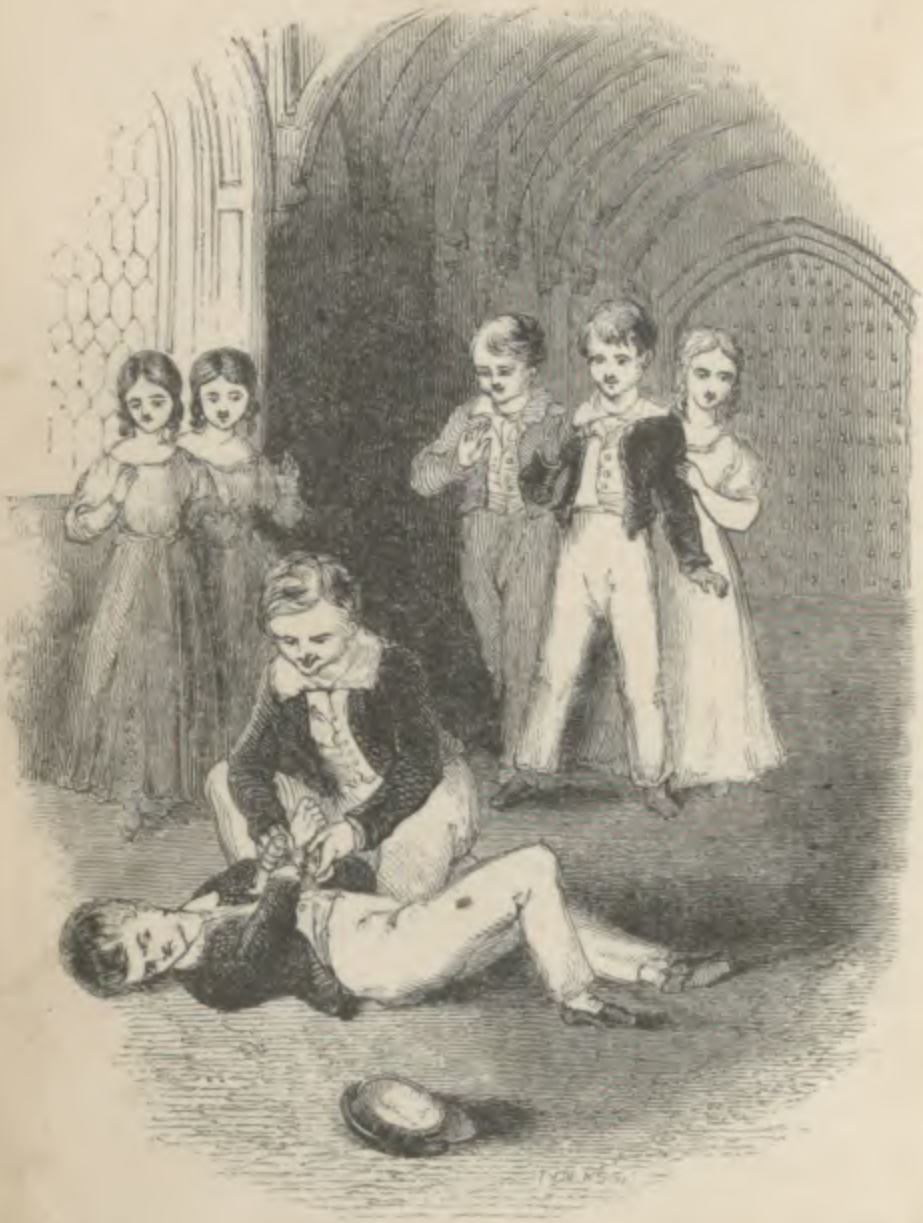

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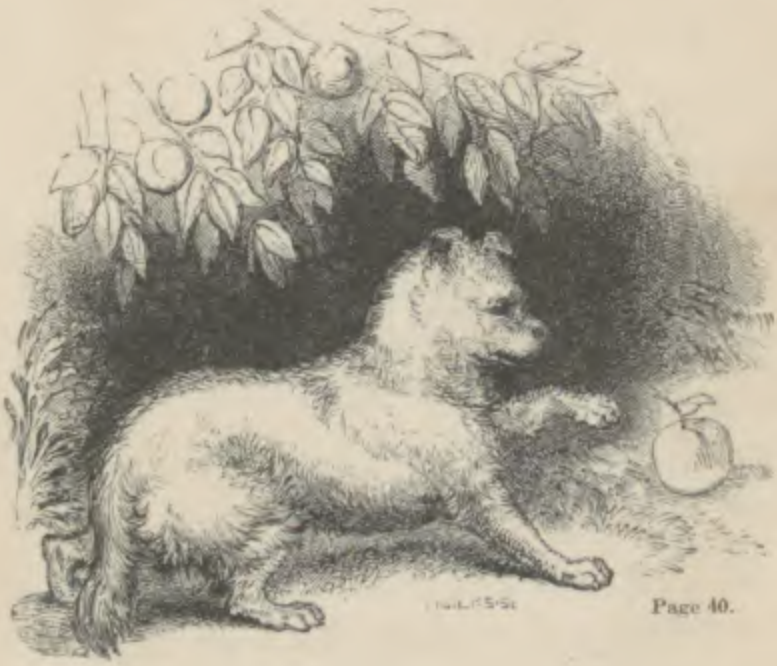
AN

AUTUMN AT KARNFORD;

BEING A SEQUEL TO

"COUSIN KATE'S STORY."



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AUTUMN AT KARNFORD.

CHAPTER I.

SUNSET COTTAGE.

I HOPE my little readers remember that the building of the wood-house took place on a Wednesday. Thursday was a very rainy day; on Friday the children found a good deal to do in the garden, so that they did not go up the hill again until Saturday, and on that day Mr and Mrs Graham accompanied them to see the house. The outside having been duly admired, Allen, with an air of much importance, drew the key from his pocket and unlocked the door. The interior looked very tidy; the clay

floor was smooth and even,—the barrow had been wheeled into the middle, with the baskets, ropes, nails, and smaller tools arranged in it, while the larger ones were neatly piled beside it on the floor.

"Oh, Allen," exclaimed Mr Graham, "you ought not to have laid your tools on the ground. I fear that, in spite of all the trouble you have bestowed upon your floor, it must be much too damp to admit of that."

"It is quite dry, papa," replied Allen; at the same time he lifted up one of the saws, which were lying one above the other near the door. The uppermost one had a few spots of rust, the next one a good many more, but the lowest was in a very bad condition. The boys looked at one another in dismay.

"I am very sorry that I did not remember to warn you of this," said Mr Graham; "but all we can now do is to set about cleaning them. You have oil, have you not? Uncle Percy ordered a stone bottle for the oil, as being less liable than a common one to be broken in your journeys up and down."

"We forgot to bring it up," said Harry; "but I will run down to the house for it directly. Only, papa, tell us first where we can keep our tools until the floor dries."

"We will drive in some strong nails to hang the saws on, and we must make shelves for the others," replied Mr Graham.

"How tiresome! how very provoking!" exclaimed Douglas. "I suppose we shall not be able to begin Sunset Cottage to-day. M'Pherson was very stupid not to tell us that we ought not to lay our tools upon the floor."

"I dare say," replied Allen, laughing, "M'Pherson did not imagine that we could be so foolish as to propose laying them on the floor. It is not fair to lay the blame of our own mistakes upon him; particularly as he did not see the inside of the house after it was finished. We were so busy discussing our plans for the cottage that we forgot to shew it to him."

"Well, I can only say," replied Douglas discontentedly, "that it is very provoking to be so often prevented from beginning the house.

I do not care about it at all now; we have had so many disappointments that I am quite disgusted with the whole concern. First an entire day was wasted in building this tiresome house, and now another is to be spent in making stupid shelves."

"Oh, but we were very happy while we were building this house," said Harry cheerfully; "and I am sure we shall be very happy to-day too, for papa is going to stay to help us. I will run down now to fetch the oil while you settle where the shelves are to be."

Allen tried hard to make Douglas take a share in the discussion, but he walked discontentedly away, saying, that he did not feel any interest in the house at all now; that for his part, he wished they would give it up,—it was only a waste of their play-hours to go on with it, for he was sure that they never could succeed. Mr Graham advised Allen to leave him alone, and when Harry came back he sat down with them to clean their tools.

Mrs Graham proposed that she and the girls should make an excursion through the

woods in search of brambles, and she invited Douglas to accompany them. He refused at first; said that it was, too much trouble, but in minute or two, he changed his mind, and went after them. He was not at all an agreeable companion; sauntering listlessly along beside them, finding fault with every thing and every body, and casting a gloom over the whole party. Alice soon looked as listless and unhappy as he did, and Marion's quick, hasty temper could not bear his perpetual contradictions. Eleanor alone continued to be good-humoured and cheerful, and seeing that Douglas and Marion were irritating each other, she proposed that they should separate—that she and Douglas should take one path, Alice and Marion another; and that mama and Gracie should go on a little farther to a comfortable seat until the others joined them again.

Having got Douglas by himself, Eleanor resolved to use every effort to soothe him into good humour, but she found it rather a hard task at first, he was in such a perverse mood

and so determined not to be pleased. They soon came to a little burn; Douglas made no offer to assist Eleanor, but when he saw her begin to cross, he told her in a disagreeable, sneering tone, that she would never get across at that part. Eleanor thought that he was wrong, but she turned back at once, and asked him to shew her another place. A little ashamed, Douglas did so. It was a much more difficult crossing than the one Eleanor had chosen, but she made no complaint; and when, in consequence of an unsteady stone, one of her feet slipped into the water, she only laughed merrily, and said that it would do her no harm.

She saw some very fine brambles on the other side of the paling, and proposed to climb over for them; but she gave up to his petted "Nonsense, you cannot get over here,"— and walked on quietly behind him, reflecting upon the pleasure it would give the others if she succeeded in restoring Douglas's good temper. She did not speak much to him, only now and then pointing out to him any-

thing that amused her, and taking no notice of the surliness of his answers. By and bye, Douglas finding that there were no brambles in the road he had chosen, began to find fault with her for having brought him that way. She did not remind him that she had wished to take another path, but asked him to try to find out some way of getting into a plantation before them, as she knew that they generally found a great many there. Douglas made his way through a gap in the hedge.

"I am afraid I cannot get through, Douglas, without tearing my frock," said Eleanor.

"Nonsense, you can get through well enough if you choose to try; but you girls always make difficulties."

Eleanor made the attempt without answering; it was very trying to her temper, for Douglas did not help her, and her frock caught several times, but she always quietly and patiently disentangled it, and at length, with much difficulty, got through. As she had said—they found a great many fine brambles, and Douglas began to enter into the spirit of

the business. Still he was very careless and provoking. Sometimes, when Eleanor asked him to pull down a branch that was too high for her to reach, he would make a careless spring up at it—catch it by the very bunch of fruit that Eleanor wished to procure, and crush them in his hand. And once, when she was standing on the edge of a ditch, busily gathering off a branch, the end of which Douglas was holding down, he allowed it to spring back to its place so suddenly, that it knocked her basket off her arm, and all its contents fell into the ditch. This accident, however, and Eleanor's good-humoured way of bearing it, had a good effect in opening his eyes to his own rudeness and surliness. He took some trouble to get back the basket, and to clean it for her, although he had not yet recovered his good temper so far as to make an apology. It was now time to return to Mrs Graham, and they were obliged to do so with an empty basket. Eleanor, however, was consoled for this by the improvement in Douglas. He tried to find an easier way of getting out

of the wood than the gap by which they had entered; and when they came again to the burn, he condescended to say—

"I think you had better try the other stones, Eleanor, they look more steady."

Eleanor exerted herself very much to complete the recovery of his good humour. As he had returned only petted answers when she had tried before to interest him in the objects around them, she determined to find some new subject to talk about. Her own mind was full of Sunset Cottage, but she knew that would not be a good topic of conversation, as it had been, in some degree, the cause of his ill-temper; so she began to tell him about a plan that had come into her head of a new door into their gardens, and she asked his advice upon the subject. She succeeded most admirably, and Mrs Graham was very glad to find, when they rejoined her, that Douglas was in a much better humour than when he left her. Douglas was a great favourite with little Gracie, and the confidence with which (forgetting all his crossness) she ran to meet him, and to tell him of the adven-

tures she had met with, completely restored him to good humour, and he was as merry as usual when they went back to Mr Graham and the boys. Alice and Marion had been very successful in their search, and with what Mrs Graham and Gracie had gathered, their basket was quite full.

There was a long consultation about the house building before they returned home. Mr Graham recommended them strongly to give up the plan of having two rooms, as he was sure that they could not succeed in making a neat passage, and they had hinges for only one door. So they decided that they would have one room—the door in the middle, and a window on each side of it. But it required a great deal of calculation and measurement, to settle all the different points that had to be considered. There was the size of the house—the distance between the windows—the breadth of the door, and many other things, to be fixed upon; and then the number and height of the upright posts had to be calculated, and how far they ought to be apart. Douglas's interest in the

house was quite renewed during these discussions, and as they turned to go home, he gave his opinion upon a disputed point, in his usual, somewhat dictatorial tone.

"Oh, Douglas," observed Mr Graham smiling, "I thought you had lost all interest in the cottage."

Douglas coloured. "I was in the pet, uncle, when I said that, but I have got the better of it."

"So I see, Douglas, or I would not have said any thing; it is always a bad plan to laugh at people when they are cross."

"I think that you were all very kind not to laugh at me to-day," replied Douglas, "when I was so unjust and unreasonable; but Eleanor was the best of all. I really do not think any thing can put her out of temper."

"I must do Eleanor the justice to say," replied Mr Graham, "that she has taken great pains to subdue her natural quickness of temper, and she has succeeded very well."

"Yes," said Mrs Graham very kindly; "Eleanor set about it in the right way,—by

asking God's help,—by keeping a strict watch over herself, often examining herself and looking back upon the instances in which she had failed, in order to find out the causes of failure, and to watch more earnestly against them another time."

All the young ones looked very much pleased to hear this praise of Eleanor, for her good humour, cheerfulness, and unselfishness, made her a universal favourite.

She blushed deeply, as she answered, "Mama, I think that it is not very difficult for me to keep my temper. In general every thing looks so happy and bright to me, that little trials of temper seem nothing at all."

"Certainly, my dear," replied Mrs Graham, "a person with a cheerful disposition like yours, has less excuse for losing her temper, or being discontented about trifles, than one who is naturally dull and peevish. And as your cheerfulness is a very precious gift from your Heavenly Father, so you ought to be deeply impressed with the responsibility it lays upon you, and to be very anxious to improve it to

His glory. Women, Eleanor," she continued smiling, "have not so many opportunities of being of use as men have; but the duty that belongs peculiarly to us, is by gentleness, kindness, and patience, to cheer and soothe our fathers, brothers, or husbands, when they are harassed and annoyed by cares and troubles in which we cannot participate."

"Oh, aunt, your description of what women may do, reminds me of what the gipsy said one day!" exclaimed Alice. "She said that our kindness to her and her baby was like the cool refreshing dew to the thirsty flower."

"Very well, Alice," said her uncle laughing, "and I suppose you will compare gentlemen to the violent thunder shower, often doing as much harm as good, crushing to the earth the plants that the dew would have fed."

"Oh no, uncle," said Alice; "I am sure I never could call you a furious thunder shower."

"I know, though," said Douglas, "who might very well be called a thunder-shower and a very violent one too, Mr ——."

"And what do you call boys who lose their temper and find fault with every one around them, because they themselves have done a stupid thing?" asked Mr Graham interrupting him. "Nay, do not look angry, Douglas; I shall not say any thing more, but I think it will be quite time enough to find fault with other people for losing their temper when you have conquered your own."

"But, uncle," said Douglas in a half-dissatisfied tone; "I think you will stop conversation altogether if you never allow us to speak of other people's faults."

"Better stop conversation altogether then, than do what is wrong," replied Mr Graham. "But I think, Douglas, it is not a very flattering account of our conversational powers to say, that unless we talk about the faults of others we must hold our tongues."

"But, papa," said Harry, "is it not sometimes right and useful to speak about the faults of others for the sake of avoiding them?"

"Oh! if Douglas meant to say Mr So-and-So has a very bad temper, but if I do not take care of mine, it will most likely be as bad as

his, by the time I am as old; in that case I beg his pardon for interrupting him, and will be very glad to hear it now."

"You know, uncle, that I did not mean to say that," replied Douglas, as he turned half smiling away from his uncle's arch look. "But there is one question I want to ask you, and it is about my own fault. You know that in some ways Harry and I are a good deal alike; we are neither of us very patient, and both rather fond of our own way. Now I want to know what made Harry so much better tempered than I was to-day."

"That question touches upon one feature in your dispositions, in which I think Harry has an advantage over you. When you are disappointed in a case where you can do nothing to help yourselves but must just submit, I think you bear the disappointment equally ill. But in a case like to-day's, where something can be done, Harry often sets to work cheerily and good humouredly, while you give up in despair and get petted and cross. Seriously speaking, my dear Douglas, you should think of this

fault and strive against it. It is one that may greatly affect both your happiness and your usefulness in after life. Do you remember telling me the other day that you should like so much to be a great man? You can never be that unless you learn not to give up your plans whenever a difficulty occurs."

"You remind me," said Mrs Graham, "of what I heard one boy say to another the other day. I was returning from the manse, and two boys overtook me at the stile leading from the meadows into the high road. They were walking very fast, and when they came up to me they asked me, 'how far they were from M——,' and 'what o'clock it was?' When I answered them, one of them sitting down upon the stile began to cry, saying that they could never be in time. 'Come on, man!' cried the other; 'let us go as far as we can, you can sit down at the end and cry as well as here.'"

The children laughed, while Mr Graham said, "that he was a sensible boy, and had no doubt learned that crying never helped any one yet. But," he continued, "I am not sure,

mama, that your story quite illustrates the weak point in Douglas's character. I do not think he would give up a plan, as long as he had the least chance of success, only when one plan fails he wants courage to try another."

"I am quite sorry that we are at home," cried Allen, "for I like this kind of talk very much."

"Take care that you are not satisfied with liking to talk about these things, Allen," said Mr Graham. "It is very amusing to hear faults pointed out, but it is not always so amusing to try and conquer them."

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, all the play hours were devoted to the building of Sunset Cottage. It occupied them longer than their shed had done, because by Mr Graham's advice they built it in a much more substantial way. They squared off the rough edges of the planks which prevented them from fitting in to one another, and they made each plank slope out a little downwards, so that it overlapped the one below it. Although this deprived the girls, Georgie, and

Lewis, of one of their occupations, that of filling up the crevices with moss and clay, they yet found plenty to do. Two of them were constantly employed as servants to the older boys, holding their planks steady, handing them nails, and such services; while the others busied themselves in levelling the floor, and carrying clay and sand for it. When they were tired of such hard work, they swept away the litter that the boys had made, and piled the shavings, little bits of wood, and branches of trees, into separate store heaps, to serve as fuel when they required a fire.

Very busy, and very happy they were; so busy and happy indeed that there would have been a great danger of their forgetting to go home in time for dinner, if the butler had not very kindly offered to ring the bell outside the house, every day at five minutes before four. This summons was not always very welcome, but it had always been complied with, though sometimes a little grumblingly, until the Friday, when it was heard after they had been busy for only about an hour.

"John must have made a mistake," cried Harry.

"I do not think that it can be a mistake," said Allen, "it is so much too soon. I am afraid that papa or mama must wish to speak to us."

"I will run down and see," said Georgie, always ready to oblige the others; "perhaps they may only require one of us and I may be enough."

Allen did not think that that would do, because perhaps they might be required in a hurry; and he said, "he was almost sure that if only one had been wished for, his mama would have sent a messenger and not have disturbed them all."

"It is very provoking!" exclaimed Harry, throwing his hatchet impatiently on the ground.

"It will be *very* provoking to-morrow," said Allen laughing, "when you find that you have spoiled your hatchet in your anger. *It* did not ring the bell, Harry; it is unfair to punish it."

"I have not spoiled it," replied Harry, a good deal irritated by Allen's mocking manner.

"Indeed," said Allen in the same provoking tone; "it must be a very extraordinary axe not to be spoiled by such treatment. Made of some peculiar kind of iron, I suppose; pray, Harry, tell me the name of that kind of iron. I should like a hatchet made of it," he continued, laying his hand on Harry's shoulder when he did not answer.

"I really wish you would be quiet, Allen," said Harry very angrily, throwing off Allen's hand.

"Poor child! its temper seems rather bad to-day," pursued Allen, pretending to pat him on the back.

Harry turned furiously round upon Allen, and would have struck him if Marion and Eleanor had not caught his arm, and drawn him away with them.

"You are a most provoking creature, Allen," said Douglas. "What is the use of teasing Harry?"

"It was not I who put Harry into a bad humour," replied Allen laughing; "it was the bell, and it has made you a little cross too,

Douglas. I dare say we shall find a good many notches in your hatchet to-morrow, as well as in Harry's, from the violent way in which you threw it down."

"I have no patience with you, Allen," said Douglas; "when you get into that teasing mood."

"You had better try to get some, then," said Allen still more provokingly. "Patience is a good commodity at all times, though your store is never very large."

A very angry reply was on Douglas's lips, when the dispute was stopped by their meeting Mr and Mrs Graham with a party of strangers. The children were introduced to the strangers; they were Mrs Wilson, her son, and two daughters. Mrs Wilson looked very gentle and pleasant; she spoke kindly to the young Grahams; hoped that they and her young people would be good friends; and told them that she had come to spend a few weeks in the Lindsey's house, as they were still unable to return home. The young Wilsons were very uninteresting-looking children. Maria and

Eliza were finely dressed, stiff and formal, while James was rude and awkward. Our young friends, not being in a very good humour at any rate, disliked them even more than they might have done at another time. As they knew, however, that Mr and Mrs Graham expected them to be kind and polite to their guests, they did their best to entertain them. It was very hard work. Little could be got from James but "yes" or "no," accompanied by a rude stare, while Maria and Eliza seemed to be quite shocked at the idea of building houses, working in gardens, or riding in carts. The Karnford party were much relieved when Mrs Wilson took her departure, though that pleasure was somewhat marred by their hearing Mrs Graham accept an invitation for the six older children to spend the Saturday of the ensuing week at Benholme.

"Oh, mama, I wish that you had refused that invitation," exclaimed Eleanor, as soon as the carriage drove off; "they are so tiresome. I am sure none of us can like to go."

"My little daughter," said Mrs Graham,

smiling; "we must sometimes do what we do not like. I do not think they seem to be very pleasant children, but, perhaps, you will find them better than you expect. At any rate, I could not refuse without being rude."

"Now, young people," said Mr Graham; I advise you to hasten back to the house. You will scarcely have time to put away your tools before dinner."

The children looked at one another, and, after a moment's hesitation, Allen came forward. "Papa," he said, colouring very much; "you told us that if we ever quarrelled about our house, you would punish us by forbidding us to go there for a certain time."

He stopped, and Mr Graham said gravely, "I hope, Allen, that you have not done anything to make it necessary for me to punish you in this way?"

"Yes, papa," replied Allen, in a low tone; "we older boys have been quarrelling; but it was all my fault, I teased and provoked both Harry and Douglas. I am very sorry," he continued, his voice faltering a little; "but I

wish that you would punish me alone, and allow the rest to go up to the house as usual, for it was entirely my fault."

"No, no, Allen," cried Douglas, eagerly coming forward, "we were wrong too; and, even if we had not been so, I am sure that if uncle forbids you to go to Sunset Cottage, we will not go without you, and leave you alone."

"No, indeed, we will not," cried the other children.

Mr Graham inquired what they had quarrelled about. Allen gave him a very candid statement of the whole.

Mr Graham looked grave, "You have done wrong, Allen, very wrong," he said; "but as you must lose no time in going up the hill to put away your tools, I will only say just now, that I think I shall leave it to yourselves to decide, whether you have incurred the penalty or not. When I made the rule, I intended it to refer to quarrels that might arise about the different plans of proceeding in building the the house. I made it because I thought that such disputes would be more likely to arise in

this play than in others, and I wished my threat to act as a sort of extra defence against an extra temptation. Strictly speaking your quarrel of to-day was not one of the kind I intended my rule to refer to, and you may decide for yourselves whether I ought to punish you or not."

Silently and sadly they went up the hill and put away the tools. As they turned to go home Douglas said with a deep sigh, "I think that we ought to punish ourselves, for, although we did not quarrel about the house, yet it was our being so much interested in the work that made us cross and petted when we were forced to leave it."

"Yes," said Harry, "and I know that things of this kind are more apt to make me cross than even the cases papa mentioned; and, as papa says, he made the rule to serve as an extra defence against an extra temptation, I am sure that we ought to regard the quarrel of to-day as one of those against which he wished to guard us."

"I think so," replied Douglas; "it may

not be exactly one of the cases uncle meant to punish in this way, but if he had thought of the likelihood of its happening, he would have included it. And, besides, he is so very anxious that you and I, Harry, should overcome our impatience and fretfulness, that I am sure he will be glad if we punish ourselves for it. What do you think, Allen?"

"I have thought, ever since papa spoke, that we ought to decide upon staying away from the house," replied Allen, in a sorrowful tone; "but I did not like to say so, because it seems so hard to punish you for my fault, and the girls and Georgie too, who took no part in the quarrel."

"O never mind us," said Eleanor; "I am quite glad that you have decided upon this, because I am sure papa and mama will be pleased. But you must not look so sad, Allen, we can be quite happy without this play for some time."

"O yes," said Harry; "we will find plenty of work and amusement in the gardens, and other things. And you must not say that it

was all your fault, Allen, for if we had not been cross at any rate we would not have minded your teasing us."

"Besides, Allen," said Douglas, "I am sure that it is very seldom that you make us quarrel; you are far oftener a peacemaker."

Allen felt their kindness very much, but in spite of all they said, he could not but feel that he had been most to blame, and he was the more sorry for it when he saw how anxious they all were to cheer him. He was very silent and sad during dinner. Harry and Douglas chatted almost as merrily as usual, for the consciousness of having done right in deciding to punish themselves counterbalanced the pain that the remembrance of their fault caused them. It was so late before they reached home that they had not an opportunity, before dinner, of telling Mr Graham what their decision was, but as soon as the servants left the room Douglas told him.

"I am particularly glad to hear this, Douglas," said Mr Graham. "I could not have blamed you if you had decided otherwise; both

because your dispute to-day hardly merited the name of a quarrel; and because it really is not one of the cases that the rule originally referred to. But your resolution assures me that you are anxious to improve yourselves, and it also gives me great confidence in your candour and honesty. Your conduct in this respect gives me more pleasure than your quarrel gave me pain, as far as Douglas and Harry are concerned, but you, Allen, have grieved me much to-day. I see that you are sorry for it, and I forgive you as freely as Douglas and Harry have done, but I should be sorry if I thought that our willingness to forgive you could make you think lightly of your fault."

"Oh, papa, I am very sorry, I know that I was wrong; I felt it even at the time, and I saw that I was making Harry angry, and still I went on."

"Yes, Allen," said Mr Graham, very gravely; "you committed a great fault. You did not consider what you were doing, but you were in reality using your utmost endeavours to make

your brother sin. You remember what Paul says, 'If meat make my brother to offend I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' Compare this resolution with your conduct to-day; consider how hatcful sin is in God's sight, and yet you, out of mere wantonness, tempted your brother to sin. Oh! Allen, consider, that in doing this you were working *for* Satan and *against* God, against the precious Saviour who dicd for our sins."

