept me till I could see, and was able to run by her side. As soon as I came to light again, my little mistress took possession of me, and tended me very carefully. Her fondness, indeed, was sometimes troublesome; as she pinched my sides with carrying me, and once or twice hurt me a good deal by letting me fall. Soon, however, I became strong and active, and played and gamboled all day long, to the great delight of my mistress and her companions.

"... the nose a strange dog, who had been <sup>A man</sup> taught to worry all the cats that came in his way. My mother <sup>sighs</sup> away at his entrance; but I thinking that I was able to protect myself, stayed on the floor, growling, and setting up my back by way of defence. The dog instantly ran at me; and, before I could get my claws ready, seized me with his mouth, and began to gripe and shake me most terribly. I screamed out, and, by good luck, my mistress was within bearing. She ran to us, but was not able to disengage me: however, a servant, seeing her distress, took a stick, and gave the dog such a bang on the back, that he was forced to let me go. He had used me so roughly, that I was not able to stand for some time; but, by care, and a good constitution, I recovered.

"I was now running after every body's heels, by which means I got one day locked up in the dairy. I was not sorry for this accident, thinking to feast upon the cream and other good things. But, having climbed up a shelf to get at a bowl of cream, I unluckily fell backwards into a large vessel of buttermilk, where I should probably have been drowned, had not the maid heard the noise, and come to see what was the matter. She took me out, scolding bitterly; and after undergoing a severe discipline at the pump to clean me, I was dismissed with a good whipping. I took care not to follow her into the dairy again.

"After a while, I began to get into the yard, and my mother took me into the barn upon a mousing expedition. We sat by a hole, and presently out came a mouse with a brood of young ones. My mother darted among them, and first demolished the old one, and then pursued the little ones, who ran about squeaking in dreadful perplexity. I now thought it was time for me to do something; and accordingly ran after a straggler, and soon overtook it. Oh, how proud was I, as I stood over my trembling captive, and patted him with my paws! My pride, however, soon met with a check; for seeing one day a large rat, I courageously flew at him; but, instead of turning tail, he gave me such a bite on the nose, that I ran away to my mother, mewling piteously, with my face all bloody and swelled. For some time, I did not meddle with rats again; but at length, growing stronger, and more skilful, I feared neither rats nor any other vermin, and acquired the reputation of an excellent hunter.

"I had some other escapes about this time. Once I happened to meet with some poisoned food laid for the rats; and, eating it, I was thrown into a disorder that was very near killing me. At another time, I chanced to set my foot in a

rat-trap, and received so many deep wounds from its teeth, that, though I was loosened as gently as possible by the people who heard me cry, I was rendered lame for some weeks after.

“Time went on, and I arrived at my full growth; and, forming an acquaintance with a he-cat about my age, after a decent resistance by scolding, biting, and scratching, we made a match of it. I became a mother in due time; and had the mortification of seeing several broods of my kittens disposed of in the same manner as my brothers and sisters had been.

“I shall mention two or three more adventures, in the order I remember them.—I was once prowling for birds along a hedge, at some distance from home, when the Squire’s greyhounds came that way a-coursing. As soon as they spied me, they set off at full speed; and, running much faster than I could do, were just at my tail, when I reached a tree, and saved myself by climbing up it.—But a greater danger befel me, on meeting with a parcel of boys returning from school. They surrounded me before I was aware, and obliged me to take refuge in a tree. But I soon found that a poor defence against such enemies; for they assembled about it, and threw stones on all sides, so that I could not avoid receiving many hard blows, one of which brought me senseless to the ground. The biggest boy now seized me, and proposed to the rest making what he called rare sport with me. This sport was, to tie me to a board, and, launching me on a pond, to set some water-dogs at me, while I was to defend myself by biting their noses, and scratching their eyes. Already was I bound, and just ready to be set a-sailing, when the school-master, taking a walk that way, and seeing the bustle, came up, and obliged the boys to set me at liberty, severely reprimanding them for their cruel intentions.

“The next remarkable incident of my life, was the occasion of my removal from the country. My mistress’s brother had a tame linnet, of which he was very fond: for it would come and light on his shoulder, when he called it, and feed out of his hand; and it sung well besides. This bird was usually either in a cage, or upon a high perch. But, one unlucky day, when he and I were alone in the room together, he came down on the table to pick up crumbs: I spied him; and, not being able to resist the temptation, I sprung at him, and, catching him in my claws, soon began to devour him. I had almost finished, when his master came into the room; and, seeing me with the remains of poor linnet in my mouth, he ran to me in the greatest fury, and after chasing me several

times round the room, at length caught me. He was proceeding instantly to hang me, when his sister, by many entreaties and tears, persuaded him—after a good whipping—to forgive me, upon the promise that I should be sent away. Accordingly, the next market-day I was despatched in the cart to a relation of theirs in town, who wanted a good cat, as the house was overrun with mice.

“In the service of this family I continued a good while, performing my duty as a mouser, extremely well. I soon became acquainted with all the particulars of a town life; and distinguished myself by my activity in climbing up walls and houses, and jumping from roof to roof, either in pursuit of prey, or upon gossiping parties with my companions. Once, however, I had like to have suffered for my venturing; for, having made a great jump from one house to another, I lighted upon a loose tile, which giving way with me, I fell from a vast height into the street; and should certainly have been killed, had I not had the luck to light in a dung-cart, whence I escaped with no other injury than being half stifled with filth.

