tle, and praying for divine help, he saw a cross of fire in the heavens, whereon was written, "With this overcome."

207. What effect had this upon Constantine?

Constantine immediately ordered a royal standard to be made in the form of a cross, and commanded it to be carried before him in his wars; and soon after, he made a public profession of the religion of Jesus.

208. What happened after the death of Constantine?

Constantine divided the empire among his three sons: but every thing was now hasting to decay. Alaric, king of the Goths, took Rome, about the year 410, and permitted his soldiers for three days to ravage this once great and glorious city.

209. Was Alaric the last enemy of Rome?

No: Genseric, king of the Vandals, next invaded Rome, and completed its ruin. For fourteen days his troops were employed in destroying the buildings, and putting the inhabitants to the sword.

210. Who was the last Roman emperor?

Romulus Augustulus was the last emperor. He was conquered by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, in the year 476. Odoacer took the title of King of all Italy, and put an end to the Western Empire.

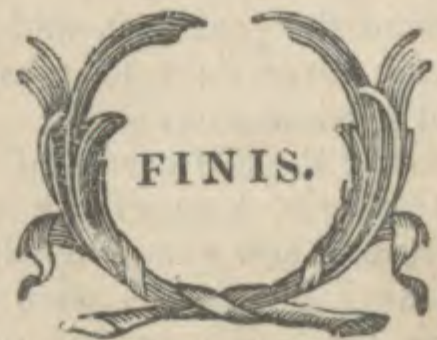
211. What do you mean by the Western and Eastern Empire?

Theodosius, one of the last emperors of Rome, divided his kingdom between his two

sons: Honorius he made emperor of Rome, the Western Empire; and Arcadius emperor of Constantinople, the Eastern Empire.

212. How long did the Eastern Empire continue?

The Eastern Empire continued till the year 1453; when Constantinople was taken by the Turks, under Mahommed the Second.



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THE

COTTAGERS OF GLENBURNIE.

CHAPTER I.

An Arrival.

In the fine summer of the year 1788, as Mr. Stewart of Gowan-brae, and his two daughters, were one morning sitting down to breakfast, they were told by the servant, that a gentlewoman was at the door, who desired to speak with Mr. Stewart on business. "She comes in good time," said Mr. Steward; "but do you know who she is?"—"No, sir," returned the servant, "she is quite a stranger, and speaks Englified, and is very lame; but has a wonderous pleasant countenance." Mr. Stewart, without further inquiry, hastened to the door, and entered with the stranger leaning on his arm. Her respectful salute was returned by Miss Stewart with that sort of reserve which young ladies, who are any-wise doubtful of being entitled to all that they assume, are apt to put on when addressing themselves to strangers, of whose rank they are uncertain; but, by her sister Mary, it was returned with a frankness which showed that she did not fear being demeaned by an act of courtesy.

"Indeed you must breakfast with us, my good Mrs. Mason," said Mr. Stewart, placing a chair; "my daughters have often heard of you from their mother. They are no strangers either to your name or character; and therefore must be prepared to show you esteem and respect." Miss Stewart coloured, and drew up her head very scornfully; of which Mrs. Mason took no notice, but, humbly thanking the good gentleman for his kindness, added, that he could scarcely imagine how much pleasure it gave her, to see the children of one whom she had so loved and honoured; "and she was loved and honoured by all that knew her," continued she. "Both the

young ladies resemble her: may they be as like her in their minds as in their persons!"—"God grant they may!" said the father, sighing; "and I hope her friends will be theirs through life."

Miss Stewart, who had been all this time looking out of the window, began her breakfast, without taking any notice of what was said; but Mary, who never heard her mother spoken of without sensible emotion, bowed to Mrs. Mason, with a look expressive of her gratitude; and observing, with compassion, how much she appeared exhausted by the fatigue of travelling, urged the necessity of her taking refreshment and repose. Mr. Stewart warmly seconded his daughter's invitation, who, having learned that Mrs. Mason had travelled night and day in the stage-coach, and only stopped at ———, until a horse could be prepared to bring her forward to Gowanbrae, was anxious that she should devote the remainder of the day to rest. The weary stranger thankfully acceded to the kind proposal; and Mary, perceiving how lame she was, offered her assistance to support her to her room, and conducted her to it with all that respectful kindness, which age or indisposition so naturally excite in an artless mind.

When Mary returned to the parlour, she found her father at the door, going out. He gave her a smile of approbation, as he passed; and, kindly tapping her on the neck, said, she was a dear lassie, and a comfort to his heart.