Allen could not speak; he laid his head on the table to hide his tears.

"I am giving you great pain, Allen," continued Mr Graham, after a few minutes' silence; "but, my dear boy, I speak thus solemnly to you because I think you do not consider seriously enough what you are doing, when you provoke and tease your brothcrs and sisters as you often do, and I think if I could once convince you of the great evil of this seemingly trifling fault, you would guard against it morc carefully for the future. It is not an uncommon fault among children,

among even kind-hearted and affectionate children, but it always grieves me much to see it, because I look upon it in this light as a serious offence; and where a child is kind-hearted, I think that it is only necessary to shew him the real tendency of what he is doing to make him strive against it. I have said enough upon the subject, and I trust that you will not forget it too soon. But if I find that my warning has not the effect of preventing a repetition of this fault, I must use harsher measures the next time, for I cannot suffer you to injure the temper of any of your brothers and sisters by useless provocation and teasing. I shall dismiss the matter now, however, Gracie thinks that we have been talking too long about things she does not understand. Do you not, Gracie?"

"I do not like you to make Allen cry, papa," said little Gracie; "but I understand a little of what you have been saying, and I think that I ought not to refuse to be Lewis's horse as I did this morning, because that makes him angry, and that is very wrong, you know."

"Quite right, Gracie," said Mr Graham, kissing her; "and I think you may all practise this principle of being careful not to give others occasion to sin. The opportunity of putting it in practice that most frequently occurs is in your arguments with one another. Remember never to press the argument when you see that your opponent is getting angry. And now I think we may have a walk this fine evening if you youngsters feel inclined to postpone the learning of your lessons till after tea."

Douglas reminded his uncle that he had forgotten to name the period of their banishment from Sunset Cottage.

"I think I shall say till this day week," said Mr Graham. "Do you think that too long?"

They said that it was not too long,—that a week would soon pass away; and they then all left the dining-room to prepare for their walk, except Allen, who had never lifted his head from the table. Douglas and Harry looked anxiously at him as they went out of the room, but Mr Graham made a sign to them to leave

him alone. He stood watching him for a minute or two in silence, and then said kindly, "Allen, are you thinking that I have been too harsh to you?"

Allen looked up—"O, no, papa," he said; "but I am very sorry, so very sorry, I cannot tell you how unhappy I am." He stopped, was silent for a minute or two, and then went on. "The thing that grieves me most, papa, is what you said about my provoking Harry to sin against God—against Christ, who died for me. I cannot bear to think of it. I do think, papa, that I *really* believe in Christ as having died for me, and borne the punishment of all my sins, and yet I love him so very little as to find pleasure in provoking any one to sin against him. Oh, papa, it makes me very miserable; I am afraid that it cannot be that I have really relied on Christ as my Saviour, or surely I should love him more than to do any thing like this."

"My dear Allen," replied Mr Graham very affectionately, "I should be sorry to say any thing that might lead you to think too lightly of

your fault; and yet I think you may be judging yourself too hastily. You are quite right in supposing that real faith in Christ must make you more careful to avoid sin than you were before you knew him; more earnestly watchful over every temper and feeling, lest you should grieve him yourself, or lead others to grieve him. You cannot really and from the heart believe that Christ died for your sins, and yet indulge in them as much as ever. But though this is quite true, it is also true that sin is not quite subdued, even in the hearts of God's truest servants, as long as they remain in this world, and therefore you must not begin to doubt whether you are a child of God or not every time you commit sin. For if you had no love to Christ, I do not think your sin would give you so much pain as it does. You must pray to Christ now, and ask him to wash out your sin in his blood; ask for the forgiveness of this individual sin, and ask for his Spirit to enable you to watch more carefully against it for the future, and to teach you how hateful all sin is in God's sight. And remember, my

own dear Allen, that we have God's assurance that he is more willing to give than we are to receive. He loves you infinitely better than I do, and I am sure you know how anxiously I desire to comfort and help you. Do not ask for forgiveness as if you feared that God might be unwilling to grant it; by doing so you commit another sin—the sin of mistrusting God's love. But go with this word upon your mind, "God *delighteth* in mercy."

Allen listened attentively to all his father said, and when he concluded, he thanked him very earnestly. "But, papa," he said, "there is one other thing that grieves me much. Harry and Douglas spoke very seriously to me the other day about religion, and Douglas said that he saw that I loved God much more really than he did; now it will be a terrible thing if I make him think less of religion by my fault."

"Yes, Allen," said Mr Graham, "we ought always to think of this; and it is a good safeguard in time of temptation, to remember that by sin we cast dishonour on the cause of our Lord and Master. I think perhaps that your

best plan will be, first, to ask God to prevent your sin from injuring his own cause, and then to speak fairly and candidly to the boys, and tell them openly your fears. I advise you to go to your room at once, and make your peace with God, and then you will be able to join us in our walk with a cheerful heart."

"I will, papa," said Allen, rising to leave the room; "and oh, papa, I am so very much obliged to you for your kindness."

"One word more, Allen. Many people would think that your offence to-day did not at all deserve to be so severely condemned; but you know, my boy, that mama and I have often spoken to you about your teazing the others, and although you have been sorry for it at the time, you have always forgotten it and committed the same fault again. Go now to your room, my dear boy, and while you are praying for yourself, remember that your mother and I will pray for you too."

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT DOGS.

"A chapter about dogs?" Yes, I am going to give my little readers a chapter which is to be principally about dogs. My reason for doing so is simply this, that I totally forgot to say any thing about the Grahams' dogs in my last little volume; therefore I determined to make amends in this one, and honour them with a chapter to themselves. I consider myself the more bound to do this, because I am very fond of dogs; and indeed all the stories about them in this chapter are quite true, and what really happened to dogs that I once possessed.

There were several dogs about Karnford. First, there was an old nondescript called Cæsar, very ugly and by no means very amiable, at least so said strangers; though the little Grahams defended him most strenuously,—

they said he was so affectionate and so faithful. However, he certainly was rather cross, and most of their friends rejoiced at his taking a fancy for the stable-yard in his old age. There he lay all day long, basking in the sun, or coiled up in a warm corner in the straw, and there he was allowed to remain undisturbed. He still appeared glad to see the children, when they went to pay him a visit; but he was too lazy to go out with them, or if they did succeed in coaxing him to go a little way, he soon tired and returned home again. Poor Cæsar! his temper had not improved as he grew older; but he was not much tried, for he seldom saw strangers in the quiet nook he had chosen; and the servants respecting his infirmities, allowed him to sleep in peace. He had a companion in the stable-yard, older, and nearly as lazy as himself, but much more good-natured.

Oscar had been a remarkably handsome setter, and he was a general favourite; old as he was, he still testified his attachment to the whole family, by a very affectionate greeting every time he saw them, hobbling up to them, thrusting his head into their hands, and wag-

ging his tail most energetically. He and Cæsar agreed better now than they had done in Cæsar's youth. Oscar was too good-natured to quarrel without provocation; and poor Cæsar had no teeth, having spoilt them all when he was young, with carrying stones for the amusement of himself and the young people.

Then Mr Graham had a dog that was his own peculiar property,—a very noble, handsome stag-hound. He was too well bred to be cross to any one, but too reserved and dignified to be familiar with any but his master. He would have protected the children from danger, even at the risk of his own life, but he was too grave and stately to play with them. The children admired him for his beauty, sense, and fidelity, and they were very proud of him, but they were much fonder of their own pet, playfellow, and laughing-stock, dear, funny, good-humoured Mussie.

Mustard, or Mussie, as he was always called, was a rough terrier of a pale brown colour. Learned dog-fanciers said that he was not a very handsome dog; but he was much admired by the ignorant. He was too tall, and his hair

was too long; but then he had such an engaging face,—he had such large, expressive eyes, and fine white teeth, shining the more brilliantly from the contrast with his jet black mouth and gums. The little Grahams said that Mussie was very proud of his teeth, he shewed them off so much. He had a curious fashion, when any thing pleased him, of grinning like a person laughing, and snacking his teeth together with a loud noise, and this the children called "Mussie's snack." But it was not for his beauty that every body liked Mussie; it was for his engaging disposition—his affection, good nature, trickiness, and his love of fun. He had never been taught any tricks, but he had many of his own invention. His mode of greeting any one when he first saw them in the morning, was to run up to them, snacking his teeth all the way; then he would stand up on his hind legs, and put his two fore-paws round their wrist, as if he wished to shake hands. The children used always to call Mussie's fore-paws his hands, because he made so much use of them; and they used to declare that Mussie

could be easily taught to walk on his hind legs altogether. Once he was actually found in the garden reaching up with his fore-paws into an apple-tree, and getting down apples for himself. He stood on his hind legs, patted one of the branches repeatedly with his fore-paw until he heard an apple fall, he then jumped down and sought for it, found it, and carried it off in triumph. He was very fond of apples, but he liked them more for the pleasure of playing with them, than for eating them. Indeed, a love of play was one of his great peculiarities. He would catch up a straw, a twig of a tree, or a fir-cone, and run off, sure of being chased by one or other of his companions; and in the noisy games they had together, it would have been difficult to tell whether the dog or the children enjoyed themselves most. He was constantly with them; he slept in the boys' room, walked with them, played with them, lay in the study while they were at their lessons, with all the patience he could muster, and even accompanied them to their gardens, though there he was rather a troublesome companion.

He did not like gardening at all, and he used to try many expedients to divert them from it; sometimes carrying off their things, sometimes jumping up upon them to beseech them to come and play, and then again lying down on the gravel, and pretending to sleep, while he kept his bright black eyes wide open and keenly fixed to watch the first indication of a move towards the woods. In all ways and at all times Mussie used to be their companion and play-fellow.

I say "used to be," for, alas! poor Mussie was lost. About a year before the time when my story begins, all the family had gone to Edinburgh for a few weeks. The dogs had been so accustomed to the country, that Mr Graham was sure they would both be very unhappy and very troublesome in Edinburgh, and they were all left behind. When the children came back to Karnford, there was no Mussie to greet them, and no one knew what had become of him. The groom had spent two whole days riding about the country in search of him, but could get no tidings of him any where. At

first, the children flattered themselves he would come back, they said he was too sensible to lose himself; but after some weeks, they were obliged to give up all hope, and to conclude that he had either been stolen or killed. They would not for some time accept of Mr Graham's offer to get them another dog, but shortly before Alice and Douglas came they had got a terrier, although they all declared they could never love any one after Mussie.

And Garry did not prove a very good substitute for their sensible favourite. He was a funny-looking dog, very like a miniature fox, —a stupid, but a good-natured little creature. Harry said that he was a fool, and had no mind. He went out with them, and sometimes he played with them, but not very often, and they still spoke with great interest and affection of dear Mussie, although they had given up all hopes of ever seeing him again. In this, however, they were mistaken, as you will hear afterwards. In the mean time, we will return to our story.

On this same Friday evening, Mr Graham

left the tea-table before the others, to see a woman, the wife of one of his cottagers, who wished to speak to him. He did not return to the drawing-room before the young people had left it to prepare their lessons; but when they came back before going to bed, they found him talking to Mrs Graham about this woman. She had come to tell Mr Graham that her son, a wild headstrong lad, had taken offence at something his father had said to him the previous night, had left home and had never returned. They had at first hoped that he had only gone to the house of his married sister, but his mother had been there and found that she had seen nothing of him, so that they feared greatly he must have fulfilled a threat he had often made of running away to sea. There was a large seaport town, A——, about twenty miles from Karnford, and as that was the place he would most probably go to, Mr Graham had offered to go there next day, to try to hear some tidings of him.

He said that as he proposed going in the dog-cart, the older boys might go with him if

they liked. If they liked! What boy does not like an excursion of any kind, more particularly a long drive in a dog-cart through a new country, and to see new things? His offer was eagerly and thankfully accepted.

"Can you take Georgie too?" asked Mrs Graham; "poor little man! he is of an awkward age, too old for Gracie and Lewis, and scarcely old enough for the older boys' plans and diversions."

"Oh, we can easily take him," replied Mr Graham; "he can sit between two of the others. I am glad you thought of it. But now, young gentlemen, we shall start to-morrow morning exactly at six, so I would advise you to go to bed soon."

Eleanor and Marion were down stairs next morning in time to see them set off. It was a beautiful September morning; the sun was just risen, the dew still heavy upon the grass and shrubs, and there was that kind of pale blue mist arising from the woods and distant ground, which gives such a peculiar beauty to the early morning in summer and autumn.

The girls could not think of returning to the house after watching the departure of the dog-cart; and, as their hoops hung most temptingly in the hall, they took them down, and had an excellent race round the sweep and down the long avenue. They were very well matched, for although Marion was the fastest runner, yet Eleanor was so much more dexterous in turning sharp corners, without letting down her hoop, that she kept up with her the whole way, and they reached the lodge breathless and tired at the same moment. They could not run any more; so they passed through a wicket beside the lodge, into a foot-path which led them straight to the wood at the bottom of the hill. They crossed the Karn by some stepping-stones, and sauntered leisurely down its banks towards the house. It was a very pretty walk, sometimes upon the soft green grass, close to the water's edge, then leaving it for a little to go along the top of a steep bank, or to wind through the wood.

The girls walked on slowly, chatting upon various subjects, and after stopping to admiro

the pretty spider's webs covered with dew, or gather flowers for a bouquet for Alice. They first discussed all the particulars of their race; telling one another where they had nearly allowed their hoops to fall, and at what part they had expected to be first. Then a casual remark from Eleanor that they had never remembered to bring Alice and Douglas to see this walk, led them to speak about their cousins, and warm were the praises bestowed upon both.

"I do like Alice very much," said Eleanor; "she is so gentle and kind, and always so much interested in all our little joys and troubles. She is very unselfish."

"Yes," replied Marion, "I like her very much too; but oh! Eleanor, I *do* wish that she were not so very slow about every thing. She fidgets me so much sometimes; when we are working in our garden, or at the house, she takes so long to do every thing. Sometimes when the boys are waiting for her to fetch nails or such things, I have to press my feet firmly on the ground to keep myself from running forward to snatch it out of her hand,

or to give her a push to make her walk faster."

"And perhaps push her down," said Eleanor, laughing. "But she is much quicker now than she used to be, and she has been so long delicate and weak, that it is no wonder she has got into the habit of moving slowly."

"Oh yes," replied Marion; "she is better, but still she often tries my temper very much. At lessons, when any thing is to be found out, or when papa is explaining anything, she thinks so slowly, I feel myself biting my lips to keep in the impatient words, and my head shakes with eagerness to get her on. I will tell you, Eleanor, of what she reminds me. Of Miss Raymond in that long walk we took last summer, when she was so frightened at crossing the stepping-stones. Do you remember how long she paused before she would put her foot upon the first stone? And then, when she was safe upon it, she stood there so long before she could be persuaded to try the next. Oh, I see her now," she continued, laughing merrily; "hesitating, putting forward her foot,

then drawing it back, and then forward again. I am sure I shall think of her whenever Alice takes one of her fits of slowness."

Eleanor laughed heartily at the remembrance of Miss Raymond, but she said that there was one great difference between her hesitation and Alice's slowness. For Miss Raymond's fears were mostly affected, while Alice was really very anxious to get on, but had only got into a slow languid way of thinking and acting from having been so long unwell, and never having been encouraged to overcome her indolence.

"But mama says," replied Marion, "that her slowness proceeds partly from her not thinking of what she is doing."

"Yes," said Eleanor; "and Alice acknowledges that herself; she says that she is often dreaming about other things; and sometimes she is thinking how very stupid she is, and wishing very much that she were able to understand what she is to do; instead of thinking with *all* her thoughts about the things she wishes to understand."

"Alice and I had a nice talk with mama

the other evening about dreaming," said Marion. "Mama told us about a young lady who used to dream away her life, as she says Alice will do if she does not cure herself of the habit just now. This young lady was warm-hearted, kind, and very anxious to help those she loved; but she was constantly thinking of other things instead of what she was about, so occupied in imagining situations in which she would do great things for her family, that she never did the very thing she was expected to do. When she was at school she wasted half her time in thinking how she would nurse her mama night and day if she were ill; or what sacrifices she would make and what efforts she would use to support her if she were reduced to poverty; neglecting all the time the means she had in her power of pleasing her mother, by attending to her studies. When she was married it was the same thing; she constantly forgot her every-day duties, and while imagining circumstances in which she would do so much for her husband, she would be injuring him deeply by forgetting some important mes-

sage or business he had entrusted to her. Mama says that she should like much to teach all her little girls to practise the rule, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy *might*.' She says that this is a positive command that God gives us, and that we break it every time we set lazily, unwillingly, or carelessly about any task. And then mama said, that it would make her *so* happy to see us all acquiring the habit of doing cheerfully and heartily the work that is given us to do, doing it with all our mind and in the very best way. I like so much to hear mama speak about these things; she speaks in such a pleasant tone, and so cheerily, it makes me feel inclined to jump up and set earnestly about something directly."

"Yes," said Eleanor; "and it makes me feel as if even disagreeable work would be pleasant, merely because it is something to do."

"We told mama how much we liked to hear her speak about this," continued Marion; "and she smiled and told us not to be con-

tented with liking to hear about it, but to begin to act upon it immediately, not to-morrow but to-day, not in the next hour but in the present one. And she says that many people deceive themselves in this way, when they hear any one talk very pleasantly and eloquently about activity of mind, diligence and cheerfulness in duty, they are much pleased by the language of the speaker, and fancy that a change is begun in them already in these repects, because they are convinced and pleased by what he has said; but they never move a bit forward, only talk a great deal about these good qualities and praise them. But oh, Eleanor," exclaimed Marion, interrupting herself; "what a beautiful wreath of the white convolvulus on that bank. I must get it for Alice."

And Marion immediately began to climb the bank to get the wished-for wreath. It was a difficult undertaking, as she had to make her way through the bramble and wild thorn bushes which covered the face of the bank; she was often stopped by her dress getting entangled on some of them, but she was not easily dis-

couraged, and she had almost reached the object of her wishes when a tiresome branch of hawthorn caught her frock. Eleanor's "Take care" was unheeded; she gave an impatient jerk, and tore her frock from the waist nearly to the hem without disentangling it from the obstinate thorn.

"How tiresome! how provoking!" she exclaimed, tearing it more and more, and entangling herself faster in her impatient struggles to get free.

Eleanor climbed up to her assistance, and patiently and quietly disentangled the torn dress from one thorn after another.

"Thank you, thank you," said Marion, eagerly gathering her pretty wreath. "You are my good genius, Eleanor," she continued, laughingly, after they had accomplished in safety the somewhat perilous descent; "you soothe me when I am angry, and help me so nicely when I have got into a scrape. Mama says, we must learn always to do the work of the hour, in the hour. I suspect the work of a good many of my hours should be, to acquire a

stock of patience. But, as papa says, it is much easier to do a great deal of work out of doors than a very little in."

"Well," said Eleanor, laughing, "we have talked so much wisdom that I am quite tired of it, suppose we have a race with our hoops."

"Not a race, because we never could pass one another in the wood, but let us be what Harry calls 'a coach and four.' You shall be the leaders and I the wheelers. But first help me to pin up my poor frock and to fasten my wreath round my bonnet."

And they set off merrily through the narrow winding walk, with many a stop and hindrance, and many a laugh at their own and their hoop's mischances. Mrs Graham was walking in their garden, and as they came near she threw open the gate that they might drive through. The sharp difficult turn, before coming to the gate, was passed in grand style by both, but Eleanor in looking up to thank her mama, allowed her hoop to strike against the side post, and Marion's fell against her.

"We are a coach and four mama," cried Marion.

"A very wet one I think; pray my dears have you been taking a shower bath?" asked Mrs Graham, smiling.

"Not intentionally, mama," replied Eleanor; "but I dare say the trees and bushes have sprinkled us with dew in revenge for the unceremonious way in which we brushed past them. Oh, mama, we have had such a delightful walk, and talked so much wisdom."

"I am very glad to hear it, but you must make haste home to take off your wet clothes. Oh, Marion, what a rent in your frock."

"Yes, mama, that was part of our wisdom."

"Part of your wisdom, to tear your frock, my dear? Then I must really request you to be wise as seldom as possible."

"Oh, mama," replied Marion, laughing, "I do not mean that. But we talked very wisely about my impatience causing me to tear my frock."

"Well, *act* wisely now, if you please, by returning home immediately to get dry clothes."

The girls had been a little afraid that this would be a dull Saturday, because the boys

were away, but they were very happy. For an hour or two Marion was not very pleasantly employed in mending her frock, but Eleanor remained in the house with her to finish a drawing, and Alice read aloud to them, so that the time passed quickly away.

"I have followed your advice, mama," said Marion, as she folded up her work after every hole, even the most minute, had been faithfully darned; "I have followed your advice, not to be always looking at the end and thinking how much I have to do, but to go on steadily, trying to do each part as well and quickly as possible, and I have not found it nearly so tiresome as I expected.

Mrs Graham went out with them after luncheon, and they took a long walk. Gracie and Lewis accompanied them. Gracie rode on old Jenny; and Jenny's grave obstinacy in keeping her own slow pace, and her independence in stopping to eat whenever she chose, gave them a great deal of amusement; for children are easily amused when they are in a good humour and disposed to take every thing contentedly.

The travellers were not expected until seven; and after dinner the girls occupied themselves in sorting some ripe flower seeds that they had gathered in the forenoon, and arranging them in a very neat box, or rather tray, which they had made with separate compartments for the different kinds.

They were so busy that they did not think it was nearly time to go out to watch for the dog cart, when the boys burst into the room in the highest glee.

"How did you come without our hearing you?" cried the girls, "and you are surely very early."

"No," said Allen, "it is almost seven; but oh, girls, we have such a story to tell you."

"Tell us then directly," said Eleanor; "but first answer mama, she has asked you three times if you have had tea, and where papa is."

"Papa is here," said Mr Graham quietly as he entered the room. "Although we had tea at four o'clock, we shall be glad of more as soon as you please. One word, Allen, before you begin your story, to relieve mama's anxiety

about Willie M'Kenzie. I have seen him, and he has promised me to come home immediately if his father desires him to do so; but I think I shall try to persuade the old man to allow him to go to sea, for his heart is so set upon it that I feel sure he will never settle at home. Now, Allen, tell our wonderful narrative."

Allen gave a somewhat lengthened description of their drive to A——; of their breakfasting at the inn; of their going down to the pier; of the difficulty of getting any tidings of Willie M'Kenzie; and of their at last meeting a man who had seen him, and who undertook to find him and to send him to Mr Graham.

"While he went for him," Allen continued, "we all sat down upon some logs on the pier, and were much amused watching the unloading of a vessel, and the landing of the passengers. After all the passengers had come on shore, some of the sailors came out of the vessel, and one of them was followed by a funny looking little dog, shaved like a poodle, and all covered with tar. We did not look much at him, for papa was explaining some part of

the vessel to us; but the dog came running up to papa, snuffed about him and seemed very happy to see him. Still we were too busy looking at the ship to notice him, and as he was very dirty, papa scolded him, pushed him away, and even threatened him with his stick. He moved away a step or two from the stick—stood still looking at us—opened his mouth—showed his teeth—and snacked them. Harry, Georgie and I exclaimed, at the same moment, 'It is Mussie's snack.'"

"Mussie!" exclaimed Mrs Graham and the girls in different tones of joy and surprise.

"Yes," said Mr Graham, "it was Mussie. As soon as he heard his name he came forward to us again, jumping up upon one after another, and snacking his teeth as if he meant to break them in pieces. The boys did not know what to do for joy. They took him in their arms, kissed him, and I rather think both Allen and Harry cried with joy."

"Well, I could not help it," said Harry; "it was not merely joy to see dear Mussie again, but he was so happy himself, he seemed

so crazy with joy, that it just made the tears come into my eyes, to see how much he loved us, and how well he remembered us."

"Poor Mussie!" said Mrs Graham, "and to whom did he belong, or how did he get there?"

"I think that he must have been stolen," replied Mr Graham. "The man with whom he came on shore denied all knowledge of him, and said that he did not belong to him. But we went on board to see the Captain, and he told us that he certainly belonged to that man. He had brought the dog on board about a twelvemonth ago, and Mussie had gone backwards and forwards with them ever since. The Captain said, that at first he was very unhappy, but he was a great pet with all the sailors, and had latterly been very contented, only he had heard his master say that he could seldom venture to take him on shore, for that he always tried to run away; and he added, 'If that man says he does not belong to him, you can take him away, for he does not belong to any one else.' Poor Mussie! I must say with the boys, that there was something quite affecting

in his transports of delight at seeing us all again."

"But where is he? Did you bring him home?" were the next questions.

They had left him in the hall in order to give mama and the girls a surprise. Eleanor and Marion ran out to the hall directly. All the servants had heard the news and were crowding round the favourite, while he was going from one to another, snacking his teeth and breathless with delight. He ran to meet the girls as soon as he heard their steps, and Eleanor stooping down to caress him, he jumped into her lap, licked her hands and neck, and looked, as Harry had said, almost crazy with joy. Dirty as he was, he was taken into the drawing-room; every good thing they could think of was given to him, and he got scarcely any rest all evening from the children caressing him. He fell at once into all his old habits, ran up before the boys to their room at bed time, and went to his own corner; and when they came home from church the next day, he had come to meet them at the old place.

A good many wistful looks were directed towards Sunset Cottage during the next week, but upon the whole they were tolerably happy and contented. It was very fine weather, and they took one or two nice long walks with Mr and Mrs Graham. The corn was cut down, so that many new walks were accessible to them; new at least to Alice and Douglas. Mussie was of great use in helping to make the week pass away pleasantly, it was a great amusement to watch how quickly he resumed all his former habits, and recognised his favourite rabbit-holes.

His determined pursuit of rabbits had made them at first a little anxious about the safety of their own pets, but Mussie's discreet behaviour soon dispelled their fears. The first day they took him with them to the rabbit-house, he did seem a little inclined to seize one of them; but he soon understood Allen's grave "No, no, Mussie," and never again shewed any desire to harm them. On the contrary, he amused the children much by constituting himself a governor over them. The children

were in the habit of allowing them to run out on the grass while they were cleaning their house, with one of the girls to watch them. But as soon as Mussie understood the business he took that office upon himself, lying down with his nose on the ground and his eyes intently fixed upon the rabbits; and if any one shewed an inclination to stray too far, he walked quietly in front of him, shewed his teeth, and gave one short bark, which had always the effect of sending the offender scampering back to the house for safety.

The young people found an occupation that lasted for one or two days of this week of banishment. It was making a new gate at the bottom of their garden, and a neat little foot-bridge across the Karn opposite it. This gave them a much more direct path between the garden and the house than they had had before; for the little stone-bridge was higher up the river than either the garden or house. And as they often remained rather too long among their flowers before breakfast, it was a great advantage to them to have a shorter way

to go. On Friday they returned to the building of their house with renewed vigour, and made great progress. The walls were completed, and when Mr and Mrs Graham saw it they admired it even more than the children had expected.

"You have really taken so much pains with it," said Mr Graham, "and have done every part of it in such a workmanlike manner, that I should be sorry if you were not as successful in the thatching your roof, and making the door and windows; so if you like I will give you M'Pherson for two or three days, to assist you in these more intricate parts."