“Notwithstanding the danger I had run from killing the linnnet, I am sorry to confess that I was again guilty of a similar offence. I contrived, one night, to leap down from a roof upon the board of some pigeon-holes, which led to a garret inhabited by those birds. I entered; and, finding them asleep, made sad havoc among all that were within my reach—killing and sucking the blood of about a dozen. I was near paying dearly for this, too; for, on attempting to return, I found it was impossible for me to leap up again to the place whence I had descended: so that, after several dangerous trials, I was obliged to wait trembling till the owner came up in the morning to feed his pigeons. I rushed out between his legs, as soon as the door was opened, and had the good fortune to get safe down stairs, and make my escape through a window unknown. Let my double danger be a warning to you, my children, to control your appetites, and on no account to do harm to those creatures which, like ourselves, are under the protection of man.

“Well—but my breath begins to fail me, and I must hasten to a conclusion. I still lived in the same family, when our present kind mistress, Mrs. Petlove, having lost a favourite tabby, advertised a very handsome price for another that should as nearly as possible resemble her dead darling. My owners, tempted by the offer, took me for the good lady’s inspection; and I had the honour of being preferred to a multitude of rivals. I was immediately settled in the comfortable

mansion we now inhabit, and had many favours and indulgences bestowed upon me, such as I had never before experienced. Among these, I reckon one of the principal—that of being allowed to rear all my children, and to see them grow up in peace and plenty. My adventures here have been few; for, after the monkey had spitefully bit off the last joint of my tail,—for which I had the satisfaction to see him soundly whipped,—I kept beyond the length of his chain: and neither the parrot nor lap-dog ever dared to molest me. One of the greatest afflictions I have felt here was, the stifling of a whole litter of my kittens, by a fat old lady, a friend of my mistress's, who sat down on the chair where they lay, and never perceived the mischief she was doing till she rose, though I pulled her clothes, and used all the means in my power to show my uneasiness. This misfortune my mistress took to heart almost as much as myself; and the lady has never since entered our doors. Indeed, both I and mine have ever been treated here with the utmost kindness—perhaps, with too much; for, to the pampering me with delicacies, together with Mrs. Abigail's frequent washings, I attribute this asthma, which is now putting an end to my life rather sooner than its natural period. But I know all was meant well; and, with my last breath, I charge you all to show your gratitude to our worthy mistress, by every return in your power.

“And now, my dear children, farewell!”

Having said this, Grimalkin became speechless, and presently departed this life, to the great grief of all the family.

## PERSEVERANCE AGAINST FORTUNE.

THEODORE was a boy of lively parts and engaging manners; but he had the failing of being extremely impatient in his temper, and inclined to extremes. He was ardent in all his pursuits, but could bear no disappointment; and if the least thing went wrong, he threw up what he was about in a pet, and could not be prevailed upon to resume it. His father, Mr. Carleton, had given him a bed in the garden, which he had cultivated with great delight. The borders were set with double daisies of different colours, next to which was a row of auriculas and polyanthus. Beyond were stocks and other taller flowers and shrubs; and a beautiful damask rose graced the centre. This rose was just budding, and Theodore watched its daily progress with great interest. One unfortunate day, the door of the garden being left open, a

drove of pigs entered, and began to riot on the herbs and flowers. An alarm being sounded, Theodore and the servant boy rushed upon them, smacking their whips. The whole herd, in fright, took their course across Theodore's flower-bed, on which some of them had before been grazing. Stocks, daisies, and auriculas, were all trampled down or torn up; and what was worst of all, a large old sow ran directly over the beautiful rose-tree, and broke off its stem level with the ground. When Theodore came up, and beheld all the mischief, and especially his favourite rose strewed on the soil, rage and grief choked his utterance. After standing a while the picture of despair, he snatched up a spade that stood near, and with furious haste dug over the whole bed, and whelmed all the relics of his flowers deep under the soil. This exertion being ended, he burst into tears, and silently left the garden.

His father, who had beheld the scene at a distance, though somewhat diverted at the boy's childish violence, yet began seriously to reflect on the future consequences of such a temper, if suffered to grow up without restraint. He said nothing to him at the time, but in the afternoon he took him a walk into a neighbouring parish. There was a large wild common, and, at the skirts of it, a neat farm-house, with fields lying round it, all well fenced, and cultivated in the best manner. The air was sweetened with the bean-flower and clover. An orchard of fine young fruit lay behind the house; and before it a little garden, gay with all the flowers of the season. A stand of bee-hives was on the southern side, sheltered by a thick hedge of honeysuckle and sweet brier. The farm-yard was stocked with pigs and poultry. A herd of cows with full udders was just coming home to be milked. Every thing wore the aspect of plenty and good management. The charms of the scene struck Theodore very forcibly, and he expressed his pleasure in the warmest terms. "This place," said his father, "belongs to a man who is the greatest example I know of patient fortitude bearing up against misfortune; and all that you see is the reward of his own perseverance. I am a little acquainted with him; and we will go in and beg a draught of milk, and try if we can prevail upon him to tell us his story." Theodore willingly accompanied his father. They were received by the farmer with cordial frankness. After they were seated, "Mr. Hardman," says Mr. Carleton, "I have often heard of part of your adventures, but never had a regular account of the whole. If you will favour me and my little boy with the story of them, we shall think ourselves much obliged to you."—"Lack a-day! Sir," said he, "there's little in them worth telling of, as far as I



know. I have had my ups and downs in the world, to be sure; but so have many men besides. However, if you wish to hear about them, they are at your service; and I can't say but it gives me pleasure sometimes to talk over old matters, and think how much better things have turned out than might have been expected."—"Now I am of opinion," said Mr. C., "that from your spirit and perseverance, a good conclusion might always have been expected."—"You are pleased to compliment, sir," replied the farmer; "but I will begin without more words.

