

CHEAP TRACTS,

*Calculated to promote the Interests of Religion, Virtue, and Humanity.*

No. XV.

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SHORT  
STORIES  
FOR  
Little Folks:  
OR,

*Little Tales,*

CALCULATED

To excite Juvenile Minds to the Love  
and Practice of Virtue.

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*Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when  
he is old he will not Depart from it.*

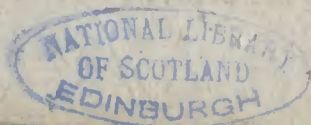
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WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.



# SHORT STORIES,

FOR

YOUNG FOLKS.

*Delightful task! to rear the tender thought  
To teach the young idea how to shoot,  
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,  
To breathe th' enliv'ning spirit, and to fix  
The gen'rous purpose in the glowing breast.*

## *Affection to Parents.*

**A**N amiable youth was lamenting, in terms of the sincerest grief, the death of a most affectionate parent. His companion endeavoured to console him by the reflection, that he had always behaved to the deceased with duty, tenderness and respect. So I thought, replied the youth, whilst my parent was living; but now I recollect with pain and sorrow, many instances of disobedience and neglect, for which, alas! it is too late to make atonement.

## *Tenderness to Mothers.*

**M**ARK that parent hen! said a father to his beloved son. With what an-

xious care does she call together her offspring, and cover them with her expanded wings? The kite is hovering in the air, and disappointed of his prey, may perhaps dart upon the hen herself, and bear her off in his talons!

Does not this sight suggest to you the tenderness and affection of your mother? Her watchful care protected you in the helpless period of infancy, when she nourished you with her milk, taught your limbs to move, and your tongue to lisp its unformed accents. In childhood she has mourned over your little griefs; has rejoiced in your innocent delights; has administered to you the healing balm in sickness; and has instilled into your mind the love of truth, of virtue, and of wisdom. Oh! cherish every sentiment of respect for such a mother. She merits your warmest gratitude, esteem and veneration.

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*Parental Affection.*

**E**ARLY in the morning, the man at the mast head of the Carcase, gave notice, that three bears were making their way very fast over the ice, and that they were directing their course towards the ship. They had without question, been invited by

the scent of the blubber of the sea-horse, killed a few days before, which the men had set on fire, and which was burning on the ice at the time of their approach. They proved to be a she bear and her two cubs; but the cubs were nearly as large as the dam. They ran eagerly to the fire, and drew out from the flames part of the flesh of the sea-horse, that remained unconsumed, and eat it voraciously. The crew from the ship threw great lumps of the flesh of the sea-horse, which they had still left, upon the ice, which the old bear fetched away singly, laid every lump before her cubs as she brought it, and dividing it, gave each a share, reserving but a small portion to herself. As she was fetching away the last piece, they levelled their muskets at the cubs, and shot them both dead; and in her retreat they wounded the dam, but not mortally.

It would have drawn tears of pity from any but unfeeling minds, to have marked the affectionate concern expressed by this poor beast, in the dying moments of her expiring young. Though she was sorely wounded, and could but just crawl to the place where they lay, she carried the lump of flesh she had fetched away, as she had done others before, tore it in pieces, and laid it down before them; and when she saw that they refused to eat, she laid her paws first upon

one, and then upon the other, and endeavoured to raise them up: all this while it was pitiful to hear her moan. When she found she could not stir them, she went off, and when she had got at some distance looked back and moaned; and that not availing her to entice them away, she returned and smelling round them, begun to lick their wounds. She went off a second time as before, and having crawled a few paces, looked again behind her, and for some time stood moaning. But still her cubs not rising to follow her, she returned to them again, and with signs of inexpressible foundness, went round one, and round the other, pawing them, and moaning. Finding at last that they were cold and lifeless, she raised her head towards the ship, and growled a curse upon the murderers, which they returned with a volley of musket balls. She fell between her cubs, and died licking their wounds.

Can you admire the maternal affection of the bear, and not feel in your heart the warmest emotions of gratitude, for the stronger and more permanent tenderness, you have so long experienced from your parents?

*The Folly of crying upon Trifling occasions.*

**A** LITTLE girl, who used to weep bitterly for the most trifling hurt, was one day attacked by a furious dog. Her cries reached the servants of the family; but they paid little attention to what they were so much accustomed to hear. It happened however very fortunately that a countryman passed by, who with great humanity, rescued the child from the devouring teeth of the dog.