Miss Bell, who thought that every praise bestowed on her sister, conveyed a reproach to her, now broke silence, in evident displeasure with all the party. She was sure, for her part, she did not know what people meant, by paying such people so much attention. But she knew well enough that it was all to get their good words; but, for her part, she scorned such meanness. She scorned to get the good word of any one, by doing what was so improper. "And what, my dear Bell, is improper in what I have now done?" said Mary, in a mild tone of expostulation. "Improper!" returned her sister; "I don't know what you call improper, if you think it proper to keep company with a servant; and to make so much fuss about her, too; as if she were a lady. Improper, indeed! and when you know, too, that Capt. Mollins was to come

here to-day; and that I hoped that my father would ask him to dinner. But my friends are never to be minded; they are to be turned out to make room for every trumpery person you choose to pick up."—"Indeed, sister, you do me injustice," said Mary; "you know I did not bring Mrs. Mason here; but when I heard her name, I recollected all that our dear mother had often told us of her extraordinary worth; and I thought that if it had pleased God to have spared her, how glad she would have been to have seen one she so much esteemed; for, though my mother was born in a higher station, and bred to higher views than we have any right to, she had no pride, and treated all those who were worthy of her notice with kindness."—"Yes," replied Miss Bell, "it was her only fault. She was a woman of family: and, with her connexions, if she had held her head a little higher, and never taken notice of people because of their being good, and such stuff, she might have lived in a genteeler stile. I am sure she gave as much to poor people every year, as might have given handsome dinners to half the gentlemen in the country: and, to curry favour with my father, you encourage him in the same mean ways. But I see through your mean arts, miss, and I despise them."—"Indeed, sister, I have no arts," said Mary; "I wish to follow the example that was set us by the best of mothers. "Do as you please, miss!" cried her sister, choking with rage; and, leaving the room, slapped the door after her, with a violence which awaked their guest, and brought their father up from his study to see what was the matter. "I see how it is," said he; "Bell has been giving vent to the passion which I saw brewing in her breast, from the moment that I brought this worthy woman into the room. The ridiculous notions that she has got about gentility, seem to have stifled every good feeling in her mind. But it is my own fault. This is the effect of sending her to that nursery of folly and impertinence, where she learned nothing but vanity and idleness."—"Indeed, sir," said Mary, "my sister is very accomplished and genteel; and it is natural that she should wish to get into genteel company, to which she thinks our taking notice of people in an inferior station presents an obstacle."

"Then she thinks very foolishly, and very absurdly,"

replied Mr. Stewart. "My father was an honest man, and all the country knows that I am but a farmer's son; but I am not ashamed of my origin. And though, by being factor on the estate of Longlands, I have been brought into the company of higher people, it is by my character, and not by my situation, that I have gained a title to their respect. Depend upon it, Mary, that as long as people in our private station rest their claim to respect upon the grounds of upright conduct and unblemished virtue, they will not fail to meet with the attention they deserve; and that the vain ambition of being esteemed richer or greater than we really are, is a contemptible meanness, and will not fail to expose us to many mortifications."

Mary expressed her assent; and Mr. Stewart proceeded. "As to Mrs. Mason," said he, "she was, it is true, but a servant in the house of Lord Longlands; and was brought up by the old lady from a child to be a servant. Your mother was then in the house, in a state of dependance, as a poor relation; and would have found her situation miserable, had it not been alleviated by the kind attentions of this good girl, Betty Mason, who performed for her many friendly offices, and was, in sickness, her sole support and consolation: for the old lady, though pride made her treat my wife as a relation, was a woman of a coarse and selfish mind, and gave herself little trouble about the feelings or comforts of any one. What my poor dear angel suffered, while she was in that great house, was well known to me, and went to my heart. When seized with a fever, at a time the house was full of company, she was so neglected, that she would inevitably have lost her life, but for the care of Mason, who watched her night and day. She always called her her preserver; and can we, my dear Mary, forget the obligation? No, no: never shall one who showed kindness to her, find aught but kindness at Gowan-brae. Tell your sister, that I say so; and that if she does not choose to treat Mrs. Mason as my guest ought to be treated, she had better keep her room.—But who comes here? A fine gentleman, I think. Do you know who he is?"

"I never saw him, sir," returned Mary; "but I suppose it is a Capt. Mollins, whom my sister met with, when she went to the ball with Mrs. Flinders.

"Mrs. Flinders is a vain giddy woman," said Mr. Stew-

art, "and I do not like any one the better for being of her acquaintance; but I will not prejudge the merits of the gentleman." Capt. Mollins was then shown in, and was received by Mr. Stewart with a grave civility, which might have embarrassed some people; but the captain was not so easily abashed, saying, that he had the honour of bringing a message for Miss Stewart from Mrs. Flinders. He took his seat, and began talking of the weather, with all the ease of an old acquaintance.