"You may perhaps have heard that my father was a man of good estate. He thought of nothing, poor man! but how to spend it; and he had the uncommon luck to spend it twice over. For when he was obliged to sell it the first time, it was bought in by a relation, who left it him again by his will. But my poor father was not a man to take warning. He fell to living as he had done before, and just made his estate and his life hold out together. He died at the age of five and forty, and left his family beggars. I believe he would not have taken to drinking, as he did, had it not been for his impatient temper, which made him fret and vex himself for every trifle, and then be bad nothing for it but to drown his care in liquor.

"It was my lot to be taken by my mother's brother, who was master of a merchant-ship. I served him as an apprentice seven years, and underwent a good deal of the usual hardship of a sailor's life. He had just made me his mate in a voyage up the Mediterranean, when we had the misfortune to be wrecked on the coast of Morocco. The ship struck at some distance from shore, and we lay a long stormy night with the waves dashing over us, expecting every moment to perish. My uncle and several of the crew died of fatigue and want; and, by morning, but four of us were left alive. My companions were so disheartened, that they thought of nothing but submitting to their fate. For my part, I thought life still worth struggling for; and, the weather having become calmer, I persuaded them to join me in making a kind of raft, by the help of which, with much toil and danger, we reached the land. Here we were seized by the barbarous inhabitants, and carried up the country for slaves to the emperor. We were employed about some public buildings, made to work very hard with the whip at our backs, and allowed nothing but water and a kind of pulse. I have heard persons talk as if there was little in being a slave but the name; but they who have been slaves themselves, I am sure, will never make light of slavery in others. A ransom was set on our heads, but so

high, that it seem'd impossible for poor friendless creatures like us ever to pay it. The thought of perpetual servitude, together with the hard treatment we met with, quite overcame my poor companions. They drooped, and died one after another. I still thought it not impossible to mend my condition, and perhaps to recover my freedom. We worked about twelve hours in the day, and had one holiday in the week. I employed my leisure time in learning to make mats and flag-baskets, in which I soon became so expert, as to have a good many for sale, and thereby got a little money to purchase better food, and several small conveniences. We were afterwards set to work in the emperor's gardens; and here I showed so much good-will and attention, that I got into favour with the overseer. He had a large garden of his own; and he made interest for me to be suffered to work for him alone, on the condition of paying a man to do my duty. I soon became so useful to him, that he treated me more like a hired servant than a slave, and gave me regular wages. I learned the language of the country, and might have passed my time comfortably enough, could I have accommodated myself to their manners and religion, and forgot my native land. I saved all I could, in order to purchase my freedom; but the ransom was so high, that I had little prospect of being able to do it for some years to come. A circumstance, however, happened, which brought it about at once. Some villains, one night, laid a plot to murder my master, and plunder his house. I slept in a little shed in the garden where the tools lay; and being awakened by a noise, I saw four men break through the fence, and walk up an alley towards the house. I crept out with a spade in my hand, and silently followed them. They made a hole with instruments in the house-wall, big enough for a man to enter at. Two of them had got in; and the third was beginning to enter when I rushed forward, and with the blow of my spade clove the skull of one of the robbers, and gave the other such a stroke on the shoulder as disabled him. I then made a loud outcry to alarm the family. My master and his son, who lay in the house, got up, and having let me in, we secured the two others, after a sharp conflict, in which I received a severe wound with a dagger. My master, who looked upon me as his preserver, had all possible care taken of me; and as soon as I was cured, made me a present of my liberty. He would fain have kept me with him; but my mind was so much bent on returning to my native country, that I immediately set out to the nearest seaport, and took my passage in a vessel going to Gibraltar.

“From this place I returned in the first ship for England. As soon as we arrived in the Downs, and I was rejoicing at the sight of the white cliffs, a man-of-war's boat came on board, and pressed into the king's service all of us who were seamen. I could not but think it hard that this should be my welcome at home after a long slavery; but there was no remedy. I resolved to do my duty in my station, and leave the rest to Providence. I was abroad during the remainder of the war, and saw many a stout fellow sink under disease and despondence. My knowledge of seamanship got me promoted to the post of a petty officer; and at the peace I was paid off, and received a pretty sum for wages and prize-money. With this I set off for London. I had experienced too much distress from want to be inclined to squander away my money; so I put it into a banker's hands, and began to look out for some new way of life.

“Unfortunately, there were some things of which I had no more experience than a child, and the tricks of London were among these. An advertisement, offering extraordinary advantages to a partner in a commercial concern, who could bring a small capital, tempted me to make inquiry about the matter; and I was soon cajoled, by a plausible artful fellow, to venture my whole stock in it. The business was a manufacture, about which I knew nothing at all; but, as I was not afraid of my labour, I set about working as they directed me, with great diligence, and thought all was going on prosperously. One morning, on coming to the office, I found my partners decamped; and the same day I was arrested for a considerable sum due by the partnership. It was in vain for me to think of getting bail; so I was obliged to go to prison. Here I should have been half starved, but for my Moorish trade of mat-making, by the help of which I bettered my condition for some months; when the creditors, finding that nothing could be got out of me, suffered me to be set at liberty.