The young people were not at first quite sure that they would like any assistance. They thought it would be so delightful to finish it all by themselves; but on more mature consideration, they determined to accept Mr Graham's offer. They were very anxious to ensure the house being quite finished by Uncle Percy's birth-day, when they expected a visit from him, and when they purposed having a feast in Sunset Cottage.

CHAPTER III.

TEMPER.

Mr and Mrs Graham were to dine with Mrs Wilson on the Saturday, which reconciled the young people a little to their engagement.

"You will keep us in order, mama," said Eleanor; "for I am very much afraid that we shall be tempted to behave ill, they are such provokingly formal creatures."

"You will have plenty of time to behave ill if you wish to do so, Eleanor," said Mrs Graham smiling; "for you will be there some hours before we go. But I hope that you will all take care and keep a strict watch over yourselves. I am not at all afraid that you will do what we forbid you, because we are not there to see you; but I am very much afraid that you may be cross and impatient if the Wilsons are very disagreeable."

"I think that is very likely, mama," replied Eleanor; "for I have no patience with such stupid formal girls as Maria and Eliza seem to be."

"But you ought to have patience with every one, my little girl. You will do no good by getting angry, but only make yourself unhappy. Try to remember that it is only for a few hours that you will have to bear with them, and do it cheerfully and good humouredly."

The Wilsons were certainly very disagreeable children,—selfish, quarrelsome, and peevish. There was, however, a little English girl there whom our young friends liked much better. Emily Greville was an only child, and had been as much indulged as the Wilsons; but she was a much more engaging child. Clever, lively, frank, and warm-hearted, spoiled as she was, it was impossible not to like her. She took a great fancy to the Karnford children, and expressed her feelings with all the frankness and energy of her disposition; so that they were quite delighted with her, and even rejoiced on her account that Mrs Graham had asked the

Wilsons to dine with them on the following Thursday.

"Well, have you been as miserable as you expected?" asked Mr Graham, as they drove away from the door.

"Oh, papa, the Wilsons are very disagreeable—so rude and selfish, they never seemed to think at all about what we should like to do, but only about what they wanted to do themselves."

"Then they quarrelled so much with one another," said Allen; "we had scarcely any play at all, because they never could agree upon a game to play at."

"And when we went out to walk," said Marion, "they complained so much about every little thing—about the sun—about the dust on the road—about the grass being wet with dew; and they could not climb a stile, or they were frightened for cows."

"I think," said Mrs Graham, "that I know *one* other little girl beside the Wilsons, who sometimes complains about every thing; who finds the sun too hot, and in the shade too

cold, the road too dusty, and the grass too wet."

"O, mama," said Marion, blushing deeply, "I have never complained so much since that miserable day when we went with the Lindsays to Karnside Castle, and papa sent me to sit in the carriage alone, because, he said, I made every one uncomfortable by my complaints. I shall never forget that day; I was so unhappy sitting in the carriage, and so ashamed to see you when you came back. Do not you think, mama, that I have been more contented since that day?"

"Yes, my dear Marion, I think you have. But I think that when you have yourself experienced how difficult it is to overcome a discontented and grumbling spirit, you ought to have more compassion for these little girls who have perhaps never been shewn the folly and sinfulness of it. You know, Marion, that both papa and I had spoken very seriously to you several times without any effect, until the sorrow and shame you felt that day made you more careful afterwards."

"But there was one person that we liked very much, mama," said Eleanor, "and that was Emily Greville. She is such a kind, merry girl, and so ready to give up her own wishes for others."

"She has so much fun and so little nonsense," added Douglas; "she is not afraid of any thing, and never makes difficulties."

"Oh, she is a very nice girl, do not you think so, mama?" asked Marion.

"I think, my dear, that she is a very pleasing little creature, but I think that she has been too much indulged, and is very self-willed."

"Oh, mama, you would not have called her self-willed if you had seen how pleasantly and good-humouredly she gave up her strong desire to go to the top of the hill, when we said that Alice was tired," said Eleanor.

"Yes," said Alice, "and after she had chosen hide-and-seek, she gave up at once when Douglas said that he liked prisoners' bars better."

"Still I must call her self-willed, when I re-

member how totally she disregarded her mama's injunctions not to go out without her bonnet. She did not look sulky, and say, 'I will, mama,' as Eliza Wilson did; but she equally disobeyed her mother, running out, as she did, with a merry 'Never fear, mama, I shall not catch cold.'"

"Still, mama," said Eleanor, "I think she is more thoughtless than self-willed."

Mrs Graham shook her head, "My dear Eleanor," said her papa, "you are blinded by the charm of Emily's manners. She is a merry, good-humoured girl, but I do not think that she has much idea of doing any thing but what she pleases; and I fear that she is as little actuated by principle in all she does as the sulky Wilsons are."

"Oh, papa," exclaimed two or three of the children at once. "We cannot think that. She is so kind that she would not willingly give pain to any one; now the Wilsons tease one another, and refuse to do any thing any one asks them to do."

"I acknowledge that Emily has naturally

a much more amiable temper than the poor Wilsons, but I cannot agree with you in saying, that she would not willingly give pain to any one. Did not she give her mama pain by going out against her wishes; and do you not remember how she teased Eliza Wilson at dinner time, by turning her into ridicule until she made her cry?"

"But, papa, Eliza really was very absurd during our walk."

"That is very likely, but was it for any good end that Emily gave that long laughable account of her fears; or do you think, Eleanor, that your mama and I would not have been much displeased with you if you had teased Eliza as Emily did to-day. Emily liked you, and willingly and kindly gave up her own wishes to please you, but did she ever give up her wishes to please the Wilsons?"

Eleanor could not say that she had; on the contrary, she remembered that she had thwarted and contradicted them about every thing.

"I dare say you cannot understand why I am so anxious to point out Emily's faults,

Eleanor. My reason is, that I look upon her as a very dangerous character. Her natural temper is so gay and kind, her appearance so graceful, and there is something so fascinating in the warmth and frankness of her manners, that one is very apt totally to overlook or greatly to extenuate all that is wrong in her. We had no difficulty in thinking Eliza Wilson disobedient and selfish, when she persisted in going out against her mother's wishes; but Emily looked so pretty and graceful, as she stood for a moment on the window sill, and looked back with such a bright, playful smile to her mama, that we scarcely thought she was doing wrong. But the thing that grieves me most in Emily is, that she makes her own will the sole rule of all her actions, and never appears to think of God at all as her guide, or as possessed of any authority over her."

"I see, papa, that it is difficult to perceive Emily's faults, but still I do not understand why you wish us to perceive them."

"Because, my dear Eleanor," said Mr Graham very solemnly, "there is scarcely any

thing so dangerous as to learn to think lightly of sin. If you begin by admiring Emily so much that you are blinded to the real nature of her faults—call her disobedience thoughtlessness, and perhaps look upon her total forgetfulness of every thing but her own pleasure as gaiety and light-heartedness, then I should tremble for you. You would soon learn to find excuses for your own sins, and unless checked and aroused by some bitter trial, you would become like your friend, trusting in the natural goodness of your own heart as your only guide, and forgetting altogether that your sole business in this world is, to glorify God and to be made fit to dwell with him for ever. This is the business of your life, although you are young children, as much as it is of ours; and God's commandments, 'Be ye kind one to another;' 'Be ye patient toward all men;' 'Be pitiful, be courteous,' are as solemnly binding upon you in your intercourse with other children, as they are upon us in our intercourse with older people. Any thing that can make you forget this must be hurtful to you; and

you can see, that to accustom yourselves to think the breaking of these commandments a trifling offence, must tend to make you forget, how entirely it is your duty to serve God, by keeping his precepts. I have mentioned these particular precepts, because they are those that Emily more particularly sinned against to-day in her conduct towards the Wilsons, and I thought the recalling to your memory, that gentleness, patience, and pity, towards all men, are directly enjoined upon us, might help to shew you that Emily's faults are not slight ones. My dear children, pray earnestly to God, to preserve ever in your hearts a true sense of the evil of sin, as being committed against a holy and sin-hating God, and watch over the first risings of an inclination to look upon any sin as a small matter.

This conversation was resumed upon the Sunday evening, when Mr and Mrs Graham took occasion from it, to press upon the children the necessity of learning to look upon all sin as being the cause of Christ's death.

"When any of you are tempted to think

lightly of some fault that you have committed," said Mr Graham, "think of Christ upon the cross, and remember that it was sin that caused him to suffer; try to realize the bitterness of that agony that made him cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and this, with God's blessing, will make you hate even what seem small sins. You can never make yourself hate sin, but God will give you his holy Spirit, to enable you to do so, if you ask him. And when you are with disagreeable, provoking children, like the Wilsons, try to remember, that the Saviour who has been so patient towards you, in spite of your innumerable sins, bids you be patient to *all* men, not 'only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.' The more you learn of the sinfulness of sin, the more deeply will you feel the preciousness of the Saviour; and the more you know of his inestimable value, the more earnestly will you desire to keep all his commandments."

The house-building proceeded merrily and quickly, with M'Pherson's help.

He was an excellent superintendent, always

willing that the children should try their own little plans where they were practicable, and where they were not, helping them to find out their error for themselves, instead of dictating to them. He explained to them his reasons for every rule he gave them, so that they might be able to judge in any new case, and that, as Allen said, was a great comfort.

"I dislike so much," he said, "to be taught to do anything, by merely getting a set of formal rules without any reason for them; so that I can never find out what to do in a difficulty, but have to go back to my teacher for a new rule, which will perhaps after all, only serve for that one case."

"It is so difficult to remember mere rules too," said Douglas; "but when you know the reason for them, then you can easily remember them."

"Yes," added Harry, "I like M'Pherson much better as a teacher than old Thomas, the gardener. When I ask Thomas for any advice about my garden, he tells me to do so and so; then if I ask him why I must do it, he stares

at me and says, 'Deed, Master Harry, I canna tell you why, but just because you maun do it.' Then I say that is no reason; and he says it is, so he gets cross, and I get angry, and call him 'an old fool.'"

The children laughed at Harry's vehemence, and M'Pherson said, "You go and tease Thomas at wrong times, when he is busy and has not leisure to attend to you, and then you get angry and call him names, which makes him more unwilling to answer you next time."

"At any rate, M'Pherson, I never call you 'an old fool.'"

"You had better not," replied M'Pherson, laughing; "for if you do, I will certainly tell my master."

"Indeed, you would not, M'Pherson, you would never be so cross; it is all very well to say that you would do it just now; but I know very well that you are too fond of us, ever to tell tales upon any of us."

"I hope that I am too fond of you ever to conceal your faults from your father and mother. Dearly as I love you all, I know that they love

you still more, and would never give you unnecessary pain; and I am sure that they know much better than I do, when a fault deserves punishment, so do not trust to my not telling. I rather think I once got you punished, Master Harry," he continued, smiling.

"Oh," replied Harry, "I know what you mean; when you told papa about my striking John; but that was an injury done to another person, now I am sure that you could never make up your mind, to tell of an injury done to yourself."

"Indeed, I would; for my reason for telling would not be because you had injured me, but because you had done wrong."

Alice returned to the discussion about giving rules. She could not agree with the boys, she said; she liked much better, both in work and lessons, to have a certain positive rule given her to follow; for then she could go on following it exactly, and feeling sure that all was right, even although she did not understand it.

"But that is a very lazy way of getting through work, Alice," remarked Eleanor.

"And a very bad way," said Allen, "because I am sure that you can never remember all the rules you learn, and if you do not understand them, you will never be able to recall the meaning of them to your mind after you have forgotten the words."

"Oh, I dare say that you are all quite right," replied Alice laughing; "but still I cannot help feeling that it is a great comfort to be told exactly what to do and how to do it. In arithmetic, which you know is the most difficult of our lessons to me, I mean, I should never get on at all if I were to wait, as Harry does, to understand all the reasons why the rule was made, before I began to follow it. That is all very well for clever people, but it would never do for slow people, we would take so long to learn every rule."

"But then, Alice, look at the difference," said Douglas; "you were much sooner ready to begin your sum to-day than Harry was, because he waited, as you say, to find out the reason of the rule, before beginning to practise it. But in a few months after this when

you have both forgotten it, Harry can find it out in a minute or two, while you must seek for your book, find out the rule, and learn it over again."

"Besides," said Allen, "you might perhaps wish to work the sum up here where you have no book, or in a shop when you wished to ascertain how much you ought to pay for something. Imagine, Alice, how ridiculous it would be, to say to the shopmen, 'I have forgotten the rule by which to find out what I owe you, but I shall go home, look in my arithmetic-book, and then come back and pay you.'"

All the children laughed heartily, and Alice joined them very good-humouredly, but she said "that she was not convinced. She could not help thinking that it would be a great waste both of her own time and her uncle's, if she were to pause as long over every rule, as she would require to do before she could find the reason for it."

"But I am sure, Miss Alice," said M'Pherson, "that your uncle would not think that a waste of time if it taught you to exercise your

mind more. Being satisfied to follow rules without understanding them, is a sleepy way of learning lessons. Any one can do that with only half his mind busy."

"Well, M'Pherson, I rather suspect that is just my case. I do use only half my mind, but I am trying to get the better of it, for it grieves both uncle and aunt."

"You are quite right," answered M'Pherson. "It is a very bad habit to get into, that of doing things with your mind half asleep or busy with other things."

"That is the reason why you let us try our own plans, is it not?" asked Harry.

"One reason; another is, that I know that young people like to try their own plans, and so I am willing to allow you to try them when they are at all good."

"Which Harry's plans are not always," said Marion, looking archly at him. "Do you remember the duck story, Harry?"

The Grahams and M'Pherson laughed, while Alice and Douglas begged to hear the story.

"Last spring," said Marion, "a pond was

made at the back of the poultry-yard. The ducks did not at first understand it, as they had never been accustomed to anything better than the little trough under the pump, so Peggy used to drive them in every day to teach them the way. We used to help her, and very fine fun it was; for the ducks did not understand that we were doing it for their good, and they tried to escape in every direction; then we chased them out of their hiding holes; they quacked and waddled, and we shouted and ran, and so we used to get them in. Well, one day Peggy showed us a fine brood of young ducklings, new out of the shell; very proud of them was the old hen that had hatched them, and very proud of them was Peggy. We admired them very much, but when we had all gone away with Peggy, except Harry and Georgie, they began to think that it would be a good plan to give these young ducks a bath as well as the old ones. So with a great deal of trouble they got them to the edge of the pond, and with two sticks pushed them gently in one by one. The little creatures swam very

well, but they wanted to get out much sooner than the boys thought right; so whenever one came to the edge they poked it back with their sticks. Soon they began to swim slower and slower; Harry fancied they seemed to be a little tired, and thought that perhaps they had better let them out now. But, alas! none came to get out, they were too weak to swim to the edge again; one popped under water; then another. Harry cried to Georgie to run for Peggy while he went into the pond to help them out. Two more sunk before he could get them all out, and the others looked so tired and cold Harry feared that they were going to die too. Poor Harry! he was most anxious for Peggy to come, and yet he was half afraid to see her. At last he heard her voice speaking angrily to Georgie, "Ye jist poked them back a wee, ye say, and what garred ye do that, to think of you're murdering my bonny wee craturs in that senseless gait." Harry staid to hear no more; he ran away, and when Peggy reached the pond she found four dead bodies floating in the water and the others half dead with cold on the bank.

The next time she saw Harry she said, "Aweel, my man, ye may be guid at a hantle things, but ye'll ne'er be a guid duck's nursery-maid."

Marion told her story very well, mimicking Harry's look of terror when he saw the ducks sinking, and Peggy's wrath and her broad Scotch; and all the children laughed except Harry. Allen saw that Harry did not like the laugh, and he told the girls that they had better go away and take a walk; adding that they were of no use there.

"We have done you a great deal of good to-day, you saucy boy, in making the place tidy," said Eleanor.

"There is nothing more to do now," said Douglas; "so you may go up the hill to meet aunt and uncle, and ask them to come here, and see how much we have done."

"Oh yes! do go," cried Georgie; "and take Mussie with you, he is quite tired of this work."

"Is Garry here?" asked Eleanor. "It is so amusing to see them together."

"Mussie has a thorough contempt for

Garry," observed Harry. "When first he came back he tried to teach Garry where the best rabbit holes were, but ever since he found that poor Garry had no notion how to catch rabbits, and, indeed, was rather frightened at them, he has evidently looked upon him as a perfect fool, of no use except to be jumped over, and teased, when he cannot get us to play with."

"Mussie is a bit of a fool himself," remarked Douglas; "he stood for half an hour last night under the large fir-tree; barking at a wasp's nest."

"Oh, but there is something so amusing in Mussie's folly, I think he does these things on purpose to make us laugh."

"Do you think that he tumbled over the sunk fence the other day to make us laugh, Harry? Oh, how funny he looked when he got up, not quite sure what had happened to him, whether he had broken his legs or not."

"When was that?" asked M'Pherson.

"We were chasing Muss on the lawn," re-

plied Allen; "he made a sudden turn at the very edge of the sunk fence, and tumbled head over heels into the park."

"But he can jump over quite well," said Harry.

"He does it sometimes when he is in a great hurry to get to us in the park, but he does not like to do it," replied Allen. "It is very amusing to see him, hesitating, whining, and running backwards and forwards, as if he were trying to find an easier place, then making a spring, and when he gets up, running off, wagging his tail, and snacking his teeth, as much as to say, 'Am not I a clever dog?'"

"Now, away you go, girls," cried Douglas.

"I will try to find some work for you before to-morrow," said M'Pherson, as they turned away.

"What kind of work?" asked the girls, eagerly, coming back.

"You shall see to-morrow," was M'Pherson's smiling answer.

"Tiresome, M'Pherson! When you know

that I have no patience. I cannot wait till to-morrow."

"What will you do then, Marion," asked Douglas, laughing, "if you *cannot* wait till to-morrow, and M'Pherson *will* not tell you to-day?"

But Marion did not hear him, she had started off upon a race with the dogs, as a means of getting rid of her impatience. When Eleanor and Alice overtook her, she was gathering some wild flowers, and she proposed that they should try who could get the prettiest nosegay for Mrs Graham. The others agreed, and for some time they walked along in silence, each occupied in her search after flowers. When Eleanor and Marion came to the edge of the wood, Eleanor said, that they would not find any more flowers, as they were going through some stubble fields, and as they must walk faster, or they would miss papa and mama. Marion and she compared their bouquets, which were both very pretty, and then they waited for Alice.

"I wish Alice did not walk so very slowly," said Marion, knocking her foot impatiently

against the paling. "I am so anxious to hear what mama will say of her flowers, and which she will think the prettiest. I am sure that it will not be Alice's; she finds so much difficulty in clambering up banks, or jumping over ditches for the pretty ones. Oh, there she is; let me see your nosegay, Alice," she continued, running to meet her.

Alice held out, not a bouquet of flowers, but a beautiful bunch of leaves, varying from the brightest green and pale yellow, to rich deep brown and crimson. They were very tastefully arranged, and looked remarkably pretty.

"How pretty; how very pretty!" exclaimed Eleanor and Marion.

"How did you think of gathering them?" asked Marion. "Your nosegay is much the prettiest, and she looked discontentedly at her own, as she spoke. 'Mine looks quite ugly beside it. I think I will throw it away.'"

"Oh, no, Marion. It is very pretty," said Alice, good humouredly; "but I think that it would be a good plan to divide my leaves between your nosegay and Eleanor's. Your gay,

bright flowers will be well set off by my sombre leaves."

"No, indeed, Alice," said Marion; "you are far too kind to me when I am petted, but I will not take your leaves. Your nosegay is the prettiest, and you must have the pleasure of giving it to mama yourself."

"Let us put them all together then," said Alice. "Yours and Eleanor's will look much better mixed. She has too much scarlet, and you have too much purple."

This was agreed upon, and sitting down on the stile, Eleanor soon arranged the three bunches into a very pretty nosegay. It wanted nothing, they all said, except a few large green leaves round the outside. They looked on all sides, but saw nothing that would do, until Marion espied some growing close to the hedge in the stubble field. They went into the field to get them, but found a ditch between them and the leaves. Marion was sure that she could reach them, by standing upon a stone that she saw in the middle of the ditch. Eleanor advised her to take off her shoes and stockings

and then if her feet did get wet, it would not signify; but Marion was too intent upon getting the leaves that very moment to listen to her advice, so she prepared to put one foot cautiously on the stone, to ascertain if it were steady or not. Eleanor held her hand that she might be able to help her if her foot slipped, but when she found that the stone was steady, she took away her hand, and stretched forward eagerly to get the prize. Alas! the treacherous stone was firm only on the side she had first stepped on, and now when she leaned the weight of her body on the other, in endeavouring to reach the leaves, it turned over, and Marion fell on her face, on the opposite bank.

As there was no danger, and she was not at all hurt, the girls could not help laughing at her comical appearance. Her frock and hands besmeared with a thick black mud, and some even on her face and the inside of her bonnet. But their laughter became quite uncontrollable when Marion drew out first one foot and then the other without a shoe, both sticking fast in the mud. There was something so ludicrous

in the whole thing, and in Marion's doleful "What am I to do without my shoes?" that it was quite irresistible. Marion got angry, her temper was injured by the accident, and to be laughed at was intolerable. But it was in vain that Eleanor and Alice tried to compose themselves. Whenever they attempted to speak, the absurdity of the whole scene came across them again, and they laughed, until they could not stand. Marion's indignation increased.

"I really wish you would give over that foolish, unkind laughter," she said, beginning to cry, "and try to help me. I am sure I cannot get home without my shoes."

Her tears sobered them, and they tried to look grave. Eleanor said, that if Alice would take hold of her frock to keep her from falling, she would try to fish out the shoes with a stick. A second catastrophe had nearly happened here, for Eleanor was seized with a silent fit of laughter while she was stooping over the ditch, which infecting Alice, they both almost tumbled in.

At that moment, Mr and Mrs Graham made

their appearance at the stile. Marion immediately began a bitter complaint against the girls for being so cross as to laugh at her, instead of helping her.

"Indeed, Marion, we could not help it," said Eleanor. "We tried to keep from laughing. I have got a pain in my throat from trying to be grave. But it was so funny to see first one shoeless foot come up, and then another."

And there was another burst of laughter from the girls, so hearty, so uncontrollable, that Mr and Mrs Graham could not resist it, but laughed with them. Marion gave way to a fresh fit of crying, saying that they were very, very unkind.

"Come, come, my little Marion," said Mr Graham, kindly, "you must not be foolish, the girls do not intend to be unkind. Dry your eyes, and laugh too, and I will try to get your shoes for you."

Mrs Graham offered to wipe some of the mud off Marion's bonnet; but Marion turned

sullenly away, and would not make any effort to recover her good humour.

"Nay, Marion," said Mr Graham; "if you are sulky and cross, we shall leave you to help yourself. I am not surprised that you felt a little cross at first; it was as natural for you to do so, as for the girls to laugh. But they are making strong exertions to be grave; let me see you exert yourself as much to laugh. I am sure it is not a thing to cry about," he continued, in a pleasant cheerful tone.

Marion turned from him as she had done from her mama.

"Very well," he said, "we shall go home and leave you. Come, Alice and Eleanor."

"Oh, papa, oh, uncle; do stay and help her. Indeed, Marion, we are very, very sorry that we laughed; do not be angry; look up and dry your eyes, and papa will get your shoes."

Eleanor stooped down and put her arms round Marion's neck, as she sat on the bank, but Marion pushed her away, and when Mussie,

seeing that she was in distress, came to speak to her, she struck him with all her force.

Mrs Graham took Eleanor's hand and led her gently away. They all passed over the stile, and proceeded homewards. Eleanor and Alice were very sorry, they felt as if they were to blame for Marion's crossness, and they were anxious to know how she could get home. When they came to Sunset Cottage, and the boys heard the story, both Douglas and Allen begged to be allowed to go to Marion, that they might help her. But Mr Graham preferred sending M'Pherson, as he feared that the boys would be too kind to her, even although she were still sulky.

Marion did not at first believe that her papa and mama would really leave her; but when their voices and the sound of their footsteps died away, and she found that she was actually alone, she began to think that she had been very foolish. If she had only tried to keep down the angry feelings when they first arose, and had tried to laugh with the others, she might have been going home quietly and hap-

pily with them now, instead of that she had displeased both her papa and mama, and made them leave her alone, and what was she to do? She rose and went to the ditch; she saw where her shoes were, but without some one to help her, it was impossible for her to get them. She looked all round to see if any one was near, but no one was in sight. She then tried how she could walk without shoes; she got on pretty well on the soft grass by the side of the ditch, but she had to cross a part of the stubble field to get to the stile, and she found that the sharp straw hurt her feet so much, that she was forced to give it up.

Oh, how bitterly she lamented her folly and crossness, and how firmly she resolved never to be so foolish again, but to try every means in her power to overcome the irritability and impatience of her temper. These wise resolutions, however, would not help her home, and she was just preparing to make another attempt to get to the stile, when she saw M'Pherson come up to it. She called to him in a very humble voice, asked him, if he would be so

good as to try to recover her shoes. M'Pherson came forward very willingly, when he found from her tone of voice, that her ill-temper was subdued. He soon got up her shoes and brought them to her, but they were of little use, they were filled with mud; and even after M'Pherson had cleaned them with grass, they were so soft from the water that she could not get them on. Marion very nearly began to cry again, but she remembered her resolution to be patient in difficulties, and only asked M'Pherson in a very sad voice what she was to do.

M'Pherson made a kind of shoe horn for her of a piece of wood, and with some difficulty one shoe was got on; but no exertions could get the other one up in the heel; and she must try to walk home as it was. M'Pherson gave her a piece of string to tie round her foot so as to keep the shoe on, but she had a very uncomfortable walk, and she often wished that she had followed Eleanor's advice to take off her stockings and shoes. She told M'Pherson as they walked along how foolish she had

been, and how she had resolved to look henceforward at the laughing instead of the crying side of any little misfortune. M'Pherson, said that was a very wise resolution.

"When any little cross happens," he said, "the best plan is to try every way to remedy it; and if you cannot; why then just submit cheerfully, and make the best of it; but crying never helped any one yet, and never will."

"Do not you think, M'Pherson, that it is a good sign of my being able to keep my resolution, that I am not fretting just now, although my shoes are really very uncomfortable." M'Pherson hesitated. He said that it was in so far a good sign, but advised her not to be too confident in herself. He warned her that little accidents would often come so suddenly and so provokingly, that the wise resolution and every thing would be forgotten; and she would begin to cry and fret before she remembered. He said that it was often easier to go on bearing a long trial well, than to submit to a short sudden one.

They were all at dinner when Marion reached

home, and after she had dressed herself she could not make up her mind to go into the dining room. She thought that she should feel and look so awkward and foolish, going in among them all; the servants would see that she had been crying, and in short she would rather lose her dinner than go down.

In the mean time Mrs Graham began to feel a little uneasy at her not making her appearance. When dinner was nearly over, she asked the servant if she had not come, and hearing that she had been home for some time, she desired one of the children to go up and invite her to come down. Harry was the one fixed on to take this message, as they thought that Marion might feel awkward at seeing either Eleanor or Alice. But after being away for some time he returned without her, she was so sorry and so ashamed that she could not come down.