Miss Stewart, who, in expectation of the captain's visit, had changed her dress, walked into the room, with a smile on her countenance; through which an acute observer would, however, have seen the remains of the recent storm. Her eyes sparkled, but her eyebrows were not yet unbent to the openness of good humour: her voice was, however, changed to the tone of pleasure; and so much wit did she find in the captain's conversation, that every sentence he uttered produced a laugh. They had, indeed, all the laugh to themselves; for as they only spoke about the ball, and as neither Mr. Stewart nor Mary had been there, they could have no clue to the meaning of the many brilliant things that were said. But when the old gentleman heard the captain ask his daughter, whether she was not acquainted with some of the quizzes whom he had seen speak to her, he thought it time to ask for an explanation; and begged the captain to inform him of whom he spoke. The captain turned off the question with a laugh; saying, "he was only rallying Miss Stewart about a gentleman in a green coat, who had the assurance to ask her to dance—one of the town's people—and you know, sir, what a vulgar set they are, he, he, he!"—"O, shockingly vulgar indeed," said Miss Stewart; "but we have no acquaintance with them, I assure you: *we* visit none but the families in the country."—"Then you have no remorse for your cruelty to that poor Mr. Fraser," cried the captain. "He looked so mortified when you refused him: I shall never forget it, he, he, he!"—"Ha, ha, ha! Well, you are so comical," said Miss Stewart, endeavouring to prevent her father, who was about to speak; but the old gentleman would be heard. "Was it Mr. Fraser, did you say, sir, that asked my daughter?"—"Yes, Fraser, Fraser, that was his name, I think—a little squat

vulgar fellow—one you probably don't know."—"But I do know him, sir," returned Mr. Stewart; "that little fat vulgar fellow is my nephew, sir—my daughters' cousin-german! a man of whose notice she ought to be proud, for he is respected as a benefactor to the whole neighbourhood. Were she to be ashamed to acknowledge her relationship to such a man, because he wears plain manners and a plain coat, I should be ashamed of her. Had my nephew been less successful in business than he has been, he would have still merited esteem; for, though of no high birth, he possesses the heart, and soul, and spirit of a gentleman."

"Very true, sir—very true, indeed," said the captain, with undaunted assurance, "Mr. Fraser is a very worthy man; he gives excellent dinners; I have the honour of knowing him intimately; have dined with him twice a week, ever since I have been at ——; a very worthy man indeed. I believe he dines with Mrs. Flinders to-day, and will probably see Miss Stewart home; for I hope she wont mortify her friend, by refusing her invitation." Miss Stewart looked at her father, who was exceedingly averse from the proposal. At length, however, she carried her point, as she generally did; for Mr. Stewart wanted the firmness that was necessary to enforce obedience, and to guide the conduct of this froward and self-willed child.

CHAPTER II.

Dissertation on Dress.—History of Mrs. Mason's Childhood.

Mr. Stewart, being called away on business, left it in charge with his daughter Mary, to prevent the departure of their guest during his absence; a commission which she gladly undertook to execute, saying, that she would watch for the moment of her awakening, in the adjoining room. In going to it, she passed the door of her sister's apartment, which stood a-jar, as was indeed its usual state; for she had acquired such a habit of slapping it after her, that the spring of the lock was always broken. Mary, hearing herself called on, entered; and asked, if she could render her any assistance in dressing.

"O yes," cried Bell, "if you will only come and help me to find my things; I don't know, I am sure, where they are all gone to. I have looked all these drawers through, and I cannot find a single pair of stockings fit to put on. What shall I do! I have nothing fit to wear. O me! what shall I do?"—"What! nothing fit to wear among all these heaps of clothes!" said Mary: "I believe, few girls in the country have such a well-stored wardrobe. We, at any rate, have no reason to complain, as we always find my father"——"My father!" interrupted Bell, "I am sure my father would never let us wear any thing in the fashion, if he could. But what should he know about dress at Gowan-brae? I wonder you have not more spirit than to fall in with his old-fashioned notions."—"My father wishes us always to dress according to our station and fortune," returned Mary; "and I think it a pity such notions should ever be out of fashion."—"But they are," said Bell, "and that's enough. Who thinks of being so mean as to confess, that they cannot afford any thing expensive? I wish you saw how the young ladies in Edinburgh dress! I don't mean those who have fortunes, for there is nothing in that; but those who have not a shilling to depend on. Yet they are all so fine, that one is ashamed to be seen beside them! Look there, and see whether I have one decent thing to put on."—"Indeed, your things are very good," returned Mary, "if you would be persuaded to keep them properly. I wonder you would not do it, for the sake of having a comfortable room; for it is always so strewed with litter, that one never can find a chair to sit down on; and think how your things must be spoiled by the dust."—"But who can be at the trouble of folding their things as you do?" cried Bell; "and besides, it is so like an old maid. Well, now that you have put that gown in order, I think it will do; and now, if you will let me have your new cap, I should be quite smart."—"And why not wear your own? It is surely the same, if not better than mine is."—"O no," returned Miss Bell, "it is all torn to pieces."—"How?"—"Why, I forgot to put it in the box; and so it met with a misfortune. How could I help it? I am sure I never saw such a thing in my life; nor any one else. These vile little terrier puppies! I never knew the like of them; but they are just kept about the house