“I was now in the wide world without a farthing or a friend; but I thanked God, that I had health and limbs left. I did not choose to trust to the sea again, but preferred my other new trade of gardening; so I applied to a nurseryman near town, and was received as a day-labourer. I set myself cheerfully to work, taking care to be in the grounds the first man in the morning, and the last at night. I acquainted my employer with all the practices I had observed in Morocco; and got him, in return, to instruct me in his own. In time, I came to be considered as a skilful workman, and was advanced to higher wages. My affairs were in a flourishing state. I

was well fed and comfortably lodged, and saved money into the bargain. About this time I fell in company with a young woman at service, very notable and well behaved, who seemed well qualified for a wife to a working man. I ventured to make an offer to her, which proved not disagreeable; and, after we had calculated a little how we were to live, we married. I took a cottage, with an acre or two of land to it; and my wife's savings furnished our house, and bought a cow. All my leisure time I spent upon my piece of ground, which I made very productive; and the profits of my cow, with my wages, supported us very well. No mortal, I think, could be happier than I was after a hard day's work, by my own fire-side, with my wife beside me, and our little infant on my knee.

"After this way of life had lasted two or three years, a gentleman who had dealt largely with my master for young plants, asked if he could recommend an honest industrious man for a tenant upon some land that he had lately taken in from the sea. My master, willing to do me a kindness, mentioned me. I was tempted by the proposal; and, going down to view the premises, I took a farm upon a lease at a low rent, and removed my family and goods to it, one hundred and fifty miles from London. There was ground enough for the money; but much was left to be done for it in draining, manuring, and fencing. Then it required more stock than I was able to furnish; so, though unwilling, I was obliged to borrow some money of my landlord, who let me have it at a moderate interest. I began with a good heart, and worked late and early to put things into the best condition. My first misfortune was, that the place proved unhealthy to us. I fell into a lingering ague, which pulled me down much, and hindered my business. My wife got a slow fever, and so did our eldest child (we had now two, and another coming). The poor child died; and, what with grief and illness, my wife had much ado to recover. Then the rot got among my sheep, and carried off the best part of my stock. I bore up against distress as well as I could; and, by the kindness of my landlord, was enabled to bring things tolerably about again. We regained our health, and began to be seasoned to the climate. As we were cheering ourselves with the prospect of better times, a dreadful storm arose—it was one night in February—I shall never forget it—and drove the spring-tide with such fury against our sea-banks, that they gave way. The water rushed in with such force, that all was presently a sea. Two hours before day-light, I was awakened by the noise of the waves dashing against our house, and bursting in at the door. My

wife had lain in about a month; and she and I, and the two children, slept on a ground floor. We had just time to carry the children up stairs, before all was afloat in the room. When day appeared, we could see nothing from the windows but water. All the out-houses, ricks, and utensils were swept away; and all the cattle and sheep drowned. The sea kept rising, and the force of the current bore so hard against our house, that we thought every moment it must fall. We clasped our babies to our breasts, and expected nothing but present death. At length we spied a boat coming to us. With a good deal of difficulty, it got under our window, and took us in, with a servant maid and boy. A few clothes was all the property we saved; and we had not left the house half an hour, before it fell, and in a minute nothing was to be seen of it. Not only the farm-house, but the farm itself, was gone.

“I was now again a ruined man; and, what was worse, I had three partners in my ruin. My wife and I looked at one another, and then at our little ones, and wept. Neither of us had a word of comfort to say. At last, thought I, this country is not Morocco, however. Here are good souls that will pity our case, and perhaps relieve us. Then I have a character, and a pair of hands. Things are bad, but they might have been worse. I took my wife by the hand, and knelt down. She did the same. I thanked God for his mercy in saving our lives, and prayed that he would continue to protect us. We rose up with lightened hearts, and were able to talk calmly about our condition. It was my desire to return to my former master, the nurseryman; but how to convey my family so far without money was the difficulty. Indeed, I was much worse than nothing; for I owed a good deal to my landlord. He came down, upon the news of the misfortune; and, though his own losses were heavy, he not only forgave me the debt, and released me from all obligations, but made me a small present. Some charitable neighbours did the like. But I was most of all affected by the kindness of our late maid-servant, who insisted upon our accepting of a crown, which she had saved out of her wages. Poor soul! we had always treated her like one of ourselves, and she felt for us like one.

“As soon as we had got some necessaries, and the weather was tolerable, we set out on our long march. My wife carried <sup>her</sup> infant in her arms. I took the bigger child on my back, <sup>an</sup> a bundle of clothes in my hand. We could walk but a <sup>few</sup> miles a day; but we, now and then, got a lift in an empty <sup>wagon</sup> or cart, which was a great help to us. One day we

met with a farmer returning with his team from market, who let us ride, and entered into conversation with me. I told him of my adventures, by which he seemed much interested; and, learning that I was skilled in managing trees, he acquainted me that a nobleman in his neighbourhood was making great plantations, and would very likely be glad to engage me: and he offered to carry us to the place. As all I was seeking was a living by my labour, I thought the sooner I got it the better; so I thankfully accepted his offer. He took us to the nobleman's steward, and made known our case. The steward wrote to my old master for a character; and receiving a favourable one, he hired me as a principal manager of a new plantation, and settled me and my family in a snug cottage near it. He advanced us somewhat for a little furniture and present subsistence; and we had once more a *home*. O Sir! how many blessings are contained in that word, to those who have known the want of it!