*Silence and Reserve reprov'd.*

**S**OPHRON was frequently the companion of Euphronius in his various journeys. He was a youth of observation, but indulged too much a natural reserve of temper. His brothers and sisters complained that he who so often enjoyed amusement himself, should contribute so little to the general entertainment of the family. At first they intended to petition their father to carry him no more abroad; but a good-natured stratagem answered better the purpose of reproof. They agreed that each should pursue, for a few days, a conduct similar to that of Sophron. One visited the magnificent Museum of Mr. Lever at Alkrington; another went to a very diverting Co-

medy ; and a third failed, with a party, upon the Duke of Bridgwater's Canal, and viewed all the wonders of that stupendous undertaking. But when they returned home, the chearful communications of friendship were suppressed ; and the usual eagerness to disclose all which they had seen, was converted into silence and reserve. No social converse enlivened the evening hours, and the sprightliness of youth gave place to mute solemnity. Sophron remarked the change with surprise and solicitude. He felt the loss of that gaiety and unreserved intercourse, which he seldom promoted, but of which he loved to participate. And when the design of his brothers and sisters were explained to him, he candidly acknowledged, and promised to amend his fault.



*The Honour and Advantage of a constant adherence to Truth.*

**P**ETRARCH, a celebrated Italian Poet, who flourished about four hundred years ago, recommended himself to the confidence and affection of Cardinal Colonna, in whose family he resided, by his candour and strict regard to truth. A violent quarrel occurred in the household of this nobleman, which was carried so far that they had

course to arms. The Cardinal wished to know the foundation of this affair; and that he might be able to decide with justice, he assembled all his people, and obliged them to bind themselves by a most solemn oath on the Gospels, to declare the whole truth. Every one, without exception, submitted to this determination; even the Bishop of Luna, brother to the Cardinal, was not excused. Petrarch, in his turn, presenting himself to take the oath, the Cardinal closed the book, and said, "As to you Petrarch, your word is sufficient."

A Story similar to this is related of Zenocrates, an Athenian Philosopher, who lived three hundred years before Christ, and was educated in the school of Plato. The people of Athens entertained so high an opinion of his probity, that one day when he approached the altar to confirm by an oath the truth of what he had asserted, the judges unanimously declared his word to be sufficient evidence.



*Cruelty to Insects.*

**J**ACOBUS indulged himself in the cruel entertainment of torturing and killing flies. He tore off their wings and legs, and then watched with pleasure their impotent



efforts to escape from him. Sometimes he collected a number of them together, and crushed them at once to death; glorying, like many a celebrated hero, in the devastation he committed. His brother remonstrated with him, in vain, on this barbarous conduct. He could not persuade him to believe that flies are capable of pain, and have a right, no less than ourselves, to life, liberty, and enjoyment. The signs of agony, which when tormented, they express by the quick and various contortions of their bodies, he neither understood nor would attend to.

Alexis had a microscope; and he desired Jacobus, one day, to examine a most beautiful and surprising animal. Mark, said he, how it is studded from head to tail with black and silver, and its body all over beset with the most curious bristles! The head contains a pair of lively eyes, encircled with silver hairs; and the trunk consists of two parts, which fold over each other. The whole body is ornamented with plums and decorations, which surpass all the luxuries of dress, in the courts of the greatest princes. Jacobus was pleased and astonished with what he saw, and impatient to know the name and properties of this wonderful animal. It was withdrawn from the magnifier; and when offered to his naked eye, proved to be a poor fly which had been the victim of his wanton cruelty.

*Selfish Sorrow reproved.*

**I**T was a holiday in the month of June, and Alexis had prepared himself to set out, with a party of his companions, upon a little journey of pleasure. But the sky lowered, the clouds gathered, and he remained for some time in anxious suspense about his expedition; which at last was prevented by heavy and continued rain. The disappointment overpowered his fortitude; he burst into tears; lamented the untimely change of weather; and sullenly refused all consolation.

In the evening the clouds were dispersed; the sun shone with unusual brightness; and the face of nature seemed to be renewed in vernal beauty. Euphronius carried Alexis into the fields. The storm of passion in his breast was now stilled; and the serenity of the air, the music of the feathered songsters, the verdure of the meadows, and the sweet perfumes which breathed around, regaled every sense, and filled his mind with peace and joy.

Don't you remark, said Euphronius, the delightful change which has suddenly taken place in the whole creation. Recollect the appearance of the scene before us yesterday. The ground was then parched with a long

drought; the flowers hid their drooping heads; no fragrant odours were perceived; and vegetation seemed to cease. To what cause must we impute the revival of nature? —To the rain which fell this morning, replied Alexis, with a modest confusion. He was struck with the selfishness and folly of his conduct; and his own bitter reflections anticipated the reproofs of Euphronius.