to plague me. I had only laid down upon my bed to read a novel I got from Mrs. Flinders, when I heard the nasty things come into the room; but I could not be at the trouble to put them out. Little did I think it was my cap they were tearing to pieces, all the while they went bouncing and jumping about the room. Whurt, whurt! cried the one; Wouf, wouf! cried the other; but I still read on, till I was so much affected by the story, that I was obliged to get up to look for my pocket-handkerchief—when, lo! the first thing I beheld was the fragments of my poor cap! not one morsel of it together. The lace torn into perfect scraps, and the ribbon quite useless! Do now, let me have your cap, like a good creature, and I promise to take care of it."

Mary could refuse her sister nothing, when she spoke to her with temper. She brought her the cap, and assisted her in dressing her hair for it; but could not avoid taking the opportunity of giving her a few cautionary hints, with regard to forming hasty intimacies with the strangers she met at Mount Flinders. Bell was instantly in arms in defence of her friend's associates, who were all *excessively genteel*; but happily the carriage was at the door, and she had no time for a further discussion. She was no sooner gone, than Mary went to inquire for her guest; and as the cordial invitation was given with evident good will, it was accepted of in the spirit of gratitude.

Mr. Stewart did not return till the evening of the following day; but, in the interim, the time passed cheerfully. The conversation often turned on a topic that was ever interesting to the heart of Mary—the virtues of her mother, on which she delighted to expatiate: she likewise spoke of her brothers, who had been recommended by her mother to her particular care. "I deeply feel," said Mary, "the importance of the trust; and I daily pray to God for strength to execute it: but what, alas! can I do for my brothers, but give them the best advice I can, when they are at home with me, and write to them when they are at school? They are, indeed, very good boys, and never refuse to attend to what I say, unless in regard to the respect I wish them to pay my sister. But she is constantly finding fault with some of them; and is so jealous of their attachment to me, that she will

never love them as she ought, which often makes me very unhappy; for I have been used to hear my mother say that young men generally turned out well, who had a peaceful, happy home: and besides, what can be so delightful as a family of love!"—"True," replied Mrs. Mason, "it is one of the characteristics of heaven. But in this life, my dear Miss Mary, every one must have their own trials; and, were it not for the contrariety of dispositions and tempers, how few trials should we have to encounter in domestic life! To yield to those who, in their turn, yield to us, is an easy task, and would neither exercise our patience, nor forbearance, nor fortitude; and are not these most precious virtues?"—"How like that is to my good mother!" cried Mary. "O, Mrs. Mason, if I had always such a friend as you, to put me in mind of my duty, and to support me in performing it, I think I should never sink under it, as I sometimes do."—"And have you not a friend, a guide, and a supporter, in Him who called you to these trials of your virtue? Consider, my dear young lady, it is your heavenly Father who has set the task: perform it as unto Him; and, when you have to encounter opposition or injustice, you will no longer find them intolerable."—"Thank you, thank you," replied Mary; "I fear I do not always reflect so much upon this as I ought. I shall, however, endeavour to keep it more in mind for the future. But tell me, Mrs. Mason, how it is that you come to think so justly, so like my dear mother. You must, like her, have had the advatage of an excellent education. And yet,—pardon me, for I suppose I have been misinformed,—but I understood that you were not, when young, in a situation in which you could be supposed to receive the benefit of much instruction. I now see you have had greater advantages than I imagined."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Mason, smiling, "my advantages indeed were great. I had a good mother, who taught me to subdue my own proud spirit, and to be tractable and obedient. Many poor people think, that their children will learn this time enough, when they go into the world; and that, as they will meet with hardships when they grow up, it would be a pity to make them suffer, by contradicting them when they are little. But what does a child suffer from the correction of a judicious parent,