"I entered upon my new employment with as much satisfaction, as if I was taking possession of an estate. My wife had enough to do in taking care of the house and children; so it lay with me to provide for all, and I may say that I was not idle. Besides my weekly pay from the steward, I contrived to make a little money, at leisure times, by pruning and dressing gentlemen's fruit-trees. I was allowed a piece of waste ground behind the house for a garden; and I spent a good deal of labour in bringing it into order. My old master sent me down, for a present, some choice young trees and flower roots, which I planted; and they thrived wonderfully. Things went on almost as well as I could desire. The situation being dry and healthy, my wife recovered her lost bloom, and the children sprung up like my plants. I began to hope that I was almost out of the reach of further misfortune; but it was not so ordered.

"I had been three years in this situation, and increased my family with another child, when my Lord died. He was succeeded by a very dissipated young man, deep in debt, who presently put a stop to the planting and improving of the estate, and sent orders to turn off all the workmen. This was a great blow to me; however, I still hoped to be allowed to keep my little house and garden, and I thought I could then maintain myself as a nurseryman and gardener. But a new steward was sent down, with directions to rack the tenants to the utmost. He asked me as much rent for the place as if I had found the garden ready made to my hands; and when I told him it was impossible for me to pay it, he gave notice to quit immediately. He would neither suffer me to

take away my trees and plants, nor allow me any thing for them. His view, I found, was to put in a favourite of his own, and set him up at my expense. I remonstrated against this cruel injustice, but could obtain nothing but hard words. As I saw it would be the ruin of me to be turned out in that manner, I determined, rather hastily, to go up to London, and plead my cause with my new Lord. I took a sorrowful leave of my family, and walking to the next market-town, I got a place on the outside of the stage-coach. When we were within thirty or forty miles of London, the coachman overturned the carriage, and I pitched directly on my head, and was taken up senseless. Nobody knew any thing about me; so I was carried to the next village, where the overseer had me taken to the parish workhouse. Here I lay a fortnight, much neglected, before I came to my senses. As soon as I became sensible of my condition, I was almost distracted in thinking of the distress my poor wife, who was near lying in, must be under on my account, not hearing any thing of me. I lay another fortnight before I was fit to travel; for, besides the hurt on my head, I had a broken collar-bone, and several bruises. My money had somehow all got out of my pocket, and I had no other means of getting away than by being passed to my own parish. I returned in sad plight indeed, and found my wife very ill in bed. My children were crying about her, and almost starving. We should now have been quite lost, had I not raised a little money by selling our furniture; for I was yet unable to work. As soon as my wife was somewhat recovered, we were forced to quit our house. I cried like a child in leaving my blooming garden and flourishing plantations, and was almost tempted to demolish them, rather than another should unjustly reap the fruit of my labours. But I checked myself, and I am glad I did. We took lodgings in a neighbouring village, and I went round among the gentlemen of the country to see if I could get a little employment. In the mean time the former steward came down to settle accounts with his successor, and was much concerned to find me in such a situation. He was a very able and honest man, and had been engaged by another nobleman to superintend a large improvable estate in a distant part of the kingdom. He told me, if I would try my fortune with him once more, he would endeavour to procure me a new settlement. I had nothing to lose, and therefore was willing enough to run any hazard; but I was destitute of means to convey my family to such a distance. My good friend, who was much provoked at the injustice of the new steward, said so much to him, that he brought him to make

me an allowance for my garden; and with that I was enabled to make another removal. It was to the place I now inhabit.

“When I came here, Sir, all this farm was a naked common, like that you crossed in coming. My Lord got an enclosure-bill for his part of it; and the steward divided it into different farms, and let it on improving leases to several tenants. A dreary spot, to be sure, it looked at first, enough to sink a man’s heart to sit down upon it! I had a little unfinished cottage given me to live in; and, as I had nothing to stock a farm, I was for some years employed as head labourer and planter about the new enelosnres. By very hard working and saving, together with a little help, I was at length enabled to take a small part of the ground I now occupy. I had various discouragements, from bad seasons and other accidents. One year the distemper carried off four out of seven cows that I kept; another year I lost two of my best horses. A high wind once almost entirely destroyed an orchard I had just planted, and blew down my biggest barn. But I was too much used to misfortune to be easily disheartened; and my way always was to set about repairing them in the best manner I could, and leave the rest to heaven. This method seems to have answered at last. I have now gone on many years in a course of continued prosperity, adding field to field, increasing my stock, and bringing up a numerous family with credit. My dear wife, who was my faithful partner through so much distress, continues to share my prosperous state; and few couples in the kingdom, I believe, have more cause to be thankful for their lot. This, Sir, is my history. You see it contains nothing very extraordinary; but if it impresses on the mind of this young gentleman the maxim, that patience and perseverance will scarcely fail of a good issue in the end, the time you have spent listening to it will not entirely be lost.”

Mr. Carleton thanked the good farmer very heartily for the amusement and instruction he had afforded them, and took leave with many expressions of regard. Theodore and he walked home, talking, by the way, of what they had heard.

Next morning Mr. C., looking out of the window, saw Theodore hard at work in his garden. He was carefully disenterring his buried flowers, trimming and cleaning them, and planting them anew. He had got the gardener to cut a slip of the broken rose-tree, and set it in the middle to give it a chance for growing. By noon every thing was laid smooth and neat, and the bed was well filled. All its splendour, indeed, was gone for the present; but it seemed in a hopeful way to revive



again. Theodore looked with pleasure over his work; but his father felt more pleasure in witnessing the first-fruits of farmer Hardman's story.