*The Fallacy of External Appearance.*

**I**S there any hidden beauty, said Alexis to Euphronius, in that dusky, ill shaped stone, which you examine with so much attention? I am admiring the wonderful properties, not the beauty, replied Euphronius, which it possesses. It is by means of this stone that the mariner steers his trackless course through the vast ocean; and without it the spices of the East, the mines of Peru, and all the luxuries which commerce pours into Europe, would for ever have remained unknown.—The curiosity of Alexis was excited, and he was impatient to learn in what wonderful manner such advantages could be derived from a substance, apparently of so little value.—This magnet or loadstone, for it is known by both names, said Euphronius, imparts to iron the property of settling itself, when nicely balanced,

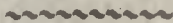
in a direction nearly North and South. The sailor is therefore furnished with an unerring guide in the midst of the ocean. For when he faces the North, the East and West are readily ascertained, the former lying to his right, and the latter to his left hand. And from these four points, all the subdivisions of the mariner's compass are formed. The figure of a star, which you so often draw upon paper, will give you a clear idea of the compass. Make yourself a master of it; and from the present instance of your want of knowledge, learn a becoming modesty in the judgements which you form concerning the productions of nature. The whole creation is the workmanship of an Omnipotent Being; and though we cannot always trace the marks of harmony, beauty, or usefulness, yet doubtless to the eye of a superior intelligence, every part of it displays infallible wisdom, and unbounded goodness.

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*We too often judge of Men by the Splendour,  
and not by the Merit of their Actions.*

**A**LEXANDER demanded of a Pirate, whom he had taken, by what right he infested the seas? By the same right, replied he boldly, that you enslave the world. But I am called a robber, because I have only one small vessel: and you are styled a

conqueror because you command great fleets and armies.



*The Pert and the Ignorant are prone to  
Ridicule.*

**A** GENTLEMAN, of a grave deportment, was busily engaged in blowing bubbles of soap and water, and was attentively observing them as they expanded and burst in the sunshine. A pert youth fell into a fit of loud laughter at a sight so strange, and which shewed, as he thought, such folly and insanity.—Be ashamed, young man, said one who passed by, of your rudeness and ignorance. You now behold the greatest Philosopher of the age, Sir Isaac Newton, investigating the nature of light and colours by a series of experiments, no less curious than useful, though you deem them childish and insignificant.



*Idleness and Irresolution.*

**H**ORACE, a celebrated Roman Poet, relates that a country man, who wanted to pass a river, stood loitering on the banks of it, in the foolish expectation that a current so rapid would soon discharge its waters. But the stream still flowed, increased perhaps by fresh torrents from the moun-

tains; and it must for ever flow, because the sources from which it is derived are inexhaustible.

THUS the *idle and irresolute youth* trifles over his books, or wastes in play his precious moments; deferring the task of improvement, which at first is easy to accomplish, but which will become more and more difficult, the longer it is neglected.



*Sloth contrasted with Industry.*

THE Sloth is an animal of South America, and is so ill formed for motion, that a few paces are often the journey of a week; and so indisposed to move, that he never changes his place, but when impelled by the severest stings of hunger. He lives upon the leaves, fruit, and flowers of trees, and often on the bark itself, when nothing besides is left for his subsistence. As a large quantity of food is necessary for his support, he generally strips a tree of all its verdure in less than a fortnight. And being then destitute of food, he drops down, like a lifeless mass, from the branches to the ground. After remaining torpid some time, from the shock received by the fall, he prepares for a journey to some neighbouring tree, to which he crawls with a motion almost imperceptible. At length arrived, he ascends the trunk, and devours with famished appetite, what-

ever the branches afford. By consuming the bark he soon destroys the life of the tree, and thus the source is lost from which his sustenance is derived.

SUCH is the miserable state of this slothful animal. How different are the comforts and enjoyments of the industrious Beaver? This creature is found in the northern parts of America, and is about two feet long and one foot high. The figure of it somewhat resembles that of a rat. In the months of June and July the Beavers assemble, and form a society which generally consists of more than two hundred. They always fix their abode by the side of a lake or river; and in order to make a dead water in that part which lies above and below, they erect with incredible labour, a dam or pier, perhaps fourscore or a hundred feet long, and ten or twelve feet thick at the base. When this dike is compleated, they build their several apartments, which are divided into three stories. The first is below the level of the mole, and is for most part full of water. The walls of their habitations are perpendicular, and about two feet thick: If any wood project from them, they cut it off with their teeth, which are more serviceable than paws. And by the help of their tails, they plaister all their works with a kind of mortar, which they prepare of dry grass and clay mixed together. In August or Sep-

tember they begin to lay up their stores of food ; which consist of the wood of the birch, the plane, and of some other trees. Thus they pass the gloomy winter in ease and plenty.