"You had better leave her alone then," said Mrs Graham, "and we will go out to walk."

The children all begged that, as the evening was very mild, the walk might be put off until

after tea, when perhaps Marion would join them. Mr and Mrs Graham consented, and they went to learn their lessons. Harry made another attempt to persuade Marion to come down to the study at least, but in vain; she said that she could not do it, and his mama who met him returning from his fruitless errand, again advised him to leave her alone.

"Please mama, allow me to take up some of her lesson books, that she may learn them just now, and then perhaps she will go out after tea."

"You may do it if you like, Harry, but I do not think that she deserves it. She is both foolish and selfish in refusing to come out of her room when we all wish it."

Harry, however, persevered in his kind attentions to her, and when tea was ready they all entreated Mrs Graham so earnestly to send up one more invitation that she yielded to their wishes. Allen tried this time but in vain, Mrs Graham said that she would remain at home while the rest went out to walk, and that she would keep some tea for Marion. Douglas

ran up to tell Marion that the tea-things were still in the drawing-room, and begged her to go down and take some after they had gone out.

Marion was by this time very hungry, and could not resist the invitation; but when she opened the door and saw her mama sitting there, she felt inclined to run away again. Her mama smiled.

"Come in, Marion," she said, "and if you are so terribly afraid of seeing any one I will turn my back to you, and go on with my work. Will that do? or, must I leave you quite alone?"

Marion saw that her mama was laughing at her, and she came in and sat down to eat, feeling a little angry as she considered her shame and sorrow for her fault to be very meritorious.

Mrs Graham did not speak until Marion had finished tea, but then she turned round and said more gravely,

"I want to speak to you, my little Marion. It has vexed both papa and me to see that

you are not really sorry for your behaviour to-day."

"Mama, I am *very* sorry," said Marion reproachfully, tears rising in her eyes. "It was because I was so sorry and ashamed that I did not come down stairs."

"My dear Marion, if you had been really sorry for having displeased papa and me, and for having been cross to the girls, do you think that you would have refused to do what we wished you to do? I have no doubt that you felt sorrow, but it was a selfish sorrow. You were grieved that you had placed yourself in an uncomfortable position,—grieved that you had shown yourself to be a foolish petted child,—grieved perhaps, too, because you were forced to blame yourself; but real sorrow for having done wrong would have made you very earnest to find some means of making amends, and would have prevented you from yielding to the repugnance you felt to come down stairs to us when we wished it."

"But indeed, mama, I *could* not come down I was so ashamed."

"Oh, Marion! you must not talk nonsense; you know that you could have come down if you had wished to do so," said Mrs Graham smiling.

"But, mama, I could not *wish* to do it. It was so disagreeable to think of seeing you all again."

"I can quite well understand that, Marion; I can quite well understand that you would feel awkward and foolish, and would dislike very much to come amongst us again. When I sent an invitation to you to come to the dining-room I did not think that it would be pleasant to you to come, but I did hope that, feeling sorry for having grieved us, you would be anxious to do what was unpleasant to yourself in order to give pleasure to us."

"Mama, I did not know that my coming down stairs would give any of you pleasure. I thought"—

"Take care, my little girl," said Mrs Graham earnestly interrupting her. "Take care that you do not say any thing that is not *exactly* true. Did Harry in his visits to you, say

nothing to lead you to believe that we were anxious that you should join us? When he was trying to persuade you, did he not urge that it would make them all happier if you would consent? I think he would use some such arguments."

Marion did not answer; but she cast down her eyes and blushed deeply. Mrs Graham continued with much earnestness and affection.

"My dear Marion, I have observed this want of accuracy in you before, and it grieves me much. Your dislike to being found in the wrong leads you sometimes to plead as an excuse what is not *quite* true. You will try to watch against this, will you not, my dear, and pray to God to make you perfectly sincere in thought, word and action? You deceive yourself in these excuses, and persuade yourself that you have not committed sin when you have. Now you must ask God to make you very jealous over yourself, to make you so fearful of sinning against him as that you will desire, not to conceal your sins, but to find them out, in order that you may avoid them for the future."

Mrs Graham paused, Marion did not speak, but her eyes were full of tears. Mrs Graham saw that she was convinced and humbled; she put her arm round her, and drew her towards her, as she said tenderly,

"I think that you are convinced now, dear, that it was a selfish, not a sincere, sorrow that prevented you from complying with our wishes this evening, and do not you see too, that it is this selfishness that makes you so unable to bear provocation of any kind? You think too much of the injury done to yourself, and not enough of the temptation to offend that the other party have had. You only thought to-day how disagreeable it was to you to be laughed at; and did not remember how natural it was for the girls to laugh. But I shall not say any more about this matter, you have had a great deal of pain and grief to-day from your impatience, and I think that you will not be so cross or foolish again."

"Mama," said Marion with a good deal of hesitation, "do you think that I am *very* selfish? more selfish than the others, I mean?"

"It is of no consequence to you, Marion, whether other people are more selfish than you or not. God says 'look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' And if you break this commandment, it will make you no better that others break it as often as you do, or even that many break it oftener. I do not think that your selfishness is very manifest; I believe that you are very often not at all aware of the selfish tendency of many things that you do. For instance, when you do a kind service for any one, you are very anxious that they should know the full amount of trouble it has given you to do it. If you were thinking only how to give pleasure to others you would not be willing that they should know how much their pleasure has cost you. Again, you are often vexed if Alice or Eleanor do any thing for me because you would like to do it yourself. There is a kind of insincerity apparent in these instances as well as selfishness; your kind service has been done more that you may appear to be kind, than in order to give pleasure; you

desire more to shew *yourself* useful, than to save *me* trouble. When a girl thinks much about herself, it has a great tendency to make her endeavour to seem what she is not, and that, my dear little girl, is an additional motive for you to try to subdue your selfishness. You will find it very difficult to do. It is not difficult to *seem* unselfish, but it is very difficult to be so in reality. And if you try to forget yourself and to do every thing from pure single motives; from a desire to please God, or to do good to those around; you will soon find that you cannot succeed in your own strength. But then, Marion, the God who has commanded you to 'consider others,' and to 'do all things to his glory,' has also promised that 'he himself will write his law upon your heart,' that he will enable you to do as he has commanded you."

"I think, mama," said Marion in a low voice, that you know very well what passes in my mind. When you or papa shew me that I have been selfish, or impatient, I feel so sorry; not because it is wrong, but because you think

ill of me, and I try very hard for some days to be gentle or unselfish, only that you may think well of me. I think I see how wrong that is, and indeed, mama, I will try to be more anxious to do all things for God's glory, and I will pray to him to help me."

"If this day's pain has taught you this, my own dear Marion," said Mrs Graham, "you may rejoice at the remembrance of it all your life."

CHAPTER IV.

KARNSIDE CASTLE.

"M'Pherson promised to find some work for us to-day," said Eleanor as they were going up to the house next afternoon.

"There is M'Pherson before us," cried Georgie, "with a large bundle of rushes." The children quickened their pace and arrived at the cottage, just as M'Pherson had deposited his load at the door. They were eager to know what was to be done with them. M'Pherson made the boys help him to roll a trunk of a tree to the front of the house, so as to make a convenient seat for the girls. And he then explained that he intended them to make baskets and fruit plates of these rushes. He showed them how to plait them, described how they were to soften and smooth the plaits, by

first damping, and then ironing them ; and lastly he explained to them how they were to sew them together and shape the baskets.

The girls were delighted, and began their new work with great eagerness. The thatching was completed, M'Pherson and Allen began one of the windows, while the other boys were occupied beside the girls, in making a table.

"It is so provoking to think of these people coming to-morrow," exclaimed Douglas ; "we are so happy working here to-day and to-morrow will be such a tiresome day."

"But do not you think, Master Douglas," said M'Pherson smiling, "that it is rather foolish to spoil your pleasure to-day, by thinking about the tiresomeness of to-morrow's occupations?"

"But I cannot help thinking about it," replied Douglas.

"Oh, yes, you can. Only try whenever the thought comes in, to chase it away with some very bright one. I have known people make themselves miserable, never enjoying the good that was present, but always thinking about

some little trouble or vexation that might happen."

"But I assure you, M'Pherson, that this is very far from being a *small* trouble," said Douglas, laughing.

"Because you are determined to make it a great one, and I think you will most probably succeed in doing so. You will think so much about the vexations you expect to arise, that by the time they come, (if they happen at all,) you will be quite able to look upon yourself as a sort of victim; you will be as cross and unreasonable as you can wish, and will most probably get into a scrape of some kind."

"Why do you suppose that I wish all this to happen?" asked Douglas.

"Because you are taking the right way to accomplish it. You are fretting so much about these little vexations to-day, that, I am sure, they will seem very great ones to-morrow."

"But, M'Pherson," said Eleanor; "I think that when you have been expecting any little trouble, you can bear it much more patiently than when it comes suddenly."

"Oh," replied M'Pherson, "if you think that you will most probably meet with many little trials of temper to-morrow, and look forward to them with a quiet determination to bear them patiently and cheerfully; that is very well. But to set about imagining all that may or can happen in a discontented grumbling way, can serve no good end, but will only make you unhappy to-day as well as to-morrow."

"Still," said Allen, "I cannot help thinking that the visit of these people is a great misfortune rather than a little vexation, as you call it."

"Well, Master Allen, if you call a matter like that a great misfortune, I wonder what you would say if you were to break your leg; or if your papa were to be killed by a fall from his horse. You must invent some new terms, there are none in the English language strong enough for such accidents; when the spending a few hours in company with two or three cross children, is worthy of being called a great misfortune." Allen laughed good-humouredly

as he replied that M'Pherson was too particular.

"Because, Master Allen, I think it is a very bad thing to accustom oneself to make so much of trifles. A boy who calls a visit of a few hours' duration a great misfortune, will not be likely to submit to the many trials he must meet with when he is a man. And you know that to murmur and repine at what God sees fit to send us is a sin in his sight."

"Do you think that it is really sinful to feel vexed and unhappy at such little things as this visit of to-morrow? I dare say it is foolish, it only makes matters worse."

"Tell me, Master Allen, do you believe that God orders every thing that befalls us, the small as well as the great?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then, I am sure you must all acknowledge that it is sinful to murmur at what God sends. I believe that one reason why we are more apt to grumble at little trials than at greater ones, is because we are more apt to forget that these little ones come from God too. When I hear

people say, how tiresome, how provoking such a thing is, and how much they wish it had been otherwise, I often wonder that they are not afraid to speak in that way, when it is God who has ordered every thing."

"I wish you could help us to find out some way of being contented to-morrow," sighed Douglas, "for in spite of all your reasoning, I think it is not a *little* vexation. You do not know what tiresome peevish children they are; nothing pleases them."

"Then, I am sure," replied M'Pherson, laughing; "I am much more sorry for them than for you. For you may be very sure that no one's peevishness or discontent is so hard to bear as your own, and none can make you more completely unhappy and uncomfortable."

Their conversation was interrupted by Mrs Graham's coming to Sunset Cottage with good news for the young people. Mr Graham had gone to Mrs Wilson's to ask her consent to the whole party going to see the ruins of Karnside Castle the next day. While the children were congratulating themselves upon this plea-

sant termination to all their gloomy forebodings, M'Pherson gave a significant glance at Douglas, as if to remind him how uselessly he had been vexing himself.

After the children were all ready for dinner, they went to the front door to watch for Mr Graham's return. He had been successful, they were to go, and nothing remained to be wished for except a fair day on the morrow. Mr and Mrs Graham submitted very good-humouredly to the somewhat noisy discussion of plans, which lasted nearly all dinner-time; but, after each separate point had been settled at least three times, Mr Graham began to tell Mrs Graham the cause of his being so late.

He had met an old college friend at Benholme; a gentleman whom he had not seen for many years, not since they both left college. Occupied as the children were with their own concerns, their interest was much awakened by Mr Graham's animated description of Mr Leslie.

He described him to be a man of most extraordinary talents and attainments, and yet

so simple and unaffected both in mind and manners, with such a warm heart, and such winning frankness and good-humour, that Mrs Graham and they all expressed great joy at the prospect of seeing him on the next day. The children listened attentively while Mr and Mrs Graham spoke about the great usefulness of such a man; how his steady religious principles, his clear judgment and great activity, and earnestness of mind; all helped to make his talents eminently useful. And Mr Graham told in glowing language all that he could, and did do for the good of man and the glory of God, dwelling with the eloquence of deep feeling upon the blessedness of thus dedicating all our energies and talents to the service of our God and Saviour.

"I should like very much to be that man, uncle," exclaimed Douglas, with a kindling eye and a glowing cheek. "I should like to be respected and admired as Mr Leslie is; and only think how delightful it would be if some one were to speak of me with as much enthusiasm as you do of him."

"Very delightful, Douglas," replied Mr Graham smiling; "but Mr Leslie would not be such a noble character, if his only aim were to be respected and admired. It is, my boy, the singleness of heart with which Mr Leslie devotes himself to the advancement of God's cause, that makes me feel and speak about him with so much respect and enthusiasm. He forgets himself altogether, and appears to remember that he has singularly great endowments, only to feel more solemnly the responsibility under which he lies to use them aright."

"But, uncle, even if I had that single-hearted desire to do good for its own sake, what chance do you think I should have of ever being like Mr Leslie? I should like so much to be a great man."

"You know, Douglas," answered Mr Graham, "that I have often told you that you have very good abilities indeed; but before you can hope to rival Mr Leslie, you must be a great deal more constantly industrious and persevering

than you are, and a great deal more patient in overcoming difficulties."

"Tell us, papa," said Allen, "all the qualities we require to make us as great as Mr Leslie."

"A very modest request, Allen!" answered Mr Graham smiling. "I cannot promise that any of you will ever equal him, for his mind is a very uncommon one, uniting great quickness and clearness of judgment, with steadiness and perseverance. But it is not of so much importance to you to inquire how you may be as eminent as Mr Leslie, as how you may improve to the utmost the talents that God has given you. Be very faithful in using your greatest exertions to do every thing you are required to do in the very best way; even though it be only to learn a lesson in geography, history, &c., take care, that it be perfectly learned; you should do every thing as quickly as you can too, and give your whole mind to what you are about."

"Go on, papa, please tell us something more."

"Oh! try to practise these rules first, and

then you may ask for new ones. You will not find it so very easy to be earnest, diligent, and attentive, as perhaps you think it is. But, it is time for you to go to your lessons, and remember," he continued smiling, "to *practise* my rules, and not to *think* about them so much as to make you unable to attend to what you are doing."

The next morning immediately after breakfast the party set off,—Mr Graham, Marion, and the boys, riding; and Mrs Graham, Alice, and Eleanor, in the carriage. They were to drive first to Benholme for some of the Wilsons' party, and the girls were a little anxious to see who were to be their companions. Mrs Greville, Emily, Eliza and Maria Wilson were waiting for them; both Eliza and Maria declaring that they could not go in the servants' seat behind, the other three girls begged to be allowed to sit there together. Mrs Graham made no objections to it, and they formed a very merry trio. Emily was certainly a remarkably amusing companion, eager and animated about all she saw, and so frank in expressing her thoughts

and feelings. Once Eleanor thought that she was wrong, in telling them some very absurd stories about the Wilsons. But when Eleanor told her that she thought she ought not to do it, Emily took the reproof so good-humouredly, that both the girls were quite delighted with her, and they reached their journey's end in great harmony, and mutually pleased with one another. The riders had taken a shorter road and were there before them.

At first the party kept together, looking at the ruins, but the young people soon began to weary of the slow pace at which the elders moved, and Allen asked if they might go by themselves, as he knew all the dangerous places. Mr Graham gave his consent at once, only desiring Allen not to go through any part of the left wing; but Mrs Wilson said that she would be much happier if her children remained with her. Eliza and Maria were quite willing to think that the young party would be too boisterous for them; but James said rudely that he *would* go, he was determined that he would not stay with the old people.

"Oh, we can all stay, then," said Allen.

But James declared that if they did he would go by himself; he had no notion of losing all the fun, merely because his mother had taken one of her foolish fancies. Mrs Wilson then asked the others earnestly to go with him, trying to hide his self-willedness by giving her consent, and acknowledging that she was too easily alarmed.

The children ran merrily up and down winding stairs, through long narrow passages and into curious small rooms, until they came to a long gallery with a strong oaken door at the farther end. Marion went towards this door, saying that that was the way to the most curious place of all; but Allen stopped her and told her that his father had forbidden them to go there. Marion merely remarked, that she was very sorry, as she wished to shew Douglas the dungeons, and she was turning away, when James Wilson said, "I *will* go at any rate, and you can come with me, Marion."

"Oh, I will never think of going if papa wishes me not," said Marion laughing.

"*Wishes!*" said James with a sneer; "*commands*, you mean."

Marion did not answer, she coloured very much, for she did not like to be laughed at even by a silly boy.

"Well," said Harry, "*commands*, if you like the word better. What do you find to laugh at in that?"

"Only that I would not be dictated to in such a way if I were you; that is all. But you are such a good tame animal, you do all you are bid, and never think of going anywhere without asking papa's or mama's leave."

James spoke the last words in a slow drawling tone as if he intended to mimick Harry, and he concluded with such a provoking laugh, that Harry's hot temper could not stand it, and he said hastily,

"If I am a tame animal I am sure you are more like a wild bear than anything else," and he pointed to James's rough hair and disorderly clothes.

"What business have you to call me names?" replied James angrily, coming up to Harry with his hand raised to strike him. Douglas stepped between them, exclaiming, "Keep quiet, Master James! Harry has too much of the tame *gentleman* about him to fight before girls."

"And as to names," said Allen, also coming forward, "remember you began first."

"Oh, I am not going to fight you all three," said James, turning sulkily away. "Cowards! to set three upon one."

"We have not set upon you," began Douglas warmly, when Allen interrupted him, saying in a contemptuous tone, "Oh, leave him alone, Douglas, he is not worth minding."

"Am I not!" cried James, making a sudden spring at Allen; "I will soon teach you that."

He was taller, but not nearly so strong or active as Allen, who after wrestling with him for a minute, turned him over on his back on the floor. He placed his knee on his breast so as to prevent him from rising.

"Promise to be peaceable and not to dis-

turb us any more with your nonsense," he said, "and I will let you rise."

"Let me up, I say," cried James fiercely, struggling to rise.

"Not till you promise," said Allen. But, "Let me up, I say," was the only answer he could get.

"Give me your handkerchief, Douglas," said Allen.

Douglas did so; and Allen having got hold of both James's hands, proceeded quietly to tie them together, tying them first with the handkerchief and then with a piece of twine which he took out of his pocket. James struggled violently, but Allen had such an advantage over him that he accomplished his purpose.

"Will you promise now," he said laughing, "and I will free you?"

"No," roared James; "but I will be revenged on you yet."

"Well, you may get up now," said Allen rising, "and I will help you."

As soon as James was on his feet he ran away down stairs, leaving all the others laugh-

ing at him. They proceeded merrily on their tour through the house, congratulating themselves on being rid of such a troublesome companion.

James in the mean time was going through all the different parts of the house seeking his mother and Mr Graham. After a long search he found them on the green in front of the ruins, where they were waiting for the children that they might go together to seek a good place to take luncheon in.

The appearance of James alone, and with his hands tied, excited a great deal of surprise. He gave a very false account of the whole affair, declaring that he had done nothing, but that the others had teased him all the time he was with them, and at last, because he had remonstrated with Allen for going into the left wing where they were forbidden to go, Allen had thrown him down, and with the help of the others had tied his hands, and would have locked him up in one of the rooms if he had not got away.

Mrs Wilson looked both frightened and

angry at such treatment of her son. Mr Graham, after looking keenly at James for a moment, asked where the others were, saying that it must be inquired into, for, if it were true, he would be very much displeased with his own children.

"Do you doubt my son's word?" asked Mrs Wilson a little indignantly.

"You surely would not condemn any one unheard, Mrs Wilson?" he replied, with a quiet smile. "But there are the children," he continued as they made their appearance at one of the windows, and he beckoned to them.

"You need not ask them," said James in a whining tone, "for as I left them I heard them say they would tell you such and such a story if you asked them about it."

"I never found out any of my children in telling a falsehood," replied Mr Graham, again fixing his keen penetrating eyes upon James, who turned away from him.

Mrs Wilson sighed as she thought that she could not assert that of James, and she would willingly have persuaded Mr Graham to let the

matter drop, as she began to fear that some exposure of her son might take place. Mr Graham said very decidedly that if his children had disobeyed his orders, he could not pass it over.

The young people now came on the green, and Mr Graham called to Allen to come forward. He did so immediately, although he could not help smiling when he saw James.

"Did you tie James's hands, Allen?" asked Mr Graham in a very grave tone.

"Yes, papa, I did," replied Allen looking up at him with his usual frank open expression.

"Why did you do so?" continued Mr Graham.

"Because he tried to fight first with Harry and then with me, and he would not promise to be quiet; so I thought it would be a good plan to tie his hands and prevent him from troubling us."

Mr Graham could hardly refrain from smiling at the quiet simple way in which Allen said this.

"Did you do or say nothing to provoke him?" he asked again.

Allen considered for a minute, and then said, "that he had told Douglas to leave him alone, for that he was not worth minding."

"And what did Harry and he quarrel about?"

Allen smiled as he replied, "James called Harry 'a good tame animal,' and then Harry called James 'a wild bear' because he is so untidy."

Mr Greville and Mr Leslie laughed outright, while Mr Graham merely said, "You should not have provoked him, Allen. It was not right. James tells a different story too. Tell Allen your story, James."

James turned away, saying sulkily that it was very hard he was not to be believed as well as Allen, and that he would not tell it over again.

"At least," said Mr Leslie, "explain to us how you knew which was the left wing, and also how you heard what they arranged to say while you were running away from them."

James only looked more and more sullen, while Mrs Wilson by her deep blush and her entreaties that no more might be said, plainly showed that she did not believe her son.

Mr Leslie said, "he did not think that it was fair to the Grahams to let the matter rest, unless James would acknowledge that Allen's account was correct. He should like, he said, to ask Douglas if it were true that he and Harry held James while Allen tied his hands."

"Do you say that?" exclaimed Douglas, coming forward in the greatest indignation. "You know it is a lie, you coward, and——

"Be quiet, Douglas," said Mr Graham authoritatively. "You must not speak in that tone. If you please, Mr Leslie, do not say any more," he continued, feeling sorry for Mrs Wilson. "My boys have done wrong; but I think you are all satisfied that James's story has been exaggerated."

"I am afraid that he has not told quite the truth," said Mrs Wilson with much embarrassment. "He was so angry; he was so—," and

she stopped, unable to find a good excuse for what was so manifestly a falsehood.

"Well, then," said Mr Greville, "Allen is cleared, and so no more need be said." And he proposed that the young people should separate in three detachments, and try which of them could find the prettiest and most convenient spot for a luncheon-room.

Mr Graham endeavoured to get the Wilsons to join in this; but James continued very sulky, and would not be reconciled to any of the boys. Maria and Eliza, after some hesitation, agreed to go, and the three parties separated, settling that Mr Graham was to whistle for them at a certain time, on hearing which they were all to return, and describe the different nooks they had chosen. Allen found that Emily, Georgie, and he, were to go together; and that the route appointed to them lay round to the other side of the castle.

"I am so glad," said Emily, as they set off together, "that we have not those tiresome girls Maria and Eliza in our party."

"I am sorry for the others, though," replied

Allen; "they will not enjoy their walk, and neither Alice nor Douglas have ever been here before."

"Oh, never mind them," said Emily laughing. "Let us rejoice that *we* are free to enjoy *our* walk."

"But I do mind them very much," replied Allen bluntly; "and I wish, Emily, that you would not speak in that way. Always, when I am beginning to like you, you say something that makes me dislike you again."

"You are very polite, Allen," said Emily good-humouredly. "But tell me what things make you dislike me."

"Oh, when you speak as if you did not care for any body's pleasure except your own, I do not like you. But I will tell you what I do like in you very much,—your good nature."

"But, Allen," said Emily colouring a good deal; "perhaps it is quite true that I do not care for any body's pleasure but my own."

"I am sure that it is right for you to say what is true; but I do not think you should allow yourself to feel in that way. And, be-

sides, Emily, if you think of it, I do not believe that you *really* do not care whether the others are happy or not."

"I suspect, though, Allen, that I think rather too little about others' happiness, either one way or other. However," she continued more gaily, "it is not our fault that Eliza and Maria are not with us; it was their own choice. I heard Eliza say that they were afraid to go with you, you were so rude; and that perhaps you might take it into your head to throw them down and tie their hands, as you did to James."

Allen reddened with anger, as he replied, "I am sure I would never touch a girl, whatever she might do to me. But perhaps they could not know that," he added more quietly; "Can you climb up this bank, Emily? I want to speak to papa, and I see him up there."

Emily consented, and they climbed up the steep bank, and found the other gentlemen with Mr Graham. Allen hesitated for a moment whether to speak to his papa or not, when he found that he was not alone. Mr Leslie was

the first to observe them, and he said very kindly to Allen—

"Well, my boy, what do you want? Any thing that I can do?"

"I only wished to ask papa if he is angry with me," Allen said with some embarrassment.

"I can scarcely say that I am, Allen," replied Mr Graham smiling; "for I can quite well believe that James was very provoking. Still I think that you ought to have been more careful not to irritate him, when you knew what a spoiled, fretful boy he was; and I also think that tying his hands was rather an extreme measure."

"But, papa, he was so very disagreeable."

"But, my dear Allen, do you think that we have any right to tie the hands of all the disagreeable people we meet?"

Georgie and Emily laughed heartily, and Emily said that she thought it would be very nice if we could do so.

"Very pleasant, Emily, if we were quite sure that no one could think *us* disagreeable, and desire to tie our hands," replied Mr

Graham. "Perhaps some one may think that little girls who always take their own way are very disagreeable."

Emily blushed, while Mr Greville said with a smile, "That is very fair, Mr Graham; Emily would be much the better of being under your charge for a time,—we spoil her."

Allen, Emily, and Georgie now proceeded on their walk, and in about half an hour the whistle summoned them back to the green. The others were there before them. The first party, consisting of Douglas, Maria, and Marion, described the spot they had fixed on. They had gone up the river, and had found a very pretty place, where, they said, the view of the opposite bank was most beautiful. But when questioned as to the convenience in the way of seats, shade from the sun, and shelter from the wind, they were obliged to confess that they had overlooked every thing but beauty.

Eleanor spoke next, as the representative of her company. They had gone through the old garden, and had fixed upon what used to be the bowling-green. The banks of the green

formed very comfortable seats, and the high shrubs were a good protection from the wind, but there was no shade from the sun.

Allen and Emily now came forward. They had gone quite to the other side of the ruins, along a cart-road which wound round the foot of the hill, and had come upon what Allen called "a bay in the hill," with a wooded promontory on the one hand, a rocky one on the other, to shelter them from the wind.

"That sounds well, Allen," said his mama. But are there convenient shady seats?"

Yes, Allen said, that there was a comfortable place under the shade of some rocks, where there was a fallen tree for some, and rocks for others to sit upon.

"We counted the number of seats," added Emily; "there are plenty of convenient ones for the old people, and such a delightful scrambling-place up above for us."