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### A FRIEND IN NEED.

GEORGE CORNISH, a native of London, was brought up to the sea. After making several voyages to the East Indies in the capacity of mate, he obtained the command of a ship in the country trade there, and passed many years of his life in sailing from one port to another of the Company's different settlements, and residing at intervals on shore with the superintendants of their commercial concerns. Having by these means raised a moderate fortune, and being now beyond the meridian of life, he felt a strong desire of returning to his native country, and seeing his family and friends, concerning whom he had received no tidings for a long time. He realized his property, settled his affairs, and, taking his passage for England, arrived in the Downs, after an absence of sixteen years.

He immediately repaired to London, and went to the house of an only brother whom he had left possessed of a genteel place in a public office. He found that his brother was dead, and the family broken up; and he was directed to the house of one of his nieces, who was married and settled at a small distance from town. On making himself known, he was received with great respect and affection by the married niece, and a single sister who resided with her; to which good reception, the idea of his bringing back with him a large fortune did not a little contribute. They pressed him, in the most urgent manner, to take up his abode there, and omitted nothing that could testify their dutiful regard to so near a relation. On his part, he was sincerely glad to see them, and presented them with some valuable Indian commodities which he had brought with him. They soon fell into conversation concerning the family events that had taken place during his long absence. Mutual condolences passed on the death of the father: the mother had been dead long before. The captain, in the warmth of his heart, declared his intention of befriending the survivors of the family, and his wishes of seeing the second sister as comfortably settled in the world as the first seemed to be.

"But," said he, "are you two the only ones left? What is become of my little smiling play-fellow, Amelia? I re-

member her as if it were yesterday, coming behind my chair, and giving me a sly pull, and then running away that I might follow her for a kiss. I should be sorry if any thing had happened to her.”—“Alas! Sir,” said the eldest niece, “she has been the cause of an infinite deal of trouble to her friends. She was always a giddy girl, and her misconduct has proved her ruin. It would be happy if we could all forget her.”—“What, then!” said the uncle, “has she dishonoured herself? Poor creature!”—“I cannot say,” replied the niece, “that she has done so in the worst sense of the word; but she has disgraced herself and family by a hasty foolish match with one beneath her; and it has ended, as might be expected, in poverty and wretchedness.”—“I am glad,” returned the captain, “that it is no worse; for though I much disapprove of improper matches, yet young girls may fall into still greater evils; and where there is no crime, there can be no irreparable disgrace. But who was the man, and what did my brother say to it?”—“Why, Sir, I cannot say but it was partly my father’s own fault; for he took a sort of liking to the young man, who was a drawing-master employed in the family, and would not forbid him the house after we had informed him of the danger of an attachment between Amelia and him. So, when it was too late, he fell into a violent passion about it, which had no other effect than to drive the girl directly into her lover’s arms. They married, and soon fell into difficulties. My father, of course, would do nothing for them; and when he died, he not only disinherited her, but made us promise no longer to look upon her as a sister.”—“And you *did* make that promise?” said the captain, in a tone of surprise and displeasure.—“We could not disobey our parent,” replied the other sister; “but we have several times sent her relief in her necessities, though it was improper for us to see her.”—“And pray what is become of her at last; where is she now?”—“Really, she and her husband have shifted their lodgings so often, that it is some time since we heard any thing about them.”—“Some time! how long?”—“Perhaps half a-year or more.”—“Poor out-cast!” cried the captain, in a sort of half-muttered voice; “I have made no promise, however, to renounce thee. Be pleased, madam,” he continued, addressing himself gravely to the married niece, “to favour me with the *last* direction you had to this unfortunate sister.” She blushed, and looked confused; and at length, after a good deal of searching, presented it to her uncle. “But, my dear Sir,” said she, “you will not think of leaving us to-night. My servant shall make all the inquiries you choose, and save you the trouble;

and to-morrow you can ride to town, and do as you think proper."—"My good niece," said the captain, "I am but an indifferent sleeper; and I am afraid things would run in my head, and keep me awake. Besides, I am naturally impatient, and love to do my business myself. You will excuse me." So saying, he took up his hat, and without much ceremony went out of the house, and took the road to town on foot, leaving his two nieces somewhat disconcerted.

When he arrived, he went without delay to the place mentioned, which was a by-street near Soho. The people who kept the lodgings informed him that the person he inquired after had left them several months, and they did not know what was become of him. This threw the captain into great perplexity; but, while he was considering what he should do next, the woman of the house recollected that Mr. Bland (that was the drawing-master's name) had been employed at a certain school, where information about him might possibly be obtained. Captain Cornish hastened away to the place, and was informed by the master of the school that such a man had, indeed, been engaged there, but had ceased to attend for some time past. "He was a very well-behaved, industrious young man," added the master, "but in distressed circumstances, which prevented him from making that genteel appearance which we expect in all who attend our school; so I was obliged to dismiss him. It was a great force upon my feelings, I assure you, Sir, to do so; but you know the thing could not be helped." The captain eyed him with indignant contempt, and said, "I suppose then, Sir, your feelings never suffered you to inquire where this poor creature lodged, or what became of him afterwards?"—"As to that," replied the master, "every man knows his own business best, and my time is fully taken up with my own concerns; but I believe I have a note of the lodgings he then occupied—here it is." The captain took it, and, turning on his heel, withdrew in silence. He posted away to the place, but there, too, had the mortification of learning that he was too late. The people, however, told him that they believed he might find the family he was seeking in a neighbouring alley, at a lodging up three pair of stairs. The captain's heart sunk within him; however, taking a boy as a guide, he proceeded immediately to the spot. On going up the narrow creaking staircase, he met a man coming down with a bed on his shoulders. At the top of the landing stood another, with a bundle of blankets and sheets. A woman with a child in her arms was expostulating with him, and he heard her exclaim, "Cruel! not to leave me *one* bed for myself and my poor children!"—"Stop!"