in comparison of what grown people suffer from their passions? My mother taught me the only true road to obedience, in the love and fear of God. I learned from her to read: but she read ill herself; nor could she afford to send me to school, for she was reduced to extreme poverty. She died when I was ten years old; and I thank God for enabling me to add to the comforts of the last year of her life by my industry."—"Why, what could you do at that tender age?" said Mary.—"I could knit stockings, though I wore none; and, having knit a pair for the gardener's wife at Hill Castle, I was recommended by her to the housekeeper, who had the gout in her feet, and wanted a pair knit of lambs' wool, to wear in the winter. I happened to please her; and, when she paid me, she not only gave me twopence over and above the price, but a bit of sweet-cake, which I immediately put in my pocket, saying, I would take it to my mother. This brought on some questions, the result of which was an order to come to the Castle daily for my mother's dinner. Never, never shall I forget the joy of heart with which I went home with these glad tidings; nor the pious gratitude with which my mother returned her thanks to God for this unlooked-for mercy. She hoped that I would gain the favour of my benefactors, by my diligence and industry; and she was not disappointed. The housekeeper spoke of me to her lady, who desired to see me. Her orders were obeyed next day; and, with trembling limbs and a beating heart did I approach her. She asked me several questions, and was so well satisfied with my answers, that she said she was sure I was a good girl, and that she would give me education to make me a good servant, and that I should live at the Castle, under the care of Jackson. Seeing me hesitate, she looked angry, and asked me if I was too proud to be a servant under Jackson. 'Oh, no!' I cried; 'I would be happy to do any thing for Mrs. Jackson, but I cannot leave my mother. She is not able to leave her bed; she has no one but me to help her.'—'It is very true, my lady,' said the housekeeper; and she then gave such an account of all I did for my mother, as seemed to astonish the old lady, who, in a gentler tone, said that I was a very good girl, and should come to live with her, when my mother died, which could be at no great distance. The possi-

bility of my mother's death had never before occurred to me; and when my lady put half-a-crown into my hand, which she said was to serve for earnest, I looked at it with horror, considering it as making a sort of bargain for my mother's life. With tears running down my cheeks, I begged her to take back the money, for that I should be ready to serve her by night or day, for what she pleased to give me; but she refused, and, telling me I was a little fool, bade me take the silver to my mother, and say, that she should have as much every week. 'Your ladyship will not long be troubled with the pensioner,' said the housekeeper; 'for I am much mistaken if she has many weeks to live.' I was so struck at hearing this sad sentence, that I went home with a heavy heart, and complained to my mother of her having concealed from me that she was so very ill. She said she knew how much I had to do; that my exertions were beyond my strength; and, therefore, she had not had the heart to afflict me, with speaking of her situation. But she saw that her trust in Providence had not been in vain. The Lord, who had through life so graciously supplied her wants, had heard her prayers in behalf of her child. 'Yes,' repeated she, "my prayers have been answered in peace. I know that my Redeemer liveth: continue to serve him, my dear bairn; and, though we now part, we shall hereafter meet in joy.'—She continued some time apparently engaged in fervent prayer. At length, her lips ceased to move, and I thought she had fallen asleep. I made up our little fire, and, having said my prayers, gently crept to bed. She was then gone; but I did not know that her soul had fled. Cold as she was, I did not think it was the coldness of death. But when I awoke in the morning, and found that she no longer breathed, and saw that her face was altered, though it still looked mild and pleasing, I was seized with inexpressible terror. This did not, however, last: I recollected that God was still present with me, and, casting myself on my knees before him, I held up my little hands to implore his protection; engaging, in the language of simplicity, that I would be evermore his obedient child.

"This action inspired me with courage. I deliberately dressed myself, and went over to the farmer's to tell of my sad loss, which was indeed proclaimed by my

tears, rather than my words. Nothing could exceed the kindness of all our neighbours, upon this occasion. They clubbed among them the expenses of my mother's funeral, and made a sort of rude inventory of her little effects; resolving, that all she had should be kept for me. But I must have tired you with talking of myself," continued Mrs. Mason; "for what interest can you take in the story of my childhood?"

"But I do indeed, Mrs. Mason, I take a great interest in it," cried Mary; "and I have learned from it more of the consequences of early education, than from many of the books I have read upon the subject. Pray, tell me how you went on at Hill Castle; and tell me how soon it was that you saw my mother, and what she was then like."—"She was then exactly what you are now, my dear young lady. The same height, the same soft voice, the same fair complexion, and the same mild expression in her eyes. I could almost think it her, that now stood before me."