THESE two American animals, contrasted with each other, afford a most striking picture of the blessings of industry, and the penury and wretchedness of sloth



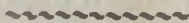
### *Honesty and Generosity*

**A** POOR man, who was door-keeper to a house in Milan, found a purse which contained two hundred crowns. The man who had lost it, informed by a public advertisement, came to the house, and giving sufficient proof that the purse belonged to him, the door-keeper restored it. Full of joy and gratitude, the owner offered his benefactor twenty crowns, which he absolutely refused. Ten were then proposed, and afterwards five : but the door-keeper still continuing inexorable, the man threw his purse upon the ground, and in an angry tone cried, I have lost nothing, nothing at all, if you thus refuse to accept of a gratuity." The door-keeper then consented to receive five crowns, which he immediately distributed amongst the poor.



*Intemperance.*

**C**YRUS, when a youth, being at the court of his grandfather Cambyfes, undertook one day to be the cup-bearer at table. It was the duty of this officer to taste the liquor before it was presented to the king. Cyrus, without performing this ceremony, delivered the cup in a very graceful manner to his grandfather. The king reminded him of his omission, which he imputed to forgetfulness. No, replied Cyrus, I was afraid to taste, because I apprehended there was poison in the liquor: For not long since, at an entertainment which you gave, I observed that the lords of your court, after drinking of it, became noisy, quarrellsome, and frantic. Even you, Sir, seemed to have forgotten that you were a king.

*A Generous Return for an Injury.*

**W**HEN the great Conde commanded the Spanish army, and laid siege to one of the French towns in Flanders, a soldier being ill treated by a general officer, and struck several times with a cane, for some disrespectful words he had let fall, answered very coolly, that he should soon make him repent of it. Fifteen days afterwards, the same general officer ordered the colonel

of the trenches to find a bold and intrepid fellow, to execute an important enterprise, for which he promised a reward of a hundred pistoles. The soldier we are speaking of, who passed for the bravest in the regiment, offered his service, and going with thirty of his comrades, which he had the liberty to make choice of, he discharged a very hazardous commission, with incredible courage and good fortune. Upon his return the general officer highly commended him, and gave him the hundred pistoles which he had promised. The soldier presently distributed them amongst his comrades, saying he did not serve for pay, and demanded only that if his late action seemed to deserve any recompense, they would make him an officer. And now, sir, adds he to the general officer, who did not know him, I am the soldier you abused so much fifteen days ago, and I then told you I would make you repent of it. The general officer in great admiration, and melting into tears, threw his arms around his neck, begged his pardon, and gave him a commission that very day.

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*The Passions should be governed by Reason.*

**S**OPHRON and Alexis had frequently heard Euphronius mention the experiment of stilling the waves with oil, made by his friend Doctor Franklin. They were im-

patient to repeat it; and a brisk wind proving favourable to the trial, they hastened, one evening to a sheet of water in the pleasure grounds of Eugenio, near Hart Hill. The oil was scattered upon the pool, and spread itself instantly on all sides, calming the whole surface of the water, and reflecting the most beautiful colours. Elated with success the youths returned to Euphronius, to enquire the cause of such a wonderful appearance. He informed them that the wind blowing upon water which is covered with a coat of oil, slides over the surface of it, and produces no friction that can raise a wave. But this curious philosophical fact, said he, suggests a most important moral reflection. When you suffer yourselves to be ruffled by passion, your minds resemble the *puddle in a storm*. But reason, if you hearken to her voice, will then, like oil poured upon the water, calm the turbulence within you, and restore you to serenity and peace.

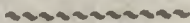
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*Scepticism condemned.*

**S**OPHRON asserted that he could hear the slightest scratch of a pin at the distance of ten yards. It is *impossible*, said Alexis, and immediately appealed to Euphronius, who was walking with them. Though I don't believe, replied Euphronius,

that Sophron's ears are more acute than yours, yet I disapprove of your hasty decision concerning the *impossibility* of what you so little understand. You are ignorant of the nature of sound, and of the various means by which it may be encreased, or quickened in its progress; and modesty should lead you, in such a case to suspend your judgment till you have made the proper and necessary inquiries. An opportunity now presents itself, which will afford Sophron the satisfaction he desires. Place your ear at one end of this long rafter of dale timber, and I will scratch the other end with a pin. Alexis obeyed, and distinctly heard the sound; which being conveyed through the tubes of the wood, was augmented in loudness, as in a speaking trumpet, or the horn of the huntsman.