said the captain to the man, "set down those things." The man hesitated. The captain renewed his command in a peremptory tone, and then advanced towards the woman. They looked earnestly at each other. Through her pale and emaciated features, he saw something of his little smiler; and at length, in a faint voice, he addressed her, "Are you Amelia Cornish?"—"That *was* my name," she replied.—"I am your uncle," he cried, clasping her in his arms, and sobbing as if his heart would break. "My uncle!" said she, and fainted. He was just able to set her down on the only remaining chair, and take her child from her. Two other young children came running up, and began to scream with terror. Amelia recovered herself. "Oh, Sir, what a situation you see me in!"—"A situation, indeed!" said he, "poor forsaken creature! but you have *one* friend left!"

He then asked what was become of her husband. She told him, that having fatigued himself with walking every day to a great distance for a little employment, that scarcely afforded them bread, he had fallen ill, and was now in an hospital; and that, after having been obliged to sell most of their little furniture and clothes for present subsistence, their landlord had just seized their only remaining bed for some arrears of rent. The captain immediately discharged the debt; and, causing the bed to be brought up again, dismissed the man. He then entered into a conversation with his niece, about the events that had befallen her. "Alas! Sir," said she, "I am sensible I was greatly to blame in disobeying my father, and leaving his roof as I did; but perhaps something might be alleged in my excuse—at least, years of calamity and distress may be an expiation. As to my husband, however, he has never given me the least cause of complaint—he has ever been kind and good; and what we have suffered has been through misfortune, and not fault. To be sure, when we married, we did not know how a family was to be maintained. His was a poor employment; and sickness and other accidents soon brought us to a state of poverty, from which we could never retrieve ourselves. He, poor man! was never idle when he could help it, and denied himself every indulgence in order to provide for the wants of me and my children. I did my part, too, as well as I was able. But my father's unrelenting severity made me quite heart-broken; and though my sisters, two or three times, gave us a little relief in our pressing necessities,—for nothing else could have made me ask in the manner I did,—yet they would never permit me to see them, and for some time past have entirely abandoned us. I thought Heaven had abandoned

us too. The hour of extremest distress was come; but you have been sent for our comfort."—"And your comfort, please God! I will be," cried the captain with energy: "you are my own dear child, and your little ones shall be mine too. Dry up your tears: better days, I hope, are approaching."

Evening was now coming on, and it was too late to think of changing lodgings. The captain procured a neighbour to go out for some provisions and other necessaries; and then took his leave, with a promise of being with his niece early the next morning. Indeed, as he proposed going to pay a visit to her husband, she was far from wishing to detain him longer. He went directly thence to the hospital; and, having got access to the apothecary, begged to be informed of the real state of his patient Bland. The apothecary told him that he laboured under a slow fever, attended with extreme dejection of spirits; but that there were no signs of urgent danger. "If you will allow me to see him," said the captain, "I believe I shall be able to administer a cordial more effectual, perhaps, than all your medicines." He was shown up to the ward where the poor man lay, and seated himself by his bedside. "Mr. Bland," said he, "I am a stranger to you; but I come to bring you some news of your family." The sick man roused himself, as it were, from a stupor, and fixed his eyes in silence on the captain. He proceeded—"Perhaps you may have heard of an uncle that your wife had in the East Indies—he is come home, and—and—I am he." Upon this, he eagerly stretched out his hand, and taking that of Bland, which was thrust out of the bedclothes to meet it, gave it a cordial shake. The sick man's eyes glistened: he grasped the captain's hand with all his remaining strength, and, drawing it to his mouth, kissed it with fervour. All he could say was, "God bless you!—be kind to poor Amelia!" "I will—I will," cried the captain, "I will be a father to you all—cheer up—keep up your spirits—all will be well!" He then, with a kind look and another shake of the hand, wished him a good night, and left the poor man lightened at once of half his disease.

The captain went home to the coffee-house where he lodged, got a light supper, and went early to bed. After meditating sometime with heartfelt satisfaction on the work of the day, he fell into a sweet sleep, which lasted till day-break. The next morning early, he rose, and sallied forth in search of furnished lodgings. After some inquiry, he met with a commodious set, in a pleasant airy situation, for which he agreed. He then drove to Amelia, and found her and her children neat and clean, and as well dressed as her poor wardrobe

would admit. He embraced them with the utmost affection, and rejoiced Amelia's heart with a favourable account of his husband. He then told them to prepare for a ride with him. The children were overjoyed at the proposal, and they accompanied him down to the coach in high spirits. Amelia scarcely knew what to think or expect. They drove first to a warehouse for ready-made linen; where the captain made Amelia furnish herself with a complete set of every thing necessary for present use for the children and herself, not forgetting some shirts for her husband. Thence they went to a clothes shop, where the little boy was supplied with a jacket and trowsers, a hat, and great coat, and the girl with another great coat and a bonnet. Both were made as happy as happy could be. They were next all furnished with new shoes. In short, they had not proceeded far, before the mother and three children were all in complete new habiliments, decent, but not fine; while the old ones were all tied up in a great bundle, and destined for some family still poorer than they had been.