"Well, but you must go on from the time you went home. Did the old lady receive you kindly?"—"She meant to do so," returned Mrs. Mason; "but she had a stern manner, and exacted such minute and punctual obedience, as rendered it difficult to please her. Indeed, she was never pleased, except by those who flattered her grossly; and it was, as I soon saw, by flattery, that her own woman, Mrs. Jackson, had made herself such a favourite. But though I could not approve the means, I must say this for Mrs. Jackson, that she did not make a bad use of her favour, at least with regard to me, or to those she thought she had in her power; but she was so jealous of any one obtaining my lady's ear, except herself, that it made her often guilty of endeavouring to create a prejudice against those whose influence she had any dread of. I was warned of this by my first friend, the old housekeeper; who, on the day after I went home, called me into her little parlour; and said, that, as she had been the means of bringing me to the house, she would always be my friend as long as I was good and obedient; but that, as she wished me well, she would not have me speak of her kindness; 'for that,' said she, 'would not please Mrs. Jackson, for she likes to think that people owe every thing to her; and you must make it

your first business to please Mrs. Jackson, aye, even before my lady herself. For though my lady may be angry, she will forget and forgive; but if you once show Jackson, that you wish to please any body before her, she will neither forget nor forgive it to you as long as you live: and, while you look to her as all in all, she will be very kind to you, and make my lady kind to you too; for she does with my lady what she pleases.'

"I dropped my little curtsey, and 'thank you, ma'am;' but, supposing that I was not satisfied, she asked me if I was thinking of what she had been saying to me. 'Yes, ma'am,' said I, 'but,'——'But what?' said she. I could not express myself; but I felt that the conduct she recommended was somewhat opposite to that uprightness and sincerity which my mother had so strictly enforced. I resolved, however, to exert myself to gain Mrs. Jackson's good will, by diligence and attention; and thought, in spite of all the housekeeper said, that she must love me the better for being grateful to whoever was kind to me.

"As our progress in every thing depends upon our diligence, Mrs. Jackson had little trouble in the task of teaching me. I soon worked at my needle, as well as was possible for a child of my age; and she did not spare me, for I never had a minute's time to play: but, though such close confinement was not good for my health, it was good for giving me a habit of application, the most essential of all habits for those who are to earn their bread.

"By the time I was twelve years old, Mrs. Jackson found me so useful an assistant, that I should probably have been fit for nothing but needle-work all my life long, had not my lady been so pleased with my performance, as to resolve to employ me in assisting her in the embroidering of a set of chair-covers, which were to be done in a fancy way of her own contrivance. I now sat all the day in her dressing-room, and had nothing to complain of, except hunger; but, though thoughtless of my wants, my lady was in other respects very kind to me, and gave me every encouragement, by praising my work. The more satisfaction she expressed in me, the less gracious did Mrs. Jackson become. She would, on some days, scarcely speak to me; and, though I begged to

know if I had offended her, would make me no other answer, than that I was now too fine a lady to mind any thing she could say. This made me very unhappy, so that I often cried when I was sitting at my work alone; and was one day observed by my lady, who, though my back was towards her, had seen my face in the glass, as she entered the room. She asked what was the matter with me, in a tone so peremptory, that I dared not refuse to answer; and, with many tears, I confessed, that Mrs. Jackson was displeased with me, and I knew not for what."

"'But I shall know,' said my lady, pulling the bell with violence; 'Jackson cannot be angry without a cause.' Jackson appeared; and, without hesitation, denied the charge. 'Me angry with the poor child!' said she; 'how could she think me angry with her? Am not I her best friend? But it is evident what the matter is, my lady: the poor young creature is broken-hearted from confinement; and, besides, she is getting uppish notions, from sitting up like a lady from morning to night. But your ladyship pleases to have her beside you, to be sure, or you would not have her, and so I say nothing; but if I were to presume to speak, I should say, that it would do the poor thing more good to let her do a little stirring work under the housemaid, now and then; for I don't like to see young creatures spoiled till they are good for nothing: but if your ladyship thinks that she can work the chair-covers better than I can, your ladyship knows best.'—My lady complied with this advice; and I was immediately consigned to Molly the housemaid, one of the most active and clever servants I have ever known. I had been so cramped by constant sitting, that I found it very difficult to go about my new occupation with the activity which Molly required, and of which she set me the example. But I soon acquired it; and Molly confessed she never had to tell me the same thing twice. This made her take pains with me; and I have often since found the advantage of having learned from her the best way of doing all sorts of household work. She was of a hasty temper, but very good-natured upon the whole; and, if she scolded me heartily for any little error in the way of doing my work, she praised me as cordially for taking pains to rectify it. As there were many pol-

ished grates to scour, and a vast number of rooms to keep clean, we had a great deal to do; but it was made easy by regularity and method; so that in winter we had time to sit down to our needles in the evening, and in summer generally contrived to get a walk as far as the dairy.