SCEPTICISM and credulity are equally unfavourable to the acquisition of knowledge. The latter anticipates, and the former precludes all enquiry. One leaves the mind satisfied with error, the other with ignorance.



*Lying.*

**M**ENDACULUS was a youth of good parts, and of amiable dispositions; but by keeping bad company he had contracted, in an extreme degree, the odious

habit of lying. His word was scarcely ever believed by his friends; and he was often suspected of faults, because he denied the commission of them, and punished for offences, of which he was convicted only by his assertions of innocence. The experience of every day manifested the disadvantages which he suffered from the habitual violation of truth. He had a garden stocked with the choicest flowers; and the cultivation of it was his favourite amusement. It happened that the cattle of the adjoining pasture had broken down the fence; and he found them trampling upon, and destroying a bed of fine auriculas. He could not drive these ravagers away, without endangering the still more valuable productions of the next parterre; and he hastened to request the assistance of the gardener. "You intend to make a fool of me," said the man, who refused to go, as he gave no credit to the relation of Mendaculus.

ONE frosty day, his father had the misfortune to be thrown from his horse, and to fracture his thigh. Mendaculus was present, and was deeply affected by the accident, but had not strength to afford the necessary help. He was therefore obliged to leave him, in his painful condition on the ground, which was at that time covered with snow; and, with all the expedition in his power, he rode to Manchester, to solicit the aid of the first

benevolent person he should meet with. His character as a liar was generally known; few to whom he applied paid attention to his story; and no one believed it. After losing much time in fruitless entreaties, he returned with a sorrowful heart, and with his eyes bathed in tears, to the place where the accident happened. But his father was removed from thence: A coach fortunately passed that way; he was taken into it, and conveyed to his own house, whither Mendaculus soon followed him.

A LUSTY boy, of whom Mendaculus had told some falsehoods, often way-laid him as he went to school, and beat him with great severity. Conscious of his ill desert, Mendaculus bore, for some time, in silence his chastisement; but the frequent repetition of it at last overpowered his resolution, and he complained to his father of the usage which he met with. His father, though dubious of the truth of this account, applied to the parents of the boy who abused him. But he could obtain no redress from them, and only received the following painful answer: "Your son is a notorious liar, and we pay no regard to his assertions." Mendaculus was therefore obliged to submit to the wonted correction, till full satisfaction had been taken by his antagonist for the injury, which he had sustained.

SUCH were the evils in which this unfortunate youth almost daily involved himself

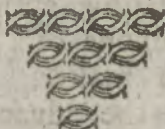
y the habit of lying. He was sensible of his misconduct, and began to reflect, upon with seriousness and contrition. Resolutions of amendment succeeded to penitence; he set a guard upon his words; spoke little, and always with caution and reserve; and he soon found, by sweet experience, that truth is more easy and natural than falsehood. By degrees the love of it became predominant in his mind; and so sacred at length did he hold veracity to be, that he scrupled even the least jocular violation of it. This happy change restored him to the esteem of his friends; the confidence of the public; and the peace of his own conscience.

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*Gratitude and Piety.*

**A**RTABANES was distinguished with peculiar favour by a wise, powerful, and good prince. A magnificent palace, surrounded with a delightful garden, was provided for his residence. He partook of all the luxuries of his sovereign's table; was invested with extensive authority; and admitted to the honour of a free intercourse with his gracious master. But Artabanes was insensible of the advantages which he enjoyed; his heart glowed not with gratitude and respect; he avoided the society of his benefactor, and abused his bounty.—I detest such a character, said Alexis, with generous

indignation ! It is your own picture which I have drawn, replied Euphronius. The great Potentate of heaven and earth has placed you in a world which displays the highest beauty, order, and magnificence ; and which abounds with every means of convenience, enjoyment, and happiness. He has furnished you with such powers of body and mind as give you dominion over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. And he has invited you to hold communion with him, and to exalt your own nature by the love and imitation of his divine perfections. Yet have your eyes wandered with brutal gaze over the fair creation, unconscious of the mighty hand from which it sprung. You have rioted in the profusion of nature, without one secret emotion of gratitude to the sovereign dispenser of all good. And you have slighted the glorious converse, and forgotten the presence of that Omnipotent Being, who fills all space, and exists through all eternity.



FINIS.