The place was found quite as convenient as they had described it to be, and the luncheon passed off very well. The Wilsons chose to consider themselves ladies and gentlemen, and

take the seats that were of easy access, so that our little friends from Karnford, with Emily Greville, had their "delightful scrambling-seats" to themselves, and were very merry. Both on their way to the luncheon-room, and afterwards when the whole party set out on a walk through the wood, Allen tried to make friends with James Wilson, but quite ineffectually. Douglas told Allen that he thought it was very absurd for *him* to try to make up, when it was James who was in the wrong.

"But," said Allen, "papa thinks that we were a little wrong in provoking him."

"I think uncle is very unjust if he says so," replied Douglas warmly; "he does not know how much provocation we received."

Douglas spoke in a loud voice, and his uncle, who was only a little way in advance, looked back.

"You should not speak ill of me, Douglas, behind my back," he said with a smile.

Douglas coloured, but he smiled too as he replied, "You can hear me, uncle, and defend yourself."

"Did you intend me to hear you, Douglas?"

"No, uncle, I would not speak in that way to you, but I did intend to ask you afterwards if you did not think that it was a little hard to blame us without knowing how much reason we had to do as we did."

"Oh, if you have good reasons to give, you may come beside me and tell me them now. There is no one here but Mr Leslie, and he likes to hear reason too."

Mr Leslie smiled, and seconded Mr Graham's invitation. The two boys joined them.

"Now, Douglas, for your reasons," said Mr Graham.

"Well, uncle, you know James was so provoking we really could not help it."

"Could not help what, Douglas? could not help James being provoking!"

"No, no, uncle; we could not help saying provoking things to him in turn."

"But, Douglas, that is the very point we are going to reason about. I say you both could and ought to have helped it, and I supposed that you were going to give me some

very good reasons why you did not. What good did it do to call James a wild bear?"

"I do not know that it did any good, uncle, but Harry could not help saying it, James was so provoking."

"Poor Harry! I feel quite sorry for him; so he cannot keep his tongue from saying things of its own accord."

"Oh, uncle," answered Douglas laughing, "I do not mean that, but only that where one is much irritated, it is very difficult not to say the angry words that come into one's head."

"Very difficult I grant, but not impossible. Now, all I say is, that it would have been better if you had said and done nothing to provoke James, and that I hope you will watch more carefully another time. But I think that we have said more upon the subject than it deserves, so if you will acquit me of injustice, I will acquit you of anything worse than a little hastiness. Shall that be the verdict of the court, Douglas?"

Douglas agreed to this, and the boys spent

half-an-hour very pleasantly walking with Mr Graham and Mr Leslie, and listening to their conversation. Mr Leslie was very kind in answering all their questions, in explaining to them every thing that they did not understand. They had heard a great deal about the patient industry of some of the Swiss peasantry in carrying soil up the steep hills, in order to render a small patch of ground fit for cultivation; and they had many questions to ask Mr Leslie about it when they heard that he had been in Switzerland.

"I like the idea of it," said Allen warmly. "I like to think of people setting sturdily and patiently about helping themselves, never minding the labour or difficulty if they can only accomplish their end."

"Well," said Douglas, "I am sure that is what I never could do. I could never go on day after day toiling and labouring, and getting on so slowly that I could not see to-morrow what I had done to-day."

"Oh," replied Allen, "I should not like to

plod on in that way if I could help it, but if I had a great object to attain, and saw some means of attaining it, although the road was long and difficult, and I could only creep at a snail's pace, I think I would begin the journey. I do like to help myself."

Mr Leslie agreed with Allen in his desire to help himself, but he said "that he thought a great deal of dogged perseverance was sometimes displayed by people who would not take the trouble to find out better means of attaining their objects, or who were too proud to learn from others."

"Still," said Mr Graham, "I must say that I like to hear boys say that they would rather find out things for themselves than be told. It may proceed from pride, but it is better than a lazy helplessness."

"Certainly," replied Mr Leslie, "and such boys always turn out the most energetic and useful men. I hope that my little friends remember that all their education is intended to fit them for being men, and for fulfilling God's

purposes with them in this world." Mr Graham had walked on to speak to Mr Greville, and Mr Leslie continued,

"I think that both of you have a great deal to answer for. You have good natural talents, you have quietness and leisure to improve them aright, and you have the great advantage of such a father and guide as few are blessed with. Few fathers or uncles are so well fitted to teach or help their young charge as he is, and fewer still are willing to take so much trouble as he does. Now you must remember, that for every advantage you possess you must give an account at the last day. Every book that you read, however foolish it may be, yet if it contains only a very little good advice, that little increases your responsibility. Even these few words that my great affection and esteem for your father have induced me to say to you, even they will be written down in God's book as a talent that you have received, and with which you are required to trade for his glory and the good of others. I am not afraid of disgusting you, my

dear young friends, by speaking so solemnly to you, for I know that you are accustomed to have every thing referred to God and to his will."

The boys did not answer him, but Mr Leslie saw by the expression of their countenances, that they were grateful to him for his kind interest in them. Just then, they were summoned to join in a game of hounds and hare, for which the wood was very well adapted, and which lasted till it was time to return home.

"Mama," said Allen, the next afternoon, when they had been discussing the events of the day, "I really do like Emily Greville very much. She is so good-humoured."

"Yes," said Eleanor, "I think she is very good-humoured. I told her yesterday that I thought she should not laugh at the Wilsons so much, and she was not in the least angry."

"Well," said Mr Graham, smiling, "I must confess I was more inclined to like her yesterday than on Saturday. She takes a reproof remarkably well, and considering how much

she has been indulged, and how seldom she has ever been found fault with, I was a good deal surprised to see how good-humouredly she bore my hint about her self-willedness."

"Then, papa," said Marion, "you would not object so much now to our being friends, would you?"

"I am a good deal more inclined to like Emily, Marion; but at the same time I do not much regret that she is going to leave this part of the country, for I still think that hers is a dangerous character. The very good-humour that I have been commending, tends perhaps to make her society the more dangerous. It is such an attractive quality that it helps to blind one to her real defects."

"But, uncle," said Douglas, "I do not think that Emily's example is so dangerous to us as to many others. We have little temptation to take our own way in opposition to your or aunt's wishes; both because we know very well that you would not permit us to do so, and also because you are both so willing to

allow us to do anything that is at all reasonable."

"I do not much fear, Douglas, that you will be tempted to imitate her disobedience, or her carelessness of the feelings of others; but you know I told you, that the fault in Emily which grieves me the most is, that she makes her own will the rule of every action, and never appears to remember that there is a God to be pleased or displeased with all she does. And yet the kindliness of her disposition so often leads her to do what is right, that in her case we are exceedingly apt to forget the great sinfulness of thus setting aside God's will as the rule of her life."

"I think, uncle," said Douglas, after a few moments' pause, "I think that when I came here I was a good deal like Emily. I seldom thought of what I *ought* to do, but did what I felt inclined. At first I was much surprised at the good humour and cheerfulness with which all here gave up their own wishes when they were convinced it was right to do so.

Then on the very first Sunday, when Eleanor spoke so much about doing every thing for God, and when you told us that we ought to be kind and gentle for Christ's sake, I began to think I should like to try to live for God in this way. And do you not think, uncle, that I have improved since that time? and that I think much more about what God wishes and commands than I used to do?"

"I do think, my dear Douglas, that in many respects you are much improved, and I rejoice most sincerely in it. But you must beware of deceiving yourself, and of thinking that all is well because in so far you are improved. A great change may have taken place in your habits and feelings, and yet you may in God's sight be as far from Him as you were before."

"I cannot understand that, uncle," said Douglas quickly.

"My dear children," said Mr Graham, "this is a subject of the deepest importance to each one of us. There is no question in the world to which it is so important for us to get a true answer as to this, 'Am I a child of God

or a child of the devil?' and there is no question in answering which we are so apt to deceive ourselves. Remember, my dearest children, that this is a question which must be answered one day, either in this world, or in the next; and try to realise that each one of you must stand all alone before the great God, and that then, the question will be answered, but then, the answer will be for ever. If it be found then that you are not a child of God, there will be no remedy; and it is this fearful thought that makes us so anxious that you should endeavour earnestly to obtain a true answer to that question now, and never rest until you can say, as in God's sight, that you are His child, His servant, His redeemed one.

"Living quietly as you do here with few temptations to sin, and carefully watched by us, you are very apt to think that all is well. When any one does wrong, we point out to you the sin you have been guilty of, and remind you of the God you have offended. You mourn for having displeased us, and you feel afraid of God, because from your infancy, you

have been accustomed to think of Him as ever seeing you, and as hating all sin. Again, when we tell you of God's compassion, and of the Saviour's tender love to us, your hearts are softened. It is so beautiful, so comforting to think that the great God who made heaven and earth looks down from His glorious throne on each one of us, cares for us, and provides all things for each of us, as minutely, as specially as if there were not another being in the world. And all your comforts and mercies, even the beauties you see in the world around you, become far more precious to you, because you look on them as the gifts of your Father in heaven. Nay, you may perhaps go farther still, and feeling that you are sinful creatures, and knowing that Christ died for sinners, you may fancy that you trust in Him for salvation, and feel joy and satisfaction in thinking of Him as your own Saviour. You may too be well acquainted with, and rejoice in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, feeling pleased at the thought of having such a helper and guide

through the cares, trials, and difficulties of religion.

"You can understand the feelings I have described, for I daresay that each one of you has felt them. But do you understand me when I say that all this may be true of you, and yet you may be far from God, you may still be children of wrath even as others? All that I have described *may* be felt, and I believe *is* felt, by many who never attain salvation, but who, living as the servants of the devil here, go to dwell with him for ever. What then is wanting? It is a new heart, a total change of nature, without which we can never believe on Christ unto salvation, we can never love God. Does this seem strange and harsh to any of you? It is not *my* doctrine, it is the doctrine of the living God. Hear what he says, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 'Born again,' that must imply a very great change. Again, God says, 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.' In the case I have

described, all things have not become new; the man is pleased with the idea of a great, an all-powerful friend, who ever watches over and cares for him, with the idea that Christ died for him; but is that not natural to man even before any change takes place? And yet if his heart is unchanged he is an enemy to God; for 'He whose word is true,' has said, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.' 'The carnal heart is enmity against God.'"

"Uncle," said Douglas, very earnestly, "I am sure that there is no enmity in my heart to God. I am sure that I do love God."

"Ask yourself, my dear Douglas," answered Mr Graham, solemnly, "what God it is that you love. Is it a God of holiness, who hates all sin? a God of justice, who will assuredly punish the ungodly? Or is it a God of love alone, of whom you think as of a Being anxious to save you, as willing to accept such a measure of love as you can spare to him, from all the creatures you love on earth? Or ask yourself how you love God? Do you love Him with *all* your heart and soul, and strength and mind?

Do you even love him as you love me, as you love your earthly father? Is he the first object of your thoughts and feelings? Does it grieve you to see others sin against him, and when you are tempted to sin, are you not more anxious to find excuses for yielding to the temptation, than anxious to obtain strength to resist it? Do you avoid sin because it is hateful to God, or because it lowers you in the esteem of others, and makes you think less highly of yourself?"

Douglas did not answer, his colour was heightened, his eyes fixed on the ground, it was evident that there was something working in his mind.

"Papa," said Harry in an anxious voice, "I know that we ought to feel as you describe about God; and you frighten me by your solemn earnest tone, because I know that I have not such love as that; and I know, that I have often felt that I should be much happier if I could think that there was no God to be displeased by my sin. But still, papa, I have *some* pleasure in hearing and in thinking about

God, as our shepherd, as our loving, compassionate Father, and it seems only natural not to like to think of God as hating our sins."

"Yes, Harry, it is natural. But, my dear boy, can that be urged as an excuse? On the solemn day of judgment, when God recalls to your mind all the sins you have committed from your birth to your death; all the coldness and deadness of your heart; all the hours and days you have passed without once thinking of God; all the times you have heard of his love in Christ Jesus to poor sinners, without any change being produced in your heart; do you think that you will be able on that solemn day to urge as your excuse, "that it was only natural for you not to love God?" It is our nature to hate God; but God has promised to change our nature, he has promised that he will give us a new heart, and if we do not avail ourselves of this promise, we shall feel in bitterness of heart on that great day of the Lord, that our condemnation is just; we shall remember with an anguish of spirit that no tongue can express, how full and free were the offers

we received, while on this earth, of mercy to pardon and grace to help."

"But, uncle," said Douglas, "I say, and so does Harry, that we do love God as our father and our friend."

"Douglas," said Mr Graham, in a tone of the deepest solemnity, "God is *not* your friend except in Jesus Christ. Unless you have gone to him as a lost sinner, and given yourself to him to be saved by him alone; God looks upon you as his enemy, his wrath still lies upon you; to you he is a consuming fire."

"But, papa," said Harry, earnestly, "I do believe that Christ died for our sins."

"My own dear Harry," said Mr Graham, very affectionately, "as I have already said, you may *know* this truth; but if there is no change in your heart, you have never gone to Christ as *your* Saviour, and the guilt and burden of your sins still lies on you; for God has told us that Christ will sanctify and renew all who come unto him."

"Uncle," said Douglas, almost angrily, "you have told us that the work of sanctification is

gradual, and goes on even till the day of our death. Why should you say that it is not at least begun in us?"

"The work of sanctification is gradual, my dear Douglas, but this new birth must have taken place in the heart of the sinner, before he is willing to renounce all his own goodness, and trust in the perfect righteousness of Christ. The natural heart is dead in sin, and therefore knows not its own sinfulness, until the spirit gives it life, and convinces it of sin. I do not wish to judge you, Douglas, but I do wish most earnestly to arouse you to judge yourself faithfully and honestly; and what makes me fear that you have not yet been born again, is your great reluctance to confess the natural enmity of your heart against God. For I know that the renewed heart is taught to see its danger, and to go to Christ as the only Saviour."

"Then, papa, what are we to do?" asked Harry, in a faultering voice.

"Go to Christ as you are, without one good thing in yourself; without faith in him, without even a desire to believe in him or to love

him. Go to him and ask him for his own sake to save you. And, dear Harry, dear Douglas, go, nothing doubting, for he has said that he will cast out none that come unto him. He will quicken your dead souls, he will change your vile hearts. His promise is sure, for it depends upon nothing in you, but on him who is unchangeable. Do not wait until you feel a change beginning in your hearts; until you see more clearly your need of Christ. If you wait for that you will never come, for, none but God can change your heart, or open your eyes, to see your utter helplessness. Oh! then, my dear children, let me intreat you to come to Christ, even now, he waiteth to be gracious, he delighteth in mercy. I have given you pain to-night, but while I would wish to deal with you very tenderly, and would grieve bitterly over any harshness; yet, if by God's grace my words have aroused you in any degree, to a knowledge of your true state before God, I should rejoice in your pain, however sore it might be."

"I am sure, uncle, none can ever call you

harsh; but you have given me a pain at my heart that I cannot put away."

"Ah! Douglas, my dear boy, my most earnest prayer will be, that that pain may not pass away until it has brought you to Christ. It is long past bed-time, bring me the Bible, and we will read, and then pray together, that this conversation may be blessed to us all."

"One question more, uncle; do you not think that our liking to do things for God is a good sign? Surely that is not natural."

"As far as you go, Douglas, it is perfectly natural. Your poetical kind of love to God as a great and merciful being, who is ever looking down upon you and loving you, makes it perfectly natural that you should feel pleasure in sacrificing your will to his. When I have done anything for you that gratifies you, you rejoice in any little sacrifice that you can make for me in turn, and you would think yourself very unnatural if you did not feel thus. Now you please yourself in thinking about God, as the giver of all the blessings you enjoy; what then is more natural, than that you should feel

grateful to God, and should rejoice in being able to prove your gratitude ?"

Douglas sighed deeply. Mr Graham opened his Bible, and read with much solemnity the fifth chapter of the Romans. The children listened with deep interest. Douglas and Harry had been much impressed by this conversation, though still the rebellion and enmity of the natural heart struggled hard against conviction; Allen, Eleanor, and even little Georgie, young as he was, had been taught by God's Holy Spirit to know themselves to be lost sinners, and they listened to the free and gracious offers of pardon with feelings that none can understand but those who have been thus taught to feel their own guilt and utter helplessness.

Of Alice and Marion's feelings it is perhaps more difficult to speak. God's Spirit had been working with Alice before she came to Karnford, convincing her of sin; and she had received with great joy and trust her uncle and aunt's instructions, as to the way of salvation by Christ alone. She often hoped that she

had gone to Him and rested upon Him for pardon and strength; but her great indolence by making her remiss in working for God, often caused her to doubt and fear that her faith was unsound. She was too apt too, to forget that her salvation did not depend upon herself; she required to learn to look more to Christ's full and finished work, and less to her own foolish weak heart. Poor Marion! She was naturally giddy, and easily affected either by good or evil. Mr and Mrs Graham had often hoped that their dear little girl's heart was touched and softened, and then the impression appeared to pass away. Marion was very apt to deceive both herself and others, because her great desire to be esteemed and admired often led her to do many things, and almost unconsciously to put on the appearance of good qualities that she did not possess.

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE PERCY'S BIRTH-DAY.

Sunset Cottage and its garden were quite completed in about three weeks after the visit to Karnside Castle, and they really did the children great credit. The windows and door were very neat, and with M'Pherson's help they had made a regular boarded floor, which was a great improvement upon the clay one of the wood-shed. Then they had made a neat table, and some tolerably convenient benches. They had erected a remarkably pretty paling of willow twigs round the garden, and had gravelled the path leading to the cottage door, so that it all looked very well indeed.

Their most pleasant occupations had been cutting down trees, and lopping off branches

in order to open up pretty views from various seats in their little territory. It was a very interesting business, and sometimes not a little difficult. First they had to decide upon the tree or branch to be sacrificed. Then they had to consult upon the best way of getting it down without injury to the trees that were intended to remain. And lastly, there was the execution of it, the sawing, cutting, pulling, pushing, and the anxious watching to see if they were to be successful. Sometimes tree after tree, branch after branch, would be condemned to the axe without producing the wished for result; and then the cutting off one small branch would do all that they had been labouring so long to effect.

Uncle Percy's birth-day came at last. Uncle Percy arrived about a week before. The morning was fine, and every thing promised well for the long-talked-of feast. The young people were busy early in the morning; and before breakfast the apples and pears in their own garden had been gathered, and carried up to Sunset Cottage. The house had

been swept and dusted with the utmost care. The windows rubbed and scrubbed till Douglas laughingly declared that the girls would rub a hole in the glass. The wood for the fire had been piled ready for use; the potatoes cleaned, pared, and put into the pot ready to be boiled. In short, so much had been done before breakfast, that they had some difficulty in knowing how to pass the time after, until the hour appointed for the feast. They had to gather a dish of brambles yet, but even impatient Harry agreed that they ought to defer that until nearer the time for eating them, in order that they might be fresh. After another sweeping, and a strict examination of every nook and corner for any concealed dust or untidiness, they sat down on one of their seats to admire the view, and to talk.

"Do you remember this day last year, Alice?" asked Douglas.

"Yes, I remember it quite well. We spent the day with grandmama, and the Ashburtons were there. It was a very stupid day."

"Although they are my cousins, I like the

Ashburtons as little as I do the Wilsons," said Douglas; "and for the same reason, because they are so affected and conceited. At least the girls are; William is a fine honest fellow."

"So he is," replied Alice, "and I like him very much. Only I am sometimes a little afraid of him, he gets so boisterous. I never know what he is going to do next."

"Is he wilder than our boys are?" asked Eleanor.

The boys laughed heartily at her for asking that question when they were present, and Alice replied, that she thought all the boys were sometimes as wild as William, but that she was not so much afraid of them.

"When you are wild," she said, "you jump over palings, climb trees, or chase Mussie; but when William is wild, he begins to play tricks on other people, and it is that that frightens me. In ordinary times he is very kind, and would be sorry to vex any one, but when a wild fit seizes him, he seems to forget every thing and every body."

"Well," said Allen, laughing, "I often feel as if I could not rest without doing something wild, and the only way to keep from doing mischief is to take a long run, or get upon the ponies and gallop round the park without saddle or bridle, or some such thing."

"Papa used to call our leaping poles our safety valves," said Harry, "because he thought that running about with them, leaping over bushes, hedges, and ditches, was such an excellent way of getting rid of some of our superabundant spirits."

"A race down hill with a few somersets at the end is not a bad way," remarked Douglas.

"No, it is a very good way, and so is a run after Mussie," said Harry.

"But your wildness never makes you play tricks on other people," said Alice.

"Papa would not allow us to do so," said Harry. "Oh! Allen, do you remember that day at Miss Buchanan's?"

"What was that, Harry? what was that?" asked Alice and Douglas, both at once.

"Miss Buchanan," replied Harry, "has a

very silly niece, Clara Buchanan. Both she and the Lindsay's tiresome cousin Jane, whom we have told you about, are very much afraid of ghosts; and one rainy day when we were all at Miss Buchanan's, they would not consent to play at hide-and-seek among the uninhabited rooms, because they were so much afraid. Well, we were all very angry, and we determined to play them a trick. Eleanor and Sophia Lindsay undertook to wile them into a long gallery, out of which there was a door leading to these rooms. They were to coax or laugh them to go in at the doorway, and then to let the door close. It had a spring, and could only be opened on the gallery side, so Eleanor and Sophia were to show them that there was no help for it, but that they must go through the ghostly part. They were to lead them wrong, then slip away from them, and Allen was to come in dressed like a ghost."

"What a shame!" cried Alice.

"So it was," answered Allen; "it was wrong, very wrong. But we did not believe that they were really frightened; we thought

that they were only pretending to be so, in order to prevent us from doing as we wished; and we were very angry; and in short, we did not think much about anything but our own amusement."

"But how did it end?" asked Douglas.

"Very unhappily for us," answered Allen, "I was stealing along one of the dark passages; I had a plate full of burning spirits in my hand, in order to make what was uncovered of my face look very ghostly. I had stopped for a moment to listen if I could hear them coming, when I felt some one catch hold of my arm. I supposed it was Harry or Willie Lindsay, and without venturing to turn towards him, as I was afraid I might spill the spirits, I whispered, 'What is the matter?' There was no answer; I turned round in great surprise, and saw papa. I had never thought before that we were doing wrong at all; but as soon as I saw papa's face, I felt that it was cruel and wrong in every way. I could not speak to him; I could not look at him; he looked so sternly and fixedly at me;

and there was such a dead silence. I turned away my head, and saw Mr Herbert with a lantern in his hand; he looked grave too, but not so stern as papa did. At last papa spoke in such a cold displeased tone, and asked me, What was the meaning of that dress? I remember that I felt glad when he spoke, and yet I did not know what to say. Oh! it was a bad business altogether."

"How did uncle find it out?" asked Alice.

"He and Mr Herbert were going through some of the rooms to look at a curious old carved roof," replied Eleanor; "they came upon Harry and Willie immediately after Allen had left them, and they heard them talking and laughing about it. Papa questioned them, and when he understood the plan, he sent Harry to stop us, and he and Mr Herbert went to seek Allen."

"And was he very angry?"

"Yes, indeed he was," answered Allen. "I remember so well, he said so sternly, that it was a shameful and cruel plan in itself, and was accomplished by artifice and deceit."

"Yes, I remember," said Eleanor. "When I told him that I had not thought about its being cruel, he answered, in a tone of grave displeasure, 'You knew at any rate, Eleanor, that nothing could justify deceit, and yet you employed it—and for such a purpose.' Oh, I was so much ashamed, and so sorry; I do not know what I would not have given to have been able to undo it all again."

"But, Eleanor," asked Alice, "did you say any thing that was untrue?"

"Not exactly untrue, perhaps; but quite as bad. When we asked them to go to the gallery to see a particular picture, we certainly wished them to believe that we meant what we did not mean; and we also intended them to believe that the shutting of the gallery door was an accident."

"Papa has such a hatred to any thing like deceit, that Eleanor's doing this vexed him more than any other part of the business," said Harry. "I remember that upon Miss Buchanan pleading, that Eleanor would not intend to deceive; Eleanor answered in such

a firm but sad voice, 'I must have intended it, or I could not have hoped to get Clara and Jane to go with me.' And then papa's grave, stern look softened a little, and he seemed less displeased."

"Oh, yes," said Marion; "papa and mama hate any thing in the least degree approaching to artifice. I remember one day, when the Lindsays were here, a new fence was found broken in a part of the park to which we had been forbidden to go. The forester accused us of doing it, and papa summoned us all in to ask about it. Willie at once acknowledged that he had forgotten, and had gone to the forbidden place; but denied having touched the paling. Papa believed him, but the forester did not; which made Sophia very angry, and she tried to prove that it could not have been Willie. I do not remember what she said; I only remember that, although she said nothing that was untrue, yet she purposely omitted telling one little thing which had a suspicious appearance against Willie. This came out, and after the forester had gone away, papa

turned to Sophia and told her very gravely, but kindly, that not even the desire to free her brother from undeserved blame, could justify her in using artifice."

"But," said Alice, "she did not say any thing that was untrue."

"She intended papa to believe that she was giving a full and correct statement of *all* the facts, while she purposely concealed a part, and that was artifice."

"Still," objected Douglas, "when she knew quite well that it was perfectly true that Willie had not done it, she was not bound to tell what might lead my uncle to believe that Willie had done it."

"Oh, no, Douglas, that is not right," said Allen. "In giving an account of any thing we have nothing to do with the effect it may have upon other people's minds, we are bound to tell the facts exactly as they happened. If papa had questioned Sophia, she need not have done more than give a true answer to each question; but when she volunteered to give

him a full account of the whole, she was bound to conceal nothing."

"Papa says," continued Eleanor, "that people often begin to acquire habits of exaggeration in this way. In telling a story, they are so very anxious to convey a certain impression to the mind of the person they are speaking to, that they almost unconsciously exaggerate one part, weaken another, and perhaps omit a third. The impression they desire to convey may be quite correct, but their history is not so, just upon this account. And papa says, 'Be perfectly exact, perfectly sincere, and straight-forward in all things. Never appear to be what you are not, or to think or feel what you do not; but be more anxious to speak and act truly, than to make others think you are doing so; or to make them think you clever, or wise, or good.'"

"Well," said Harry, "I have liked Clara Buchanan better ever since that day. She came forward and entreated papa to forgive us with so much earnestness and kindness, that she quite forgot to be affected."

"I remember another time when she forgot to be affected; it was when the gardener's child was so severely burnt. None of the servants would do any thing to the burns until the doctor came, because they were so very sore. But when Clara heard her old nurse (who was too ill to go herself) say that oil ought to be applied to them, she went down and anointed them all herself with a feather dipped in oil; although she used to pretend, or rather to imagine, that the sight of any sore made her faint."

"Oh, she must be better than the Ashburton girls," said Douglas. "They are thoroughly tiresome creatures, able to do nothing but to sit dressed in fine frocks and look pretty."

"Had you no nice companions in London?" asked Harry.

"Oh, yes," replied Alice; "the Walsinghams are very delightful girls, so kind and so merry, a good deal like yourselves."

The little Grahams laughed at Alice's compliment, and Allen remarked, that he really did not think they had much merit in behav-

ing well, for they were seldom left to their own discretion ; and whenever they were beginning to go wrong, his papa or mama, he said, were always ready to help them into the right way again.