"I was a year and a half under Molly, and thought it a happy time; for, though I worked hard, I was as gay as a lark. When Molly was going to be married, she desired the housekeeper to ask my lady to permit me to be her bridemaid. We were both called into my lady's room, when she repeated the request; and taking me by the hand, 'It is but justice,' says she, 'to tell your ladyship, how this lassie has behaved. I thought, when she began, she never would have made a servant, because she never had been used to it; but I soon found she had a willing mind, and that was every thing. She has been greater help to me, than some that were twice her age; and, in the eighteen months she has been with me, she has never disappointed me by any neglect, nor ever told me an untruth, or given me a saucy answer. And, as she has been civil and discreet, I wish to put what respect on her is in my power; and, if your ladyship pleases to let her be my bridemaid, I shall take it as a great favour to myself.' My lady looked at Jackson, who was dressing out her toilet, and had stopped to listen to Molly's speech. 'Do you think she can be spared, Jackson?' said my lady. 'Indeed,' replied Jackson, 'if you ask me, my lady, I certainly do not think she can.'—'If you please, my lady,' said Molly, 'the new housemaid says she will think nothing of doing all the work to give a ploy to poor Betty; the dairy-maid, too, will help her; there is not a servant in the house that would not, she is so obliging and so good-natured a lassie.'—'Oh, if you are to dictate to my lady, that's another thing,' cried Jackson; 'I supposed my lady was to do as she pleased.'—'And so I will,' said my lady, peevishly; 'go down stairs now (to me), and I will think of it.' In a short time, Jackson came down exultingly, and hid me go to my work; for that my lady did not choose that I should have my head turned, and be made good for nothing by going about to weddings. I made no answer, but I could not help being much

vexed; for it was the first time I had had the prospect of any pleasure; and the idea of seeing a dance, and enjoying all the merriment of such a happy day, had quite elated my spirits, which were now as suddenly depressed.

CHAPTER III.

History of Mrs. Mason continued.

After dinner, Mrs. Mason, at Miss Mary's request, resumed the account of her life, which we shall give as nearly as possible in her own words, without taking notice of the interruptions that occurred to break the thread of her story.

"Jackson, who had now got over her fears of my lady's taking a fancy to me, began to wish for my assistance in the work she was about; and got my lady prevailed upon to put me once more under her direction. She took care that I had full employment; and I thank her for it, though it was not to show her good-will that she did it, but the contrary; for she still retained a grudge at me, for the affection I had expressed for Molly; and it was in this spirit that she laid out my work. As you have been at Hill Castle, you must remember the old tower, and that there are four rooms in it, one over the other to the top. The lowest of these rooms—that on the ground-floor, with the iron-barred windows—was Jackson's own apartment, and where I likewise slept in a little press-bed. There could not, to be sure, be a more dismal-looking place; and, indeed, they said it had in the old times been used as a prison, and was said by all the servants to be haunted. But I had no leisure for thinking of such things; for, besides the quantity of needle-work which Mrs. Jackson exacted from me, I had all the apartments of the tower committed to my care, and had to sweep and dust them, and to rub the furniture every day; so that in the day I was too busy, and by the time I went to bed, too sleepy, to think about the ghost.

"Ever since I had been at the castle, the tower rooms had only been occasionally in use, when the house was full of company; but now the upper one was, we heard, to be occupied by a cousin of my lady's, who was spoken

of by Jackson with the contempt which servants are too apt to feel towards the humble friends or poor relations of the families they live with. I thought, I confess it, with some vexation of the additional trouble which this new guest was to occasion me; and, on the evening of her arrival, went to make up her room with no great cheerfulness. On opening the door, I saw the young lady sitting at the window, and would have gone back; but she desired me to come in, in a voice so sweet, and yet so sorrowful, that it seemed to go to my very heart. I saw she had been weeping; but she dried her tears, and condescended to enter into conversation with me, asking me how long I had been at service, and other kindly questions. 'Four years at service, and not yet fifteen!' said she; 'poor girl! your parents must have been in great distress to part with you so soon.'—'I had no parents, ma'am,' said I: 'my father was carried off in a fever before I was born, and my mother ten years after.' 'And you were thankful for getting leave to learn to be a servant?' said Miss Osburne; 'what a lesson for me!' She seemed for some moments buried in thought; and then, speaking to me again, 'You are right to be thankful, Betty; God Almighty, who is the father of the fatherless, will never forsake us while we trust in Him; and we ought to submit ourselves to all his dispensations, and even to be thankful for those that appear the darkest.'

"While I looked at her lovely face, as it was again bathed in tears, I thought her an angel! so superior did she seem to any human being that I had ever seen. The meekness with which she bore her afflictions, increased my respect; but that one, in the rank of a lady, could have her heart thus touched by grief, appeared to me incomprehensible; for I was then so ignorant as to think, that the sorrows of life were tasted in their bitterness only by those of lowly station.