The captain then drove to the lodgings he had taken, and which he had directed to be put in thorough order. He led Amelia up stairs, who knew not whither she was going. He brought her into a handsome parlour, and seated her in a chair. "This, my dear," said he, "is your house. I hope you will let me, now and then, come and see you in it." Amelia turned pale, and could not speak. At length, a flood of tears came to her relief, and she suddenly threw herself at her uncle's feet, and poured out thanks and blessings in a broken voice. He raised her; and, kindly kissing her and her children, slipped a purse of gold into her hand, and hurried down stairs.

He next went to the hospital, and found Mr. Bland sitting up in bed, and taking some food with apparent pleasure. He sat down by him. "God bless you, Sir!" said Bland: "I see now it is all a reality, and not a dream. Your figure has been hunting me all night; and I have scarcely been able to satisfy myself whether I had really seen and spoken to you, or whether it was a fit of delirium. Yet my spirits have been lightened, and I have now been eating with a relish I have not experienced for many days past. But may I ask how is my poor Amelia, and my little ones?"—"They are well and happy, my good friend," said the captain; "and I hope you will soon be so along with them." The apothecary came up, and felt his patient's pulse. "You are a lucky doctor, indeed, Sir," said he to Captain Cornish: "you have cured the poor man of his fever. His pulse is as calm as my own." The captain consulted him about the safety of removing him;

and the apothecary thought that there would be no hazard in doing it that very day. The captain waited the arrival of the physician, who confirmed the same opinion. A sedan chair was procured; and, full directions being obtained for the future treatment, with the physician's promise to look after him, the captain walked before the chair to the new lodging. On the knock at the door, Amelia looked out of the window; and, seeing the chair, ran down, and met her uncle and husband in the passage. The poor man, not knowing where he was, and gazing wildly around him, was carried up stairs, and placed upon a good bed, while his wife and children assembled round it. A glass of wine, brought by the people of the house, restored him to his recollection; when a most tender scene ensued, which the uncle closed as soon as he could, for fear of too much agitating the yet feeble organs of the sick man.

By Amelia's constant attention, assisted by proper help, Mr. Bland shortly recovered; and the whole family lost their sickly emaciated appearance, and became healthy and happy. The kind uncle was never long absent from them, and was always received with looks of pleasure and gratitude that penetrated his very soul. He obtained for Mr. Bland a good situation in the exercise of his profession, and took Amelia and her children into his special care. As to his other nieces, though he did not entirely break off his connexion with them, but on the contrary showed them occasional marks of the kindness of a relation, yet he could never look upon them with true cordiality. And as they had so well kept their promise to their father of never treating Amelia as a sister, while in her afflicted state, he took care not to tempt them to break it, now that she was in a favoured and prosperous condition.

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### THE BIRTH-DAY GIFT.

THE populous kingdom of Ava, in India beyond the Ganges, was once inherited by a minor prince, who was brought up in the luxurious indolence of an Eastern palace. When he had reached the age of seventeen, which, by the laws of that country, was the period of majority for the crown, all the great men of his court, and the governors of the provinces, according to established custom, laid at his feet presents consisting of the most costly products of art and nature that they had been able to procure. One offered a casket of the most precious jewels of Golconda; another, a curious piece of clock-work, made by an European artist; another, a piece of the

richest silk from the looms of China; another, a bezoar stone, said to be a sovereign antidote against all poisons and infectious diseases; another, a choice piece of the most fragrant rosewood, in a box of ebony inlaid with pearls; another, a golden cruse full of genuine balsam of Meeca; another, a courser of the purest breed of Arabia; and another, a female slave of exquisite beauty. The whole court of the palace was overspread with rarities; and long rows of slaves were continually passing loaded with vessels and utensils of gold and silver, and other articles of high price.

At length, an aged magistrate from a distant province made his appearance. He was simply clad in a long cotton robe, and his hoary beard waved on his breast. He made his obeisance before the young monarch, and, holding forth an embroidered silken bag, he thus addressed him:—

“Deign, great king, to accept the faithful homage and fervent good wishes of thy servant on this important day, and, with them, the small present I hold in my hand. Small, indeed, it is in show; but not so, I trust, in value. Others have offered what may decorate thy person—here is what will impart perpetual grace and lustre to thy features. Others have presented thee with rich perfumes—here is what will make thy name sweet and fragrant to the latest ages. Others have given what may afford pleasure to thine eyes—here is what will nourish a source of never-failing pleasure within thy breast. Others have furnished thee with preservatives against bodily contagion—here is what will preserve thy better parts uncontaminated. Others have heaped round thee the riches of a temporal kingdom—this will secure thee the treasures of an eternal one.”

He said, and drew from the purse a book, containing *the moral Precepts of the sage Zender*, the wisest and most virtuous man the East had ever beheld. “If,” he proceeded, “my gracious sovereign will condescend to make this his constant companion, not an hour can pass in which its perusal may not be a comfort and a blessing. In the arduous duties of thy station, it will prove a faithful guide and counsellor. Amidst the allurements of pleasure and the incitements of passion, it will be an incorruptible monitor, that will never suffer thee to err without warning thee of thy error. It will render thee a blessing to thy people, and blessed in thyself; for what sovereign can be the one without the other?”

He then returned the book to its place, and kneeling gave it into the hands of the king. He received it with respect and benignity; and history affirms, that the use he made of it corresponded with the wishes of the donor.