"I think that uncle and aunt have such a nice kind way of keeping us from doing wrong," said Douglas. "When my uncle gives us an order, he tells us so distinctly what we are to do, that we cannot make a mistake ; and he speaks so decidedly, that we feel there is no use in trying to disobey him."

"Yes," replied Allen ; "and both papa and mama are so glad to say 'Yes,' and so sorry to say 'No,' to any request we make, that I think we should be very bad indeed if we were to disobey them."

"Well," said Douglas, "but it is not merely because you do all that you are bid, that I think you are better than most other boys and girls; but there is so little quarrelling among yourselves,—every thing goes on so smoothly."

"Only sometimes, Douglas," said Eleanor

laughing. "I think that if we had not been afraid to quarrel, because if we did, papa would have kept us from the house, there would have been a good many quarrels, particularly in making these seats."

They were all sitting upon one of the new seats, and as Eleanor said this a loud crack was heard; the seat went suddenly down at one end, and they all rolled off one above the other. No one was hurt, and it caused a great deal of merriment; although they were a little vexed at their seat being rendered useless, as it was one of the prettiest, and they had planned that Mr Percy, and Mr and Mrs Graham were to sit there after the feast. This interrupted their conversation, and they dispersed to complete their preparations. The boys and Marion went to gather brambles, while Alice and Eleanor remained to boil the potatoes. Marion had such a quick eye, that the boys said they must have her with them; Harry asserting that she belonged to the bird tribe, she was so quick and sharp, that no poor solitary bramble could ever escape her.

The long talked-of feast passed off remarkably well. Mr Percy admired the cottage, the table, the seats, and the rush plates as much as they expected; and the potatoes and fruit were excellent. Mr Percy and Mr Graham had witnessed the downfall of the seat from a walk a little farther down the hill, and they were curious to know what important subject they had been discussing with such earnestness at the time.

"Oh," said Allen, "we were only trying to find out how it is that we are so much better than other children."

"Are you quite sure of the fact, Allen?" asked Mr Graham laughing.

"Alice and Douglas say that we are," answered Harry. "But, papa, we agreed that all the merit of our good behaviour is due to mama and you. You watch over us so carefully, and check us when we do any thing wrong."

"I think you are right in that, Harry," said Mr Percy. "I think that you have less excuse than most children for behaving ill."

"But do not you think, papa," asked Douglas, "that they do behave better than most children?"

Mr Percy smiled. "Really, Douglas," he said, "I can scarcely answer that question, my visits to Karnford have been so short, that I have had little opportunity of judging. I will say, however, that I think my little nephews and nieces are in general very good-tempered, and very easily pleased, and these are always agreeable qualities. At the same time, I have seen one or two faults in each of you which will require care and attention on your own part, as well as on the part of those who have the charge of you. Shall I tell you what I have seen?" he continued, looking round with a smile.

"Oh yes, papa, and we will tell you whether you are right or not."

"No, no, Douglas, I do not think that you will be very fair judges of your own characters. But if you please, I shall give you an instance of each fault. The first day I came on this visit,

I was sitting in the study and you young ones were in the dining-room, arranging some flower seeds. The door was open, and I heard your conversation. All went on pleasantly for some time, until Harry accused Marion of having put some lupin seeds into a compartment where there were seeds of the sweet pea. At first Marion said, that it was not she who had done it; and when Allen proved that it could have been no one else, she said that the lupins used always to be in that compartment, and that it was wrong to put the sweet peas there. Allen answered with a provoking smile, 'that *of course* Marion was always in the right,' and Marion with much warmth denied the imputation. I saw here, on the one side a want of consideration and forbearance for the infirmities of others; on the other side, an impatience at being thought in the wrong." Both Allen and Marion blushed and cast down their eyes.

"I think," said Mr Percy, "that I have given a sufficient proof of my penetration, and this is not a pleasant topic of conversation."

The children, however, begged him to go

on, and he continued, "I admired Harry's candour and honesty in coming last Monday to tell his papa that he had disobeyed his orders not to make his pony leap the new ditch, and I liked particularly the plain, straightforward way of telling it, without attempting to excuse himself. But I thought that if the heedlessness that caused him to forget the prohibition was not subdued, he might do many things in after life that would cause him bitter sorrow, and remorse.

"Then, last night Douglas got very angry because he was found to be wrong about the kings of France. We perhaps triumphed too much, but he deserved it, he was so positive before he discovered his error."

"Alice has made great progress in her efforts to overcome her old enemy, indolence, but I think she must see herself that a good deal remains to be done yet. Eleanor's good temper, unselfishness, and cheerfulness make her such a favourite, that I am almost afraid to point out a fault in her lest you should all attack me; but the keen quick sense she has

for the ridiculous sometimes, makes her a little satirical. Georgie is a quiet kind little fellow, who never forgets to bring me the newspapers at the very time I like them best, but I have seen too little of him and of our merry little elves Gracie and Lewis to be able to give a judgment on their characters."

There was silence for a few minutes after Mr Percy had concluded, for each of the children felt a little awkwardness in being the first to speak. At last Douglas said, "Well, I only know that I have never liked any people so much as I do my cousins, and I never was so happy any where as I have been ever since I came here."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Douglas," answered Mr Percy, "as your uncle and I have almost decided that it will be the best plan for Alice and you to remain here during the winter. I am so often away from home that I cannot attend to your education myself, and if you do not remain here, I must send you to school. I shall be able to see you as often or

oftener here than at school, and shall feel much more sure of your being well cared for."

"Oh thank you, papa," and "I am so glad" was heard from all, the Grahams rejoicing as much as the Percies.

"But is it not quite settled?" asked Alice a little anxiously.

"I suppose I may say that it is, it was to be decided partly by yourselves, and as you are anxious to remain with your cousins we may conclude the business. But, my dear Alice and Douglas, I am very anxious that you should both feel solemnly that your being here brings a heavy responsibility upon you. This is not only the time for improving your minds by diligent attention to study, but also for improving and softening your hearts and tempers. You tell me that your cousins are better tempered, more kind, and obliging than any other children you ever met with; but you must be anxious to derive benefit as well as pleasure from their society. If you bestow particular pains upon any one of your plants, sheltering it from cold winds, taking care to

give it proper proportion of water, and, as far as you can, of heat and sunshine, you expect that it will reward your care by fine flowers, or plentiful fruit. Now your heavenly Father, in his kindness and care for you, has brought you into this pleasant home, where all is happy and peaceful around you. There are no disagreeable rugged tempers here to irritate or cross you; no harshness or severity to make you reserved and deccitful; but there is the bright sunshine of kindliness and affection to nourish good and gentle feelings in your heart. And when you leave this favoured garden, you must bring forth fruit to that kind Father who has thus highly blessed you, and endeavour by kindness, gentleness, unselfishness, and cheerful contentment to make others sharers in the happiness you have enjoyed. All children ought to remember that this is one great object they ought to keep steadily in view during the happy years of childhood; and if you think yourselves particularly favoured in this respect, then your responsibility is the greater, and the fruit you bring forth ought to

be proportionably abundant. I am not afraid to tell my little friends here that I think their natural tempers are particularly happy for themselves and pleasant to all around them. For I know well that they have been taught to consider these good tempers as gifts from God. But I should like to press them as well as you to consider seriously the great advantages they possess over others, and to remember that they are only the Lord's stewards, and are bound to expend these talents in his service and for his glory. Great forbearance with those who have naturally unpleasant tempers is required from you; great consideration and tender pity towards them. But am I not talking too gravely for such a cheerful occasion?"

"No, uncle," said Eleanor, "we like to hear you speak in that way when you speak so clearly, and make us feel so sure that you are right."

"You must take care though, Eleanor, not to rest satisfied with liking to hear about these things, with talking about them, and yet for-

getting to practise them. This is a kind of self-deception we are liable to in all things, and particularly in the one great concern of our life—in religion. We hear a Saviour spoken of, his character and his work described in the beautiful language of scripture. We are delighted with this, and delighted to feel how much pleasure it gives us; and there perhaps we may rest through our lives, go down to the grave with a lie in our right hand, and discover when too late that our hope was vain. My dear children, nothing will save us but a real living faith in the Saviour, working by love, and that faith the Holy Spirit alone can give us, changing our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, convincing us that we are dead in ourselves and must go to Christ for light, life, and complete salvation. You *know* all this, but are you not resting satisfied with knowing it? My most earnest prayer for each one of you is, that the Holy Spirit may shine into your hearts, teaching you to believe, that unless God give you new hearts, you are at enmity with Him, and must perish everlast-

ingly; teaching you to believe it as fully, as really, as you believe at this moment that I intend you to remain here this winter, and shewing you the full and complete salvation that is provided in Christ. To you," he continued, turning again to his own children, "I speak with great earnestness, because I feel that I have too long neglected you in this respect. My Alice was seldom with me; Douglas I saw only for a few minutes in the day, and in my anxiety for your temporal welfare and happiness, I overlooked the attention I ought to have bestowed upon your religious instruction. I believed that you were well cared for in all things by those to whose charge I had committed you, nor was it until I saw, during my first visit here, the great change that had taken place, that I was convinced that you had never been properly instructed before, and my eyes were opened to my culpable neglect. I hope, my dear children, that you may never have cause to feel such bitter sorrow on account of neglected duty, as I have in this respect."

This serious conversation made the children all a little grave, and Harry and Douglas were much struck with the agreement between Mr Percy's solemn warning and their conversation with Mr Graham upon the same subject. They had often thought of what he had said to them, and Douglas in particular had often felt alarmed at the thought that no such change had taken place in his heart. But hitherto he had always put the thought away from him, repeating that he certainly had no enmity to God. His father's words enforcing so strongly the same doctrine now startled him a good deal, and, by the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, his mind was somewhat enlightened as to his real condition in God's sight.

CHAPTER VI.

APPLE GATHERING.

THE month of October is often a very pleasant one. The oppressive heat of summer is gone, the air is bright and clear, with as much coolness as makes exercise of every kind a pleasure. It is a busy and entertaining month in the country too, there is so much to be done, both in the garden and field. Our party at Karnford enjoyed this October very much. They were often busy in their gardens, and in transplanting rose-trees and shrubs up to Sunset Cottage, and they took much longer walks than they had been able to undertake during the hot weather. Mr Percy remained during the first week of the month but was obliged to leave them on the next, promising, however, to return at Christmas.

One morning, after Mr Percy's departure, Harry came into the dining-room and announced, in a very significant manner, that M'Pherson thought, from the appearance of the sky, that there was going to be a great deal of wind, and that therefore all the fruit remaining on the trees ought to be gathered immediately.

"Very well," answered Mr Graham quietly, without looking up from his book. "I suppose M'Pherson knows that he may gather them whenever he pleases."

"Yes, papa, most probably he does," answered Eleanor, laughing. "But you know what Harry means by telling you. We have always had a holiday on the apple-gathering day, in order that we might help, and I am sure that you cannot intend to refuse us one this year, when Alice and Douglas are here.

Mr Graham smiled good-humouredly as he replied, "That he should not like to deprive them of their amusement as they had been looking forward to it. They might help M'Pherson if he chose to allow them to do so.

But," he continued, "this must be your last holiday. We have permitted you to be very idle this summer, but you must now begin to study hard again, and you must prove to us that you have not been spoiled by the amusements provided for you. Mama and I will take advantage of your holiday to go to M—— for some new books, and we shall begin regular lessons and reading next week."

After breakfast the young ones all went to the orchard, where they found M'Pherson with two or three other men with large hampers and ladders, preparing to get down the fruit with which many of the trees were yet laden.

"We will climb the trees, Allen, and shake down the apples, and the girls can gather them up," said Douglas, eager to begin his new occupation.

"No, no, Douglas, that plan answered well enough with our small quantity of fruit, which was all consumed in a few days. But these are expected to keep for months, and we must be very careful not to bruise them. I am not sure that M'Pherson will allow us to do more

than pick up those that are fallen, or with our long poles shake the branches that the men on the ladders cannot reach. M'Pherson, if we promise to be very careful, will you allow us to help in gathering the fruit off the trees ?"

"If you are *very* careful, Master Allen, but not otherwise. The apples are so ripe that if you set to work hastily you will probably knock down two or three for every one you pull. I will trust you with that branch," he continued, pointing to one easily got at, and which had few side branches. Douglas sprang forward, and was going to climb the tree and begin at once, but M'Pherson caught hold of him saying,—

"Not you yet, Master Douglas, you do not know how to set about it."

"But I will climb the tree if I choose," said Douglas very angrily, trying to break away from M'Pherson; "you have no right to prevent me, and you shall not hinder me."

"I have just this right, Master Douglas," answered M'Pherson composedly, "that my master has given me the charge of this orchard,

and no one shall injure his fruit while in my charge."

"You are excessively impertinent to think of keeping me from doing as I please. My uncle allowed me to gather the fruit, and I will do it in spite of you. Let me go, I say," he continued, struggling furiously, while MacPherson held him firmly by the arm.

Allen tried to reason with him, but Douglas was too angry to listen to reason, and finding that he could not free himself from M'Pherson's strong grasp, he turned round and struck him with all his force. M'Pherson did not say a word, he dropped Douglas's arm and walked off in the direction of the house, telling one of the men quietly, that he must prevent any of the young gentlemen from climbing the trees while he was away.

"Oh, Douglas!" exclaimed two or three of the children at once; "you ought not to have done that—M'Pherson has gone to tell papa."

"He may tell whom he pleases," was the haughty answer; "I do not care. What right had he to dictate to me?"

"Because this orchard is under his charge," answered Allen; "and it is his duty to prevent any one from injuring it. I am afraid papa will be very angry."

"Allow me to run after M'Pherson," cried Georgie; "and tell him you are sorry, and will do what he bids you."

"Tell M'Pherson I am sorry! and say I will do as he bids me!" answered Douglas with increased haughtiness. "I shall do nothing of the kind, I assure you."

The little Grahams saw that it did no good to speak to him, and they awaited M'Pherson's return in silence. Douglas turned away from them, and in doing so moved nearer the tree. One of the men stepped in front of it, saying, very respectfully but firmly, "You cannot climb this tree, sir."

"I have not the least desire to do so," answered Douglas, contemptuously; "if I had, *your* orders should have no effect on me."

The man made no answer; and in a few minutes the party saw M'Pherson returning alone.

"Oh, I hope that papa has gone to M——," exclaimed Allen, as he and Harry ran to meet him.

"We were afraid that you were going to tell papa," said Harry.

"I have sent to ask him to be so good as to come here," answered M'Pherson, in his usual quiet manner.

The boys walked beside him for some steps without speaking, at last Allen said hesitatingly,—

"Do you mean to tell papa that Douglas struck you? We should like you very much not to tell him. We know that he was wrong, but he will be sorry for it soon; and papa will be very angry."

"I should only tell for Master Douglas' own good. I am not at all angry with him. I should only tell because I thought it right to do so."

"We know that," replied Allen; "but if you could at all think it right not to tell, it would make us all much happier. I am sure it will do Douglas as much good if you punish

me instead of him. I will not gather apples all day, and when Douglas gets out of his passion and finds that he has deprived me of that pleasure, it will do him as much good as if papa punishes him."

"You are a very kind boy," replied M'Pherson. "But I did not intend to tell my master about the blow. I am quite sure that Douglas is sufficiently punished for it already; his pride will be so much hurt by his doing such an undignified thing. The reason why I quitted my hold of him as soon as he struck me, and not before, was, because I knew very well that the regret he would feel for having done it, would sober him, and that I might leave him without any fear of his doing mischief. But there is my master," he continued, pointing to Mr Graham, whom they could see crossing the part of the park that lay between the garden and orchard. M'Pherson walked leisurely towards the spot where Douglas was standing leaning against the tree. He looked very sullen, but M'Pherson could see, from the way in which he avoided looking at him, that he

was ashamed of having struck him. Mr Graham advanced rapidly; he had felt a little afraid that some accident had happened when he got M'Pherson's message.

"Did you wish to speak to me, M'Pherson?" he asked, after a hasty glance had assured him that all were safe.

"Yes, sir," replied M'Pherson; "I took the liberty of asking you to come here in order to tell Master Douglas that it is your will that none of the young gentlemen should climb the trees or meddle with the fruit without my permission."

"Certainly, that is my will," answered Mr Graham, observing for the first time Douglas' sullen demeanour. "You ought to have understood that from my saying so expressly that you might assist M'Pherson if *he* pleased."

Douglas did not speak, and Mr Graham continued. "Do you understand this now? If you wish to help at all, you must do so entirely under M'Pherson's directions, and I desire that you will not do any thing but what he permits you to do."

"I will do nothing at all, then," said Douglas, very angrily; "for I will certainly never submit to be under the orders of an impertinent, interfering fool like M'Pherson."

"M'Pherson is neither impertinent nor interfering," replied Mr Graham. "You can do as you please about assisting in gathering the fruit or not. Only remember that it is my positive command to you, not to gather a single apple until you have apologised to M'Pherson for using such language to him, and have also promised to follow his directions implicitly. Do not say any thing more about it, Douglas," he added, seeing that Douglas was about to speak. "You are not in a mood to speak properly, and I cannot suffer you to speak disrespectfully to me. It is enough that you understand what I desire you to do."

Mr Graham then turned to speak to the other children, leaving Douglas very unhappy and indignant. He was angry with Mr Graham for speaking to him in such a commanding manner before the work people, and he felt inclined to answer him as haughtily as he had

spoken to M'Pherson, but his uncle's calm decided tone and authoritative manner overawed him, and he remained silent.

After Mr Graham went away, M'Pherson told Allen that he might try the branch he had pointed out, cautioning him to avoid, as much as possible, pulling the side branches towards him, as that was apt to shake off the apples. He watched him for a few minutes, and then, being satisfied with his careful manner of proceeding, he left him to set Harry to work. Georgie was always so prudent and steady that he promoted him too, to the honourable task of climbing the trees. The girls and Lewis had ample employment, going about among the trees, receiving the apples as they were pulled, and carrying them to the hampers, and picking up what the gatherers allowed to fall, or what had been shaken down by the wind.

All were soon busy. Douglas, the only idle and discontented person, remained standing leaning against the tree, just as his uncle had left him. Every angry and proud feeling of his heart was busy within him, as he stood

there gazing upon the merry group; exciting himself to greater indignation, by dwelling upon and exaggerating all the injuries he had received; and looking upon himself as a sort of victim whom every one was leagued against. Mr Graham was harsh and unjust, M'Pherson impertinent, and his cousins and Alice were very unkind to enjoy themselves so much while he was unhappy; they ought not, he thought, to be so friendly with M'Pherson, when he had behaved so ill to him. He tried to despise their amusement too, and to persuade himself that he had no wish to join them, and that it was a stupid way of spending a holiday. But in this attempt he did not succeed; for there is always something very captivating to young people in a busy, bustling scene like that before him; and in spite of his endeavours to repress it, he could not help wishing to take part in it. Once the thought came into his mind, whether it would not be a good plan to make the requisite apology, and so be able to enjoy himself. But he rejected this thought with disdain; and in order to put

himself out of the way of being tempted to such a humiliating act, he walked out of the orchard altogether.

The other children, in the mean time, pursued their occupations very cheerily, until twelve o'clock, when M'Pherson advised them to rest for a little while. It was a warmer day than we generally have in October. The white fleecy clouds, which M'Pherson said betokened wind, being too light to have much effect in softening the brightness or heat of the sun. Allen and Georgie went to the house to get bread and milk for luncheon, and they found seats from which they could see the men still hard at work.

"Where is Douglas?" asked Harry.

One of the girls answered that she had seen him go away in the direction of their gardens about an hour before.

"I wish very much that he had not been so angry," said Allen. "We ought to have told him that M'Pherson always takes charge in this business, and that we are all under his orders."

"I think it was a pity that M'Pherson spoke so dictatorially to him at first," remarked Eleanor. "It is provoking to be stopped in such a cool way, when you are eager to begin work."

"Yes," replied Harry; "and then Douglas got angry, because he thought that M'Pherson had no right to dictate to him."

"M'Pherson told me," answered Allen, "that he was sorry that he had not spoken more pleasantly; but he spoke hastily because Douglas was in such a hurry to begin, that he would not wait to hear what he was to do."

"Well, we cannot help it now," said Marion; "but I wish very much that we could get Douglas into good humour again. I think one of us girls might go after him, and try to persuade him to do as papa desired him."

Marion looked at Alice as she spoke; and Alice herself felt conscious that she was the proper person to go. But she was afraid that Douglas might be angry with her too; she did not know what to say to him, or how to persuade him. In short, dearly as she loved her

brother, and earnestly as she wished to see him among them again, she could not resolve to make the exertion that was necessary to overcome her timidity, and her dislike to any disagreeable task. As she did not speak, therefore, Eleanor, after a moment's thought, said, that she would go; and rising immediately she went out of the orchard towards their garden.

"That is so like Eleanor," exclaimed Allen; "she is always so ready to do any thing. You and Alice, Marion, say so and so ought to be done, but Eleanor is almost always the one to do it."

Marion answered a little angrily, that she could sometimes act as well as Eleanor.

"Oh, yes," replied Allen, "you *can*; but what I mean is, when a disagreeable task is proposed, you and Alice only think of how to excuse yourselves from it, while Eleanor, seeing that some one must perform it, sets about it at once."

Marion was going to defend herself still more angrily, but was prevented by a frank confes-

sion from Alice, that in her own case, at least, Allen's accusation was correct.

"I am often sorry afterwards," she added; "but at the time the task seems so difficult, that I cannot make up my mind to do it."

"That brings us back," remarked Harry, "to what mama so often says of both you and me; that we think too much of the difficulty of performing our duty, and not enough of the simple right or wrong."

Eleanor, in the mean time, had gone down the river towards their garden. She crossed by the stone bridge, which was always called Maggie's Bridge, went up the bank, and entered by the upper gate. From the middle of the highest walk she could see every part of their own garden, and a good part of the lawn on the other side; but Douglas was not in sight. She saw, however, that the little gate at the bottom of the garden was open, and this made her feel pretty sure that Douglas had been there; for she remembered distinctly that she and Alice had turned back in the morning to shut this gate, as they were afraid

of the dogs getting in. She supposed that Douglas had come in by this little gate, and had gone out at the top of the garden, so that she would most probably find him in one of the walks up the hill. But as she went down the middle walk to shut the gate, a slight circumstance made her change her opinion. The ground on each side of this walk was laid out in vegetables, with broad flower-borders next the walk, and in order to separate the flowers from the vegetables, the children had, two summers before, made a light paling round the vegetables, and trained creeping roses and honeysuckles upon it. This made a very pretty screen in summer, when the flowers were in beauty, and the vacant spaces over which the roses had not yet spread, the children covered with sweet peas and Indian cresses. The young gardeners were very proud of this fence, and took great delight in training and cutting their roses, and keeping it always in good order. But on this morning, Eleanor and Alice had found that one long truant branch of an Ayrshire rose-tree had got loosened from its support, and

was lying across the gravel-walk. It was this that made Eleanor so careful to shut the gate, for they had not time to fasten it up; and there was a beautiful bunch of roses (late as it was) on the branch, which they were anxious to preserve from their friend Mussie's destructive paws. Now Eleanor found her bunch of roses trampled into the gravel, and part of the branch broken off. As she stooped sorrowfully to lift it up, she guessed that Douglas, in his angry haste, not seeing the branch, it had caught his foot as he walked over it; and that he had broken it in his impatience at being checked. She saw that he had stepped into the border to free himself from it; and looking at his foot-print, she saw that he had gone *down*, not *up*, the garden. He must have gone down the walk by the river-side, and she tried to console herself for the destruction of her roses by the reflection, that if it had not been for them, she might have wandered up the hill all the afternoon, without finding him.

Soon after leaving the gate of their garden, she saw Mussie in one of the wood-walks above

her, hunting for rabbits. She knew that he had left the orchard with Douglas, and she immediately began to climb the bank in hopes of at last succeeding in her search. Nor was she disappointed. A little further along the walk she saw Douglas lying beside the trunk of a fallen tree. He took no notice of her as she came up; but after she had seated herself on the tree, he asked her sullenly what she wanted?

"I want you to come back with me to the orchard, Douglas; we miss you very much."

"I will not," replied Douglas in a sulky tone; "you can just go back again, if that is all you want."

"I will not go back," said Eleanor. "If you will not go with me, I will stay with you."

"I do not want you," he replied; "and as you have managed to be happy so long without me, you can go back and forget me again."

Eleanor looked at him for a moment, and then said with a half smile, "Oh, Douglas, are

you angry because we went on gathering the apples without you? We did not forget you, only we did not like to try to persuade you then, because you were so angry."

"I had a good right to be angry," said Douglas haughtily; "and I am angry still. So you may go back, for you will not be able to persuade me now, any more than you could have done then."

Poor Eleanor saw that she had not taken the right means of soothing Douglas; and she was considering what she ought to say or do next, when an angry bark from Mussie, and the sound of a man's footsteps interrupted her meditations.

"Frank Herbert!" she exclaimed, eagerly starting up as he appeared.

Douglas also rose; while Mussie used every means in his power to shew that he had not forgotten him, although Frank had been away from home ever since he was found.

"How did you come here? where did you come from? We thought you were not to be

back until the end of the month," exclaimed Eleanor.

Frank, with a good-humoured smile, answered all her questions. He had returned sooner than he had expected, because he had some expectation of going soon to sea again. He had arrived at his father's house the night before,—had been a long walk through the woods, and was now on his way to Karnford.

"But," he asked in turn, "why are you two here alone?"

Eleanor replied, with some confusion, that the others were in the orchard gathering apples.

"And do you not like that occupation too?" he asked, looking keenly at her and Douglas. "I remember I used to delight in it."

Neither answered.

"Come," said he, frankly, "I see there is something wrong here. I should like much to know what it is; but if you would rather not tell me, I will ask you no more questions."

Eleanor looked at Douglas. Douglas hesi-

tated, and then said, half sullenly, "You may tell Frank if you like, Eleanor; I am not at all ashamed."

Frank strongly suspected that Douglas was deceiving himself, and that he did really feel ashamed, but he did not say so; he merely remarked, as he seated himself on the tree, that he would not be sorry to sit down, as he was rather tired.

"Now, let us have a fair trial," he continued, laughing. "I am the judge; you, Douglas, I suppose, the accused; and Eleanor the accuser."

Eleanor gave a very fair account of the whole matter, neither blaming nor excusing Douglas too much. She said, candidly, that M'Pherson had spoken more hastily than he would have done, if he had not been busy; and that Douglas did not know that it was always the rule in the apple-gatherings for all to obey M'Pherson. This moderate way of stating the matter did Douglas good, in so far as it removed from his mind all the exaggerated views he had been taking of the provocation

he had received, and shewed him his own foolish passion in a more inexcusable light.

"Now, Douglas," said Frank jestingly, "we must hear your answer. Do you plead guilty to the charge?"

"I did strike M'Pherson, and call him impertinent and interfering; but he deserved it."

"Oh, but we are not trying M'Pherson's cause just now, but yours."

"But you cannot try my cause, as you call it, without knowing the provocation I received."

"I beg your pardon, Douglas. We have first to prove that the offence has been committed; secondly, the criminality of it in law; and then the provocation received may be used as a plea for the mitigation of the sentence."

It was difficult to resist Frank's merry, good-humoured manner, and though a little indignant at the terms offence, criminality, and sentence, Douglas forced himself to take it as a joke.