"You, my dear Miss Mary, have doubtless heard enough of the history of your mother's family, to know the sad change of circumstances, which she experienced on the death of her parents, an event that had then lately taken place. I was unable to form in my mind any notion of how this change affected her; for she appeared to be still placed in a situation so high above all want,

as to be most enviable. She had no hard work to do, no task to perform; but servants to attend her, and fine rooms to sit in, and plenty of fine clothes to wear, and the niceties of a plentiful table to eat. Alas! I soon learned, from closer observation, how little these things tend to happiness;, and that peace of mind, the only happiness to be had on earth, is distributed by Providence with an equal hand among all the various classes in society.

"The kind manner in which Miss Osburne spoke to me, made me take great pleasure in serving her. My attention did not escape her notice, and richly did she repay it! Finding that I read indifferently, she proposed giving me a daily lesson, which I thankfully accepted; and, that it might not interfere with my work, I got up an hour earlier every morning, which I employed so diligently, that even Mrs. Jackson was fully satisfied.

"I had now acquired sense enough to know what an inestimable benefit was conferred upon me by my dear Miss Osburne's kind instructions. To her goodness I am indeed indebted for all I know. From her I not only learned to read with propriety, to write a tolerable hand, and to cast accounts; but, what was more valuable than all these, from her I learned to think. She opened to me the book of Providence, and taught me to adore the wisdom, the justice, and the mercy of my God, in all his dealings with the human race. She taught me to explore my own heart; to be sensible of its errors and weaknesses; and to be tender of the faults of others, in proportion as I was severe upon my own. My mother had endeavoured to lay in me the foundation of Christian principles; but it was not until I had learned from this dear young lady to search the Scriptures for instruction, instead of running them over as a task, that Christian principles were rooted in my heart. What could I do for her in return? If I could have laid down my life, it would have been too little; and if, in any instance, I proved of service to her, I consider it a happiness, for which I am most truly thankful.

"Her situation at Hill Castle was indeed a thorny one. She was there encompassed with many evils; and, in one instance, beset with snares, which it required no common prudence to escape. But her prudence was never

put to sleep, as in other young people it often is, by vanity; and, with all the meekness and gentleness of a saint, she had all the wisdom and the firmness of a noble and enlightened mind. My lady and Jackson were the only persons that ever saw Miss Osburne without loving her. But my lady, though she sometimes took fancies to particular people, which lasted for a little while, never loved any one for their good qualities; and had a spite at Miss Osburne for being so much better informed, and so much wiser than she was herself; and it was enough to prevent Jackson from loving her, that she was so loved by me. But, notwithstanding all my lady's crossness to her, Miss Osburne endeavoured to make her happy, by labouring to bring about a reconciliation between her and her son; and so far succeeded, as to prevail on him to come to the castle on the death of his lady, and to leave his little boy under his mother's care. I never thought my lady loved the child; but, as the heir of the family, she was proud of him, and indulged his humour in every thing, so that his temper was quite spoiled. He took a fancy to play in Jackson's room, in preference to the nursery; and was attended by his maid, a very artful woman, who had contrived to make the child fond of her, by giving him quantities of sweet cake, which, on account of his stomach, he was forbidden to eat. When he could not be bribed into doing what she pleased, she had nothing for it but to frighten him; and, in order to do so effectually, used to tell him stories of hobgoblins, and to make a noise as of some spirit coming to take him away; on hearing which, the little creature would run panting, and terrified, to hide his head in her lap. You can have no notion how his nerves were shook. I believe he feels it to the present day; and much of his oddity and bad temper, of which the world talks so much, might be traced to the bad management of Jenny Thomson.

"One day, while I was busied in getting up a suit of lace for my lady, the little lord came into our room, as usual, to play. Two pieces of the lace which I had ironed were hung on the screen by the fire; and, while I was smoothing out another for the iron, he snatched one of the pieces from the screen, and twisted it round his neck. I flew to rescue it, and called to Jenny to desire him to give it

up, which she did in a wheedling tone, promising at the same time to give him a piece of plumb-cake. 'I know you have none to give me,' cried he; 'I have eat it all up, so I don't mind you.'—'And don't you mind me?' cried I: 'what mischief are you doing me! Your grandmamma will be so angry with me, that I must tell her the truth, and then she will be angry with you too.' —'I don't care,' cried Lord Lintop, twisting the lace the firmer round his neck. Seeing that no other means would do, I took hold of him to take it from him by force. He immediately set up a scream of passion; but I persisted, and disengaged the lace, as