"You plead guilty to the charge of having

struck M'Pherson, and called him names, so that the first point requires no argument. As to the second, I think you will scarcely venture to assert that you have a right to strike a man, or call him names whenever you please. If you have no such right, it must be wrong to do so. Thus we have proved that you have committed a *crime;* the only point unsettled, is the extenuating circumstances connected with your offence. You plead that you were first offended against. Now, did you strike M'Pherson to prevent him from injuring you, or to punish him for having done so?"

Douglas hesitated for a moment. "Merely because I was angry," he said at last.

"That is to say you did it to punish him. But the law does not allow any man to take the punishment of another into his own hands."

"What could I do?" asked Douglas.

"You ought to have had recourse to the law, to obtain amends for the injury you supposed had been done to you. You took an illegal way of obtaining amends, and therefore exposed yourself to punishment in turn."

Douglas was silent.

"You see," pursued Frank laughing; "that you are fairly condemned. Your case is this, A man does what you consider an injury to you; in order to punish him you commit an assault upon him; an assault is an offence punishable by law; therefore you have incurred the penalty the law awards. Come, Douglas," continued Frank more seriously; "I think you are convinced that, supposing M'Pherson did wrong, still you offended against him. Be a man then; do boldly and bravely what is right, however disagreeable it may be; go down at once to the orchard, walk up to M'Pherson and say, 'I was wrong, I will not do this again.' You imagine that you are asserting your dignity by refusing to acknowledge your fault, but you are quite mistaken. You are only acting the part of a petted child. Your reason is convinced that you have done wrong, and to rest a moment without acknowledging it, only proves that you have a want of honesty, or a want of courageous resolution in your character, perhaps both. You are

unwilling to go because you think M'Pherson will suppose that you apologise only because you can no longer bear the punishment of being excluded from the amusement you wish to enjoy. Let him think so; you have nothing to do with his thoughts. All your concern ought to be to do what is just and right. You have injured him, and justice requires that you should make reparation at once."

"And I will," exclaimed Douglas, starting up; "come after me, if you please, and see."

Well pleased, Frank and Eleanor followed him, but Douglas went too fast for them. He ran hastily through the wood, across the river, and into the orchard: he walked straight up to M'Pherson and held out his hand.

"M'Pherson," he said, "I did wrong in striking you, and calling you names, I am sorry for it. Will you forgive me?"

M'Pherson shook his hand heartily; he frankly acknowledged that he had been to blame in speaking to Douglas as he did. If he had not been thinking of other things, he said, he would not have caught hold of him

in such a provoking way, but have told him quietly why he could not allow him to begin until he knew how to proceed. "But you may believe, Master Douglas, that I did not *intend* to make you angry."

"I ought to have believed that from the first. You are always kind and considerate to us, and you were very generous not to tell my uncle that I struck you."

"Oh, you were not yourself when you did that, I never thought of it again. But I hope you are going to help us now? We shall be much the better for your help."

Douglas was much touched by the way in which M'Pherson said this; by the care he took not to make it appear as if he were granting him permission to work, but rather asking him to do it as a favour. He felt more real sorrow than before for his foolish unreasonable passion, and saw more clearly the evil and childishness of his fits of anger and pride. He was particularly careful all afternoon to follow M'Pherson's directions very exactly, and was pronounced to be a cautious and prudent

gatherer, it being proved that fewer apples fell from his branches than from any of the others.

After the young people were ready for dinner, they went out on the stairs at the front door to watch for the return of Mr and Mrs Graham. Douglas was anxious for them to come home, but yet when they saw the carriage coming up the avenue, he hung back while the rest pressed forward to welcome them. When, however, he saw his uncle looking through the group, as if anxious to know where he was, and what he had done, he went forward to him.

"M'Pherson and I are friends now, uncle," he said, colouring very much; "and I am both sorry and much ashamed of having behaved so foolishly this morning."

"I am glad to hear it, Douglas," said his uncle kindly; "but, my dear boy, I hope you are aware that your impatience and pride are not merely foolish, but positively sinful in God's sight. Do not forget this, for Satan's surest means of leading us into sin, are to persuade us to look upon our faults as mere follies, and

to make us forget that *every* transgression of God's law, however small, is an act of rebellion against his sovereign authority, and therefore a grievous sin."

Douglas listened to Mr Graham with a humility and submission which gave his uncle the pleasing assurance that his heart was really softened, and his pride subdued. He gave him also, of his own accord, a full and fair statement of the whole transaction, and acknowledged that it was more the unexpected pleasure of seeing Frank that had at first subdued his sullenness, than any conviction that he was in the wrong. He told, also, how it was almost altogether pride that had made him resolve to ask M'Pherson's pardon, because Frank proved to him that it was mean and childish to be afraid to do so; and that it was not till M'Pherson had softened his heart by his kindness and generosity, that he felt real sorrow for his offence against him.

"I did feel sorrow before, uncle, but it was sorrow on my own account; I was vexed that

I had put myself in the wrong, and shewn myself so foolish."

"But did you not all the time feel conscious that you had done wrong?"

"Far in, in my heart, there was a little consciousness, but I always shut it up, and would not suffer it to come out, or to speak."

"Well, Douglas, I have great hopes that, with God's help, you will be able to overcome this fiery, proud temper, because I see that, when once the fit is over, you have courage to look back and expose all the lurking evil in your heart. One word of warning; after a storm like to-day's, there is something dangerous in the pleasant calm that follows. We are kind, because you have been unhappy, and because you have done right in the end; you are well pleased with yourself, because you have been victorious in a hard struggle with your evil passions, and the agreeable contrast all this presents to your unhappy state in the morning, makes you feel happier than you were before you did wrong. Now, there is a danger of your forgetting, in the enjoyment of this

peace and happiness, that you have really sinned against God. Remember that you have done so, that your sin is recorded against you, and that no performance of what is only your duty can blot it out from that awful book of God's remembrance; nothing can do it but the blood of Christ."

No more passed between them, but Douglas felt the truth of what his uncle had said, when he saw how kind every one was to him, and felt how soothing their kindness was.

When the children went into the drawing-room, after their lessons were finished, they found Mr and Mrs Graham looking over a large collection of books they had brought from M——.

"New music, mama," cried Eleanor, as her quick eye caught sight of a roll of music.

"Yes, Eleanor, and I have done more than buy you new music to-day. I have engaged Mr B——, the music-master at M——, to come out twice a-week to give lessons to you three girls."

Eleanor and Marion were delighted at this

information, for they had both great talent for music, but Alice sighed as she remarked that when they had a master they would have to practise for a longer time than they did; and she told her uncle that he must shorten their other lessons.

"On the contrary, Alice," replied Mr Graham smiling; "I have determined to grant the request you all made some time ago, to begin to learn German, and I have brought out books for the purpose."

Alice sighed more deeply still.

"You may trust your uncle not to give you more than you can accomplish," said Mrs Graham.

"I know that aunt, but still——," she hesitated; "I do not like to have so much to do every day; it seems like a heavy load upon me, in the morning to awake and think how much must be done before night."

"Well, Alice," exclaimed Marion, "I think it is delightful to have a great deal to do, and to think that you must be active and diligent

every hour of the day, in order to accomplish it all."

"I am afraid, Marion," said Mrs Graham, "that you sometimes stop short at the *think-ing* about it."

Marion coloured, even to tears, as she said quickly, "I do not like to hear you say that, mama. Every one seems to think that I am always talking and never acting."

"I did not intend to vex you so much, my little Marion; but quick and active as you imagine yourself to be, Alice often accomplishes more than you do. You like, as you say, to *think* about being busy, but when the time for business comes, you are often idle and inattentive. I believe you are often thinking of the pleasure there is in being active, while you are sitting for an hour over a task you could learn in quarter of the time, if you gave your whole mind to it."

Marion did not reply, but her countenance shewed that she was only half satisfied as to the correctness of this charge. Mrs Graham resolved to recur to it at another time, as this

was a defect in Marion's character that seemed to be increasing.

"My dear Alice," said Mr Graham, "I should be very sorry to lay such a heavy load upon you as you describe; but I think if you begin steadily, every morning, to lift the first stone of your burden, you will find that you can easily accomplish the raising of them all before night. If you cannot do so, you may depend upon it I shall not ask you to pursue the German. It is of no consequence *when* you learn it, it is of little consequence whether you ever learn it at all; but it is of the greatest consequence that you should acquire activity of mind, and overcome your indolence."

"I should like to learn it, uncle, only I am afraid it will be very difficult."

"Do you know, Alice," said her uncle, as he put his arm round her, and drew her towards him; "I am sometimes afraid that I shall lose my temper and patience with you, if you do not exert yourself a little more."

Alice looked smilingly up in his face, as she

replied, "I am not at all afraid, uncle; you never lose your temper."

"Oh, but *I* am much afraid, Alice. It provokes me to hear a young girl like you say you fear it will be very difficult. Why, young people ought to rejoice in meeting difficulties; and instead of shrinking from them, they should, like the knights of old, buckle on their armour, and spring forward to meet them with a cheerful heart and determined will. I intend you all to be very busy this winter, and I warn my three idle ones," nodding smilingly to Marion and Harry, "that I will not answer for my patience standing out, if they try it too much."

"Marion and Harry are idlers," said Mrs Graham; "but Alice is a sleeper, I think."

"Yes, they do not take any pains, except when they please; but Alice dislikes exertion of every kind. Marion and Harry would not sit still and dream, as she does. They are like the boy who wished to be a sunbeam, that he might have nothing to do all day but to dance up and down in the air, and dart out and into dark holes and corners."

"Oh, papa, tell us about him."

"It is a long story, Eleanor, and I am not sure that I remember it."

"Oh, yes, papa, you will remember it; and the longer the better, you know."

"Get your work, then, girls; and if you will bring me the pretty little drawing you made of the mill last week, Eleanor, I will mount it for you, that you may give it to your uncle," said Mrs Graham.

The boys were busy with some nets which were intended to be ready before next summer for their small cherry-tree, and so all had some occupation, while Mr Graham told them the following story:—

Gerard was a quick, clever boy, but very idle. He was not lazy or indolent, like some little girls, for in his amusements, or in pursuits that pleased him, he spared no pains, and thought no exertion too great to attain his object. But, at his studies, or when obliged to do any thing he disliked, he thought every thing a trouble, grumbled over every little difficulty, and in short, was in great danger,

with all his cleverness and sense, of becoming a useless, idle, selfish being. One bright day, early in summer, when all the leaves were in their richest, freshest dress, this young idler wandered out alone into a field, and lay down to enjoy, in the perfect luxury of doing nothing, the beautiful sights and sounds around him. He lay for some time, thinking how disagreeable it was to have difficult lessons to learn, or to be forced to exert himself and make himself of use to others. And as he watched the bright particles that appear to float up and down in the air on a warm day, he exclaimed, "Oh, how I should like to be a sunbeam, to have nothing to do but dance up and down in the air, glide out and in of dark shady nooks, and float on the surface of cool waters." While thinking of this, lying comfortably on a soft bed of moss, his eyes gradually began to close, his thoughts became confused; he fell asleep. He slept and dreamed. He dreamed that as he lay there, a lovely fairy came flying towards him, and lighted on the turf beside him. She was clothed in a golden

coloured robe, so dazzlingly bright that he could scarcely look at her. She stood beside him, and looked at him with a countenance that expressed both pity and contempt. "Foolish boy!" she said; "so you wish to be a sunbeam, in order that you may have nothing to do but to enjoy yourself, and you know not that there does not breathe on earth a more miserable wretch than he who has none to please or to serve, who lives for himself alone. But, come with me and learn if the sunbeams have nothing to do but to enjoy themselves." As she spoke she raised her light wings, and rose easily and gracefully into the air. Gerard found that he had wings too, and he followed her through the sky for many an hour, until the sun had gone to his rest and the stars shone out. Still on flew the fairy through the dark night, and on flew Gerard after her, until they arrived at the castle of the Sun, the great lord of the day.

The sun was not yet out of his bed, but there was a bustle and a movement among all the inhabitants of his castle, and all his ser-

vants, Gerard's friends the sunbeams, seemed to be preparing for some great work.

"What nonsense, uncle," cried Douglas; "the sun does not go to bed, he only ——"

"I know, my dear Douglas," said his uncle very quietly, "that the sun does not go to sleep, and I rather suspect that the author knew this also. But I suppose he did not think that the history of a dream required philosophical accuracy. And, indeed, I wonder that a gentleman of your remarkable penetration and knowledge did not as well object to sunbeams being represented as living and rational creatures."

Douglas blushed, and looked half offended.

"I beg your pardon, Douglas, for laughing at you, but I think it was a little superfluous to tell us that the sun does not go to bed, and that he disappears in one place only to shine in another. And I suspect you desired more to shew us your own knowledge than to give us information, as you could not suppose we required it. But to continue my story."—

Although the sun was not yet up, some of

his servants had already gone forth on the business of the day, not clothed indeed in their dazzling golden attire, but in invisible robes, and their path only manifest by the faint, but ever increasing light which they shed around them as they proceeded on their way. But when the great lord of the day arose from his couch, then began the labours of his innumerable attendants.

Gerard felt that he had the power of accompanying any of the bright bands that he chose, and he was soon darting through the air with a company of busy dew-gatherers.

They alighted on a field of wheat, and began to occupy themselves in warming its tender shoots, chilled by the night-air, and in conveying up to their home in the sky the dew-drops that lay heavy on the young leaves. The dew-drops sparkled joyously as their friends the sunbeams stooped down to kiss them and to carry them away, for they knew that their task was done, and they were glad to return to the bright skies, to rest there until again sent down in dew or rain to fertilize and refresh

the earth. Some of them were, however, lying fast asleep, deep down in the heart of the plants, and the sunbeams had to seek them out diligently and awaken them, knowing that to permit them to sleep there too long would injure the tender flower, which had not yet ventured forth from the shelter of its guardian leaves.

"We are of use," cried these busy dew-gatherers to Gerard. "We are gay and happy, because we are fulfilling the task appointed for us, and are nursing into health and fruitfulness this plant, so necessary to man."

Some of the dew-gatherers too were busy in the garden, and Gerard observed how all things seemed to rejoice in their presence. The dark violet lifted its drooping head, and gave forth its sweetest odours when they touched it; the pretty primrose opened its leaves and looked up with joy in its glad eye at their approach; while the birds sung gaily on every bush and tree.

"We are of use," they too cried. "See how the sight of us fills all things with joy. We

are gay and happy, because we are contributing to the happiness of others."

And now Gerard went to join some who were directing their flight to a wood. They had great difficulty in making their way through the thick foliage, but they persevered; climbing over one leaf, darting under another, and taking advantage of every chance opening which the light breeze afforded them, until they shone brightly on the grass beneath. And oh, how much beauty did they shed around them, on the velvet turf, on the rich brown moss, on the very green leaves which had tried to impede their progress. And Gerard saw innumerable tribes of insects stealing out of their nests, some to dance merrily with the sunbeams, others to creep up and down the trunks of the trees; and he heard the busy happy murmur that followed on their path wherever they went. And while he watched he saw a young girl coming slowly through the wood. There was a shade of anxiety and sorrow upon her brow, and a weight of care upon her heart. Many vexations and troubles

had conspired to depress her, and she had gone out that morning feeling as if nothing could help her or remove her sadness. But now, as she sauntered along, she remarked half unconsciously the gay sunbeams that were busy around her. She saw them darting into shady nooks, and lighting all in them up into life and beauty; she saw the grey moss on the trees turn into silver at their touch. She saw the butterflies dance as if giddy with joy, because the sun shone upon them, and as she gazed she remembered the word, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" And she thought, "If God forgets not to send his sun to warm, refresh, and beautify all these things, how can I fear that he shall forget me, or refuse to help me?" And her brow grew lighter, and she raised her heart to heaven, and prayed for faith to cast all her care upon Him who cared for her. As she passed on calm and peaceful, the sunbeams looked at Gerard and cried, "We are of use, and we are gay and happy, because we are fulfilling our appointed

task, and are leading the hearts of the sorrowful to rest upon their God."

Now Gerard took a long flight across land and ocean. Much did he see by the way of the faithful sunbeam's work, more than I have time to tell. But when they were crossing a country where oppression and violence reigned, he glided, with one gentle solitary ray, into a deep, dark dungeon ; where was one who had been there for many, many years ; detained by injustice and cruelty because he was resolute to serve God, as God's Spirit and word taught him to do, and not after the dictates of man. The sunbeam glided in, shed, for a moment, a stream of golden light upon the dark, damp walls of his dungeon, and then fled away. But it had done its part ere it went. When first the captive saw it, it sent a thrill of anguish to his heart, as it reminded him of the bright sunshine he was never again to see, of the free fresh air he was never again to breathe, and pictured to his memory all the happy days of the past, all the dear ones whom he was never again to behold. But this anguish was

but for a moment; soon there returned that calm peaceful waiting upon God, that patient submission to his will, that had been his support and consolation through the long years of solitude and misery. And Gerard heard him say, "Yes, go, gay sunbeam, this is no place for you. Return to the bright hill side, return to shine on free waters, to rejoice the hearts of free men. You have told me your tale and you may go. You told me of earthly joy and happiness that will never again be mine; but you told me also of a home that is prepared for me where sorrow cannot come, and you have shed into my heart a ray of peace far brighter and more lasting than the light you cast on that dark wall." The sunbeam looked at Gerard and whispered, "I too am of use, my joy lies in fulfilling the work for which I am sent."

The next band led him to a rocky sea-shore, and oh! how gaily and beautifully did they sport with the waves as they rolled in upon the sand or dashed against the rocks. Now lighting up their white heads, and making them brighter

than the eye could well bear to look at, now catching the light spray and turning it into sparkling diamonds and pearls, and now creating a thousand fairy rainbows, which shone for a moment, and died away only to shine again. Gerard was wiser now, and he knew that even in conferring beauty upon inanimate things, the sunbeams were fulfilling their appointed task, but he did not know until they pointed it out to him, all the good they were doing here. For on that rocky beach there stood a gay party, who had come to see the beautiful mixture of rock and ocean. Their eyes sparkled with pleasure as they beheld the brightness and splendour of the sunshine on the water, and many were their light-hearted joyous exclamations of delight. But there was one among them whose heart swelled, as she marked the glorious sight, with feelings too deep for utterance. She was one whom God's Spirit had shone upon, and led to seek a Saviour, the Sun of righteousness. And as she saw the bright colours that the waves gave back to the sun, she felt that they reproached her for re-

missness in rendering back to her Saviour the light with which he had blessed her. And she resolved, in that Saviour's strength, to shine before men as these waves did; and by patience, meekness, gentleness, and love, to repay her God for what he had done for her; to seek to refresh and comfort the hearts of those he loved; and to endeavour, by the beauty of her life and conversation, to lead those who as yet knew him not to seek after him.

"We too are of use," cried the sunbeams; "and are happy, far happier than an idle, selfish being like you can understand, in thus fulfilling our duty, and helping to stir up God's own people to serve him better."

The sun was by this time getting low in the heavens, and it was with a softer light and a gentler step that the sunbeams moved on their various errands. One small party went with Gerard to the window of a chamber in which lay a young boy in a deep sleep. His body was wasted with fever, his strength was gone, and all day he had tossed about in his bed, unable to sleep from pain and weariness. At

length he slept, deeply, quietly; and his poor mother, as she watched him, blessed the God who had in his kind, tender care, sent such a sweet sleep, which she fancied would be the precursor of renewed health and strength. But while he slept a sunbeam stole softly into the darkened room, and shone full on the face of the sleeper. The mother rose hastily to shut it out, but the boy awoke. He looked up and smiled, "Do not shut out the sun, mother," he said, in a quiet calm voice. "It has done a great service to you and to me. It has awakened me out of a sleep so deep that had I not wakened now I never had wakened on earth again. And I would not willingly leave thee, my own, my tender mother, without telling thee how bright and beautiful that home is to which I am going. There is no sun there, for the Lamb is the light thereof; and oh! joy beyond all telling, not only shall I see that Lamb who died for me, but I shall at last be able to love him. Often has my heart danced with joy in the brightness and warmth of the sun, and when I am gone,

mother dear, you must look at its rays with joy and thankfulness, and remember that I am where its light is as darkness in comparison of the glory that is around the throne. Good bye, mother darling, the sun and I are going to rest together." And as he spoke his eyes closed, his breath grew short, and without a struggle his spirit went home, and his weary pained body entered into rest. And the mother's heart was enabled to rejoice that so peacefully and sweetly her darling had left her.

Gerard awoke with the tear of pity in his eye, and he arose and went home a wiser, a more unselfish boy, for the words of the sunbeams rung in his ears, "We are gay and happy, because we are fulfilling the task given us to do, and are working good for others." He felt that though he was but a young weak child yet he had a task given him to perform; that there were means of doing good in his power. He remembered that if he could do nothing else, he could at least cheer the hearts of his parents by diligent, faithful attention to his studies, by prompt cheerful obedience to

their commands, and by anxious efforts to save them trouble. Nor did the good effect of his dream ever pass away. In spite of his good resolutions, Gerard often found himself relapsing into his old habits of idleness, but a glance at the sunbeams on their various errands to fertilize and beautify the earth, was, in general, sufficient to excite him to renewed exertions.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, I think I deserve great credit for remembering so well a story that I have not read for, I am sure, fifteen years."

"I like it very much, papa," said Harry. I like that kind of story, one remembers it so well. Do not you like it, mama?"

"Yes, Harry, I think it is a good little fable, and it teaches us a good many lessons in a very pleasant way."

"I like the description of the sunbeams searching out and awakening the sleepy dewdrops in the heart of the young plants," said Alice; "and about them peeping in behind the grey moss to rouse the merry insects out of their nests."

"But I wish, papa," said Eleanor, "that the story had told us more about the different people. How the rainbow girl got on; and how the mother recovered after the loss of her boy. I wanted to know if she had any more children, and if her husband were alive."

"Oh, you are very unreasonable, Eleanor," replied Mr Graham, laughing. "It was not at all the intention of the author to give us a history of these people. He leaves that to the imagination of the reader."

"But I do not like to have it left to my imagination. I should like to hear all about it."

"You may, if you please, enact the rainbow girl, as you call her, Eleanor," said Mrs Graham. "Form her resolution and see how you succeed in keeping it."

"Do not you think, mama," asked Marion; "that Miss Grey is a good deal like her?"

"I think Eleanor is like her already," said Douglas; "she is so cheerful and kind."

Mrs Graham glanced smilingly at Eleanor, and Eleanor blushed as she said,—

"I know what you mean, mama. I have not forgotten what you said to me about its being wrong to allow myself to laugh at people and turn them into ridicule. You mean that I must watch against this if I wish to be like the rainbow girl."

"Yes, Eleanor, I intended to remind you that this bad habit, if not checked, will greatly impair that usefulness that God has intended you for, in giving you the natural gaiety and kindliness which Douglas admires so much."

"And you told us pretty plainly, papa, what part of the lesson you meant for Harry and me," said Marion, smiling.

"That is the principal lesson of the story," replied Mr Graham. "But another one which comes out more indirectly is, to teach us to see God's hand and his kindness in those lesser beauties of nature. In the bright gilding of a cloud, in the sparkle of sunshine on the waters, or in a dew-drop on a blade of grass. We ought to observe these things and to feel grateful for them, and besides its being

our duty to do so, it is true wisdom. The man who has learned to mark and to enjoy such things as these has objects of pleasure and admiration by his side every day and hour."

CHAPTER VII.

SNOW.

"How cold, how very cold it is," exclaimed Eleanor one day towards the end of October, as they were setting out on a long walk. "Who will try a race with me to warm my feet?"

Georgie accepted her challenge, and they started off on a merry race across the lawn in the direction of the stable-yard. When the others overtook them, they found them arguing with M'Pherson about the probability of there being a snow-storm. M'Pherson thought that it was too early in the year for a regular storm, and also that the clouds had gathered too quickly. They might have a shower, he said, but that would be all. He was wrong. The next day Alice was aroused by one of the

boys coming into her room, very early in the morning, bidding her rise immediately and come out; for that there had been a very heavy fall of snow during the night, and they were going to have *such* fun making a snow-man, and pelting one another with snow-balls.

Before she was dressed, Eleanor and Marion came for her in the greatest glee. Every thing was exactly as they would have wished. It was a Saturday; the snow had fallen so softly that the trees were in their greatest beauty with their snow covering; and it was a fine, bright frosty morning. Alice, who had never seen snow before, except in London, was quite enchanted with the beauty of the lawn in its winter dress, and the animated description the girls gave of the pleasures of a snow-storm, made her as eager as they were to get ready to go out. She would not allow them to wait for her, but promised to join them at the stable-yard as soon as she had finished her morning reading.

Now Alice had no idea of the condition of untrodden snow. The girls had spoken of the in-

tense frost, and she had imagined that the snow would be quite hard and compact, and that she would be able to walk on it with great comfort in her usual walking shoes. She went out by the back-door, and found the court well trodden, and the snow there as hard as she could desire. But when she had passed through the gate and proceeded down the back avenue, she soon found out her mistake. Her feet sunk over the shoes in the snow, and were quite wet before she had gone five steps. Poor Alice thought that if this was the comfort of snow in the country, she would much rather be without it altogether; and she felt much inclined to return home. A merry peal of laughter from the stable-yard reaching her ear, however, made her resolve to persevere, in the vain hope that she would get accustomed to the discomfort of the cold wet snow. She tried to place her feet in the foot-marks that she saw along the path, but the snow was so light, that some was always brushed off, and emptied into her shoe; and after going a few steps she again paused. Looking towards the

yard, she saw Mrs White, the housekeeper, come out of the yard, and come along the path to the house. Alice waited for her, and as she came nearer, she saw that she, too, appeared to think a snow-storm a very amusing thing, for there was a broad smile on her good-humoured countenance.

"Are you going up the yard, Miss Alice?" she asked. "You will find a merry party there. It makes me feel like a bairn myself to see their mirth and fun."

"I should like very much to go, but the soft wet snow makes me so uncomfortable."

Mrs White glanced at Alice's shoes. "No wonder, my dear, that your feet are wet with such shoes on. You ought to have strong waterproof boots like our young ladies."

"Must I wait till they are made before I can go out in the snow?" asked Alice in a melancholy tone.

"Oh, no," answered the good-natured housekeeper. "Come back with me, and I will contrive some plan for keeping your feet dry."

She led her into her own room, where a

cheerful warm fire was burning, and made her take off her shoes and stockings, and rub her feet dry with a warm towel. She then went up stairs, and returned in a few minutes with dry stockings, and a pair of strong boots belonging to one of the boys. The boots were much too large for Alice, so Mrs White advised her to put on a pair of Harry's worsted socks above her own stockings, to fill up the boots and keep her feet warm. She then pinned up her frock for her, and put on an old waterproof cape of Mr Graham's, which reached nearly to her feet.

"Thank you, thank you," cried Alice, laughing heartily at her own appearance. "You have managed very nicely,—my feet are quite warm."

She now ran quickly and fearlessly through the snow, and joined the others in the stable-yard. She found a great bustle there. The snow had come so unexpectedly, that no one was prepared for it; and there was a great deal to do in the cattle-shed, in the byre, and in the stables. The boys had left their snow-

man to give what help they could in carrying messages, or in assisting in the hasty carpenter work that was required to make all things ready. The children enjoyed the excitement and bustle, and were much amused at the numerous difficulties and dilemmas they heard of. Alice thought that the varied demands that were made upon her uncle's attention were a good trial of his patience and calmness of temper. While he and M'Pherson were busy in consultation about some important point, one of the men would come with a grave face,—

"There are not more turnips in the house than will serve the cattle to-day, sir."

Again, "If you please, the horses' shoes must be frosted;" or, "The door of the house for the young horses is broken, sir."

But Mr Graham continued to answer in the same quiet undisturbed tone; and even the melancholy question, "What are we to do for coals, sir? There are almost none in the cellar, and we cannot go for more through this deep snow;" could not annoy him. He pointed

quietly to the wood-stack, and turned again to his consultation with M'Pherson.

"Oh, M'Pherson," said Eleanor, with a wise shake of her head; "you should have believed me yesterday, when I told you that it was going to snow. If you had, you would have been spared all this trouble."

"Really, Eleanor," said her papa laughing, you are too provoking. When we have so much to think of and to try our tempers, you ought not to triumph over us."

"The boys are worse than I am, papa. They made Thomas so angry this morning, by their delight at the bustle and turmoil every one is in."

"Thomas has less right to complain than any one else," remarked Marion. "For, though some of his pet plants are still out in the open border, yet this deep snow will keep them so warm and comfortable, that they will not feel the frost. They do not often get such a thick blanket so early in the year."

"Poor Thomas! he is more easily annoyed than most people," replied Mr Graham. "So

remember, all of you, that I positively forbid you to tease him in any way, either with snowballs, or by laughing at him."

"We may tease M'Pherson as much as we like, then, papa," cried Allen. "He never gets angry."

"If I were M'Pherson, I would get angry directly," replied Mr Graham laughing; "if that is all the thanks you give him for his patience."

The children were in general fond of their Saturday's lessons, as they consisted merely of a drawing-lesson, and of a sort of lecture upon Natural Philosophy from Mr Graham. But upon this charming snowy day, they were delighted to hear him say that he would not be able to attend to them; and the whole party, except Mrs Graham and Gracie, went out again immediately after breakfast.

The snow-man was discarded for a new project. They determined to build a house large enough to hold them all. Their plan was to raise a high mound of snow, and then dig a cave out of it. And they set all busily to work,

shovelling up the snow, treading it down, and carrying pitchers of water to throw over it. The water froze, and so made the mound very hard. They erected it in a shady corner against the north side of a wall, so that it never was completely thawed through all the winter. They did not get it raised high enough during this storm; but it was a very severe winter, the snow being seldom off the ground; and by adding to it at every opportunity, they had a very large and compact mound before the Christmas holidays, when they had plenty of leisure to excavate their house, and fit it up with seats according to their taste. It lasted until far on in spring, long after they had ceased to care about it; though for some time it was a great amusement to them.

When they had tired themselves with hard work at the mound, the girls went into the house to rest, while the boys obtained permission to go to the smith's shop to see the bustle there, caused by the numbers of horses going to get their shoes frosted. Every one they met on the road seemed full of business, and the

boys again agreed that an unexpected snow-storm was a most amusing thing.

After the snow passed away, they found that a good deal of damage had been done among the young trees in their garden. Those that had still leaves on, were so heavily loaded with snow that many branches were broken. And their favourite young purple beech in particular was broken over about half way up the stem. But these disasters were quite unsuspected by them in the mean time; and they enjoyed fully all the fun and frolic of snow-balling one another, and a beautiful walk up to Sunset Cottage to see the icicles at their waterfall. They were certainly very splendid; and Alice and Douglas, to whom every thing was quite new, were never tired of admiring the snow-laden trees and shrubs, the bright frozen snow sparkling in the sun, and the waterfall decorated with icicles such as they had never dreamed of.

The day did not end in perfect harmony, however. The girls were very tired when they returned home from their walk. The boys

much stronger, and more capable of enduring fatigue, were still in high spirits, and persisted in snow-balling the weary girls, until even Eleanor's good temper gave way, under the irritation and discomfort of the snow getting down the back of her neck; a misfortune to which girls' dresses render them more subject than boys. The boys at last desisted, but not before they had made the girls angry, and even then they did it with a bad grace, declaring, unreasonably enough, that they were cross and petted, and had no fun in them.

"I see," said Mr Graham, with a significant smile, as he glanced round the table after dinner; "I see that however delightful a bustle may be in the morning, its effects are not always so pleasant in the after part of the day."

"We were tired, papa," said Eleanor, colouring, "and did not like the boys to throw snow-balls at us."

"And the boys were angry, I suppose, because you were tired. Well, do not you think it is a pity that you cannot have a little more consideration for one another?"

"But, papa," said Harry, "we were not angry because the girls were tired, but because they were so very cross and petted."

"Indeed, Harry, we were not petted," was Marion's angry rejoinder; "but you were ——."

"Hush, hush," interrupted Mr Graham. "To quarrel about it now will only make the matter worse. If the girls were really petted, so much the more reason why the boys ought to have been sorry for them, and forborne to tease them; for it is much more uncomfortable to feel petted than to be merely tired. On the other hand, perhaps the girls did not fight hard enough against the cross feelings that weariedness is very apt to produce. But now that it is all over, the best plan for each little boy and girl is, to forget that there is such a person in the world as him or herself; and to use every effort to soothe and cheer all the others. And in order to help us in this, I am sure that Eleanor and Marion will sing that cheerful duet that we all like so much. I have not heard it for a week, and Mr B—— told me

that Eleanor had been very successful in overcoming the difficulties of her part."

The girls complied immediately with this request, and Mr Graham's pleasant cheerful way of speaking had its usual effect in restoring peace and harmony to the little circle.

As I have already told you, it was not until after the first thaw that the children knew how much injury the snow had done to their young trees and shrubs. But on the next Monday afternoon, Mr Graham discovered that the roof of their little tool-house was crushed in by the weight of snow. He went to tell them of it, and found them all in the work-shop with Frank Herbert, who was assisting them to construct a sleigh. The interest of this new occupation prevented them from being so much annoyed by the accident as they might otherwise have been. The boys declared that they were surprised that "the frail, ill-built thing" had lasted so long; and rather rejoiced at the thought of building a new one, forming magnicent plans for its erection. Eleanor alone expressed sorrow for its destruction.

"Poor old thing!" she said; "I shall be quite sorry to take it down. We thought it so neat, and were so proud of it when we got it finished. Papa and mama came out to see it, and we made quite a grand ceremony on carrying the tools into it. We walked in procession, each bearing some tool; and I remember so well, little Gracie insisted on having some thing to carry; and nurse had great trouble in keeping her back; she could not understand why we walked so gravely; she wished to run as fast as she could."

"Oh, yes, I remember that," cried Harry; "and we hung garlands of flowers all round the walls. How absurd it seems now to make such a work about such a rickety old thing."

"It was not old then, though, Harry," replied Eleanor laughing; "and it was the best we could make, so we thought a great deal of it. But we must go to Thomas, and beg a corner of his tool-shed for our poor houseless spades and rakes. Come, Marion, and Alice, we will go now, and not stay to hear these ungrateful boys abuse our old friend."

Thomas was not at all willing to grant their request. Eleanor was his favourite, because she never teased him, and she was always ready to sympathise with him in any disasters that befell his plants. But even to her he made so many conditions about keeping the tools in good order, et cetera, that the children thankfully accepted the coachman's offer to give them a corner of the coach-house.

Thomas had more foresight than the children, as to the mischief likely to ensue from such a heavy fall of snow, while the leaves were still on the trees; and his gloomy forebodings upon this subject made him less able than ever to stand any trial of his temper. The young people did not believe his predictions, but said he was always grumbling about something. And when they discovered that he had been right, Harry declared that he was more annoyed at the thought of how much Thomas would triumph over them in the future, than vexed even at the destruction of their trees. "Whenever we contradict him," he said, "he

will say, 'Well, well, we'll see. Who was right about the snow upon the trees?' "

On various accounts, besides the discovery of the loss they had sustained, the thaw was not very agreeable to the children. It was delightful to take long walks while the snow was hard and dry, and every thing dazzlingly bright and beautiful in its white dress. They all enjoyed their slides and snow-balling; their games with Mussie, and their skating with Frank Herbert and Mr Graham; and as long as the frost lasted, they all thought that snow was a charming thing. But the thaw changed matters considerably. The roads were so wet for some days, that Mrs Graham would not allow Alice to walk any where, except in one sunny walk, from which the boys had cleared away the snow before the thaw began. Her own hardy girls, she said, might walk with the boys if they chose; but she could not allow Alice to do so. At first, Marion as well as Eleanor remained with Alice; but her patience soon failed, and she left them to their quiet walk alone. Her absence was, however, rather a

relief to them; for, although she could resolve to make the great sacrifice of giving up her walk, she could not make the effort necessary to overcome her feelings of pettishness and impatience at being deprived of the pleasure. She went with them firmly resolved not to be satisfied with any thing; and she felt angry with them, because they were contented and cheerful. She felt and spoke as if she were the only injured person, and made Alice regret doubly her aunt's prohibition, because Marion seemed so much vexed by it. When they were left alone, Eleanor and Alice were much happier. They moralised very sagely upon Marion's disposition to fret about trifles, and agreed that they were happier without her. But Mrs Graham reminded them that Marion's temper was a greater trial to herself than it was to them; and advised them rather to find out ways to help her in overcoming it, than to discuss her faults in her absence.

The frost, when it came back, was joyfully welcomed by all the children, but particularly by the two prisoners, Alice and Eleanor. No

thaw after the first tried their patience so much ; for the boys always exerted themselves to clear a great variety of walks for Mrs Graham and Alice. One thing that pleased Alice very much was, Harry's consideration in clearing the walk down to the river, so that she was able to enjoy the sight of their old friend the Karn, when swollen by the melted snow from the hills.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPRING.

If our young friends had had as much leisure for play and amusement as they had during summer, I am not sure that they would not have tired of this long winter. As it was, they had not much time to grow weary. They were very busy all the forenoon. In the afternoon they took long walks, worked at their snow mound, or had skating matches in fine weather; and when they could not get out, they had riotous games in the house, or found occupation in their workshop, making different articles of furniture for Sunset Cottage; and the preparation of lessons for the next day always took up the greater part of the evening. It was a very severe winter, so that Mrs Graham and

the girls were well occupied in making warm clothing for their poor neighbours; and while they worked, one of the boys or Mr Graham read aloud to them.

One or two holidays were spent at Miss Buchanan's. The absence of the little Lindsays was often mourned over on these occasions; but they were a large party even without them, and had many a merry game of hide-and-seek in the uninhabited rooms. But, although they did not grow weary of the long winter, still the return of spring was a great delight to them all, and particularly to Alice and Douglas. The watching for, and recording the first symptoms of its approach,—the long walks to the dell for early violets; to the bank where primroses first made their appearance, or to the birch wood to catch the first sweet smell of the young leaves,—the bringing home the first buds of the hawthorn, and eager telling of the first song of the thrush or blackbird, —the anxiety about the spring frosts for the fruit-blossoms, and the constant daily examination of these blossoms, to ascertain what

promise they gave of fruit ;—all this was quite new to the town children, and Eleanor declared that she wished they could have London cousins every spring to shew all these things to.

"However," she added, "I am not sure that many boys or girls would be such good admirers as you are. And it is a great comfort to get a really good admirer when you have any thing to shew."

"How can any one help admiring every thing just now ?" asked Alice. "Every thing looks so gay and pretty. The small larch-buds after the shower yesterday looked so joyous and laughing, the sight of them made me feel quite happy. And then the beech-bud you brought to me this morning ! I never could have imagined any thing so beautiful. The pale delicate green covered with tiny spikes of pure silver. And I think that I admired it the more, because the dark brown hard beech-bud is much less promising than the buds of other trees."

"I think," remarked Douglas, "that if we are good sight-seers, you are the very best

sight-showers I ever met with. You never forget to point out any beauty, however small."

"Mama taught us that when we were very young," replied Marion. "I remember her shewing me the different kinds of flowers on the mosses, long long ago, when I was younger than Gracie, and inviting me to look closely into them and admire them."

"Well, I do love the mosses," cried Eleanor warmly; "they have such beautiful flowers; some of the cup kinds are so graceful and elegant."

"It is very amusing to hear you say that you *love* a flower, Eleanor," said Douglas laughing. Eleanor laughed too. "It seems an absurd expression, and is, I suppose, an exaggerated one; but yet it is very difficult to find correct words in speaking about flowers or trees. That good old plane-tree, for instance, I feel quite grateful to it for becoming green so early, and it has such an honest friendly look, one can quite fancy that it comes out soon for the very purpose of giving us pleasure."

The children all laughed; but Allen said that he felt that too, and that there were some trees that seemed much kinder and more friendly to him than others. "The old elm," he said, "at the corner of the garden, is a fine noble-looking tree, but it has not the open happy look of that dear old plane. I can quite fancy Mr Elm to be a formal, grave, conscientious old gentleman, who always does his duty, but who cannot take a joke, and who thinks children a great plague."

"He must be a brother to old Thomas, then," said Harry laughing; "for he cannot take a joke, and he thinks children a great plague."

"And has he not good reason to think so?" said Mrs Graham, who had overtaken them without their perceiving her. "Do you think, Harry, that if you were an old man, you would not think a little boy a great plague, when that little boy had hid your tools, laughed at you, and sought out every opportunity of tormenting you? My dear Harry, you really should not do this. I found Thomas just now look-

ing every where for a packet of peas, which he had left for a few minutes in the garden, and which at last were found hidden under a flower-pot. Did not you do this?"

Harry laughingly acknowledged that he was the culprit; but Mrs Graham looked grave. "Really, Harry, I cannot see any amusement in giving an old faithful servant like Thomas so much trouble. And I did not think that you could find pleasure in what gives pain to another. I have told Thomas that the next time you play him any trick, he must complain to your papa. You call these tricks jokes, but they are not jokes when they vex him so much, as you know they do, and you have no right to tease any person in that way. You have been told this before, Harry, and still you persist."

"Forgive me this time, mama," said Harry earnestly; "I am very sorry, indeed I am. Always when you and papa speak to me I feel how wrong it is to tease Thomas, but I always forget."

"Because you think so little about it, Harry.

You feel a little sorrow for a few minutes, and then you drive it out of your mind. If you were to be more anxious not to forget your faults, you would not be so often in disgrace."

"But you will not tell papa to-day, mama," said Harry; "for I have grieved him enough already by my idleness and inattention. And indeed," he continued in a sorrowful tone; "I despair of ever being any better. I do not know what to do. Papa says he cannot submit to my trifling any longer, and yet I am sure that there is no good in my trying any more to be less idle, for however firmly I resolve to-day, I shall be as bad as ever to-morrow. I may as well give up trying to improve altogether."

"No, dear Harry, you must not say that," replied Mrs Graham earnestly and affectionately. "You do not know what bitter sorrow of heart it would give to papa and me, to see you give up the struggle with your evil temper and habits; to see that our dear boy was contented to remain idle, impatient, and careless, grieving those around him, and displeas-

ing God. If you could at all conceive the bitter pain this would give us, you would never speak or think of desisting from your efforts to improve."

"I never could bear to give you pain, my own kind mama," said the warm-hearted little fellow, much touched by his mother's earnest tone. "I shall struggle on, and not care for the pain or trouble it gives me. I see papa in the park, I will go to him at once and tell him that I am very sorry for having displeased him, and that I will begin now to fight harder than ever."

"Well," said Marion, looking after Harry as he ran across the lawn; "I am sure that it would be a good thing for us all, if Harry's carelessness and my pettedness were to fly away suddenly, in a night; so that we might awake in the morning as attentive as Allen, as good-humoured as Eleanor."

"Wishes will never make either pettedness or carelessness fly away, my little Marion," said Mrs Graham smiling; "but something else will. Earnest prayer to God, and a steady

determined resistance to every beginning of the evil, will do far more than wishes. But it is easier to wish than to do this."

"Yes, it is very *easy* to wish, mama," replied Marion blushing.

"But not very useful, Marion, if you rest there. I do not doubt that you wish very sincerely to get rid of your pettedness, but you do not like the trouble, and pain of resisting it. And you have yielded to it so much of late, that a very strong effort will be necessary now to overcome it."

"What has papa told Harry?" exclaimed Eleanor and Allen, as they saw him suddenly throw his cap up in the air, and then came running towards them, shouting "Hurrah! hurrah!"

"The Lindsays are come home—the Lindsays are come home—and we are to go there on Saturday," he cried as soon as he came within hearing.

The Grahams could scarcely believe that such very good news could be true. They knew that Willie was much better, and that

they hoped to be able to return home in summer, but they had not expected to see them so soon.

"Oh, I am so glad I do not know what to do," exclaimed Allen, after they had heard all the particulars of their return. "I think I must do some mischief."

"You had better not, Allen," replied Mr Graham laughing; "for I was so much displeased with Harry this morning, that I told Mr Lindsay that the idle and careless must not be allowed to accept his invitation. So I advise you all to be very careful both to-night and to-morrow."

"Well, papa," said Eleanor laughing; "I did not think that you could be so cruel as to propose such a punishment. To keep us from Benholme when we have not seen the Lindsays for nearly a year. Mama, is not papa very hard-hearted?"

"Not when he has warned you, Eleanor. It will not be his fault now if you do not go."

The children laughingly insisted that Mr Graham ought to give them a list of the faults

the commission of which was to exclude them from Benholme; but he declared that their only motive in asking for it must be that they might indulge in every fault not contained in the list, and that, therefore, he would not give it to them on any account. Every thing went on very smoothly the next day, both in the study and during their walk. Allen and Harry were very anxious to ride over to Benholme to see their friends, but they yielded to Mrs Graham's suggestion that Willie might perhaps be tired with his long journey, and that they had better wait till next morning.

"I feel very nervous, papa," said Harry smiling as he brought his exercise for Mr Graham to correct after tea. "I so often fail in this stupid exercise."

He stood anxiously watching while his papa read it over, and when he gave him back the book saying with a smile, "Right, very good." Harry threw it to a far corner of the room and exclaimed, "Well, I am glad you are over; you were my *last* danger."

"I rather think not, Harry," said Mrs

Graham. "If you had broke my china jar with your book just now, how could you have escaped the charge of carelessness? You had better be careful still."

"We cannot settle to reading though, mama," said Eleanor. "It will suit us much better to talk. We will tell Alice and Douglas all that we will do to-morrow."

"I think that to read aloud as usual would be the safer employment," said Mrs Graham; "but you can do as you please."

All the children agreed with Eleanor that it was impossible to attend to reading, and they clustered together in one of the window seats, telling of all the pleasures of a visit to Benholme, and recalling former scenes and adventures with the Lindsays."

"Marion, have you remembered to write out the chords for Mr B.?" asked Mrs Graham, after they had been thus employed for some time.

"Oh, no, mama; what a plague!" exclaimed Marion, rising unwillingly to seek her music-book.

This little interruption made her feel very cross, and she sat down to write with a most discontented countenance. She did not give her mind at all to what she was doing, and when she had nearly completed her task, she found that she had written over again the chords she had shewn to Mr B. the previous day. Still more thoroughly out of temper, she began to make querulous complaints of every body and every thing. Her pen was too soft, her ink was thick, the laughter and whispering of the others distracted her attention; and when they went to a distant part of the room, in order to leave her in quietness, she said in an impatient, peevish voice, that they shook the table so much in passing, that she could not write.

"Marion," said her mama, "I cannot allow you to remain here, if you make yourself so disagreeable; and I advise you to remember that we cannot take you to Benholme to-morrow if you do not behave better than you are doing."

Marion did not reply, but tears of anger

and vexation filled her eyes, and she completed her misfortunes by making a large blot on the paper, when she had for the second time almost arrived at the end of her work.

"Was there ever any thing so teasing?" she exclaimed impatiently. "I *cannot* write these stupid tiresome chords."

"Do not be so foolish, Marion, dear," said Mrs Graham kindly; "you know this task must be done. Wait quietly for a few minutes until you have recovered your good humour; then get some more paper, and you will easily copy out what you have already written."

"I have no time to wait," she answered, almost rudely, as she went to the music-stand. There was no paper in her portfolio, and she turned round, angrily accusing Eleanor of having taken out a sheet.

"I did not touch it, indeed, Marion; but I will give you some of mine," replied Eleanor.

"Then one of you boys must have taken it," she persisted in the same angry tone.

While the boys were defending themselves, Eleanor had given her what she required, and

then she quietly lifted the two sheets of paper that Marion had spoiled, and said in a pleasant, kind tone,—

"Look, Marion, here are two sheets, and that was all you had."

"I wish you would leave my paper alone," said Marion, snatching them out of her hand. "I am sure I have enough to tease me, without your interrupting me."

Mr Graham desired Marion to take her writing materials into another room, and not to return until prayer-time. When she came in to prayers, she looked as cross and discontented as before, and she left the room immediately after prayers, without speaking to any one.

The other children were very anxious to ascertain before going to bed, whether she was to go to the Lindsays, or not. And they lingered in the drawing-room for some minutes after saying good night, hoping that something might be said about it. Both Mr and Mrs Graham looked grave and thoughtful; but Eleanor, as she watched the expression of their

countenances, could not make out whether they were thinking of Marion or not. She did not at first like to ask them; but when Mr Graham roused himself from his reverie, to advise them to go to bed and sleep well, in preparation for the pleasure of the next day, she said with a little hesitation,—

"You will not forbid Marion to go, papa?"

"Why, Eleanor," he answered with a smile; "I have not been able to answer that question to myself yet. I believe I ought, but I can scarcely resolve to do so. It will be such a disappointment to her, poor girl; and will vex you all so much. Ask mama what she thinks about it."

Eleanor turned eagerly to her mama.

"I am afraid that you will think me very hard-hearted," said Mrs Graham; "but I really do not think that we can allow Marion to go. Her temper is much worse than it was some months ago, and she has lately been giving way to those feelings of pettedness and impatience, without making the least exertion to

subdue them. I am sure that she requires a severe lesson to arouse her."

"I believe that you are right, but I thought that the alarm which she must have felt ever since we sent her out of the room, might be sufficient for the purpose."

Mrs Graham shook her head. "I am sure, by the expression of her countenance," she said, "that she is still unsubdued; and even if it were otherwise, I think you are bound to fulfil your threat. I am very very sorry for poor Marion, but still I am sure that it will do her good, and that she requires it."

"Please, mama, do forgive Marion this once," said Eleanor.

"Oh, aunt, do," cried Douglas. "I am sure, as uncle says, that the fright will be enough; and if you speak to her, she will see how wrong her impatience is, and be more careful another time."

"My dear children," answered Mrs Graham, "I assure you that it gives me as much pain as it does you, to think that Marion must be deprived of to-morrow's pleasure; but I can-

not yield to your wishes. We have so often spoken to her, and warned her without any good effect; and now we must allow her to experience the evils of her want of self-command. I think papa agrees with me now."

"Yes," answered Mr Graham with a smile, 'I must confess that you have displayed both more wisdom and more firmness than I have to-night; for I had almost determined to allow her to go with us. But you have convinced me, and as I have given you the pain of deciding, I shall take upon myself the disagreeable task of speaking to her to-morrow."

The children knew that any further remonstrance would be useless, but Mr Graham saw tears in Eleanor's eyes when she came to bid him good night.

"My dear little girl," he said kindly, as he kissed her, "you must not grieve too much on Marion's account. The pain of to-morrow will soon be over, and if it is of use to her in enabling her to subdue her impatient temper, it will save her much unhappiness afterwards. Remember her in your prayers, dear; and ask

God to bless this sorrow to her, and to open her eyes to her fault."

Marion quite expected this decision of Mr and Mrs Graham; and when her impatience and anger had passed away, she was quite convinced of the justice of her punishment. Mr Graham's kind, earnest way of speaking to her the next morning, made her feel very penitent. And as she had nothing to amuse her during her long hours of solitude, or, to cause her to forget her fault, this punishment had an excellent effect upon her.

Mr Graham reminded her how often she had been warned, and advised to check the first beginnings of impatience and discontent; to resist even secret complaints in her own mind, and to accustom herself to seek excuses for those who had inadvertently offended her. He shewed her how completely the reverse of this her conduct had been; how constantly she had aggravated the sense of injury in her mind by dwelling upon the offence, until, what was in itself a mere trifle, became in her eyes a most serious crime; and how, in cases where no one

was to blame but herself, she had tried to throw blame upon others, and to find her consolation in proving them to be in the wrong.

"You are constantly endeavouring, Marion," he said, "to think little of your own offences, and a great deal of the offences of others. In short, if you had desired to *cherish* your natural infirmity of temper, you could not have chosen better means for that end than those you have been employing for some months past; and now it has gained such strength as to be almost beyond your control. Employ the leisure of to-day in recalling to your mind the many instances in which you have failed lately, and try to recollect all the minute details, and to find out the first beginnings and causes of your going wrong. And do not forget, my dearest Marion, to ask for help where alone you can get it."

Marion followed her papa's advice. She set herself steadily to consider all the particular circumstances of her fault, and though she found this a very painful task, she persevered bravely; for she remembered that her mama

had often told her that she would be much more successful in her struggles with her temper, if she would take more time to reflect upon the evils of it.

In thus thinking over the occasions in which she had yielded to her besetting sin, Marion was shocked to discover how unkind and selfish she had often been, and what an unpleasant companion she must have proved to the others. She had, as I have said, an excessive desire for approbation, and it was therefore a severe mortification to her to discover how unreasonable, foolish, and unkind she must have appeared to all around her. Had her reflections stopped here, they might have made her more careful to *conceal* her discontent and peevishness, without assisting her to make any real progress in subduing them. But happily her mama's warning about this recurred to her mind, and feeling the great difficulty of being sincere and single-hearted in her resolutions of amendment, she prayed to God to help her with more earnestness than she had ever done in her life. She felt a sweet satisfaction in

telling God of all her little difficulties and temptations, and in asking for strength against them. She remembered Mrs Graham's words, "That God has promised to write his law upon our hearts; and that, therefore, we may with perfect confidence ask him to enable us to keep each separate precept, and we may feel sure that he will answer us." One precept, that Marion was conscious she often forgot, was, "Mind the things of others," and she asked God to help her to fulfil it that very night when the party returned home. She knew that out of kindness to her, they would not begin to tell of their adventures until she asked them, and she resolved to meet them with a kind, cheerful interest and sympathy in all they had been doing. In this she succeeded completely; and although Mr and Mrs Graham were afraid to say much to her, from her great tendency to seek praise in all she did, yet Marion had the happiness of seeing that they observed and were pleased with her exertions.

Except from her absence, it had been a complete day of pleasure. Willie was quite well,

and every one at Benholme, old and young, master and servants, had been so kind and so very happy to see the Grahams again. Alice and Douglas liked Sophia and Willie quite as much as they had expected. And, in short, the whole proceedings had been a complete contrast to the day spent there in summer with the Wilsons. Marion did feel her regret increased by all this account of their happiness; but the lesson she had received, against giving way to her own selfish and impatient feelings, had been a very salutary one, and she persevered courageously to the close of the evening in her efforts to forget herself, and rejoice in the happiness of others. And she felt herself well rewarded by her mama's peculiarly tender Good night; and by the single sentence from Mr Graham, "You have done well, my little Marion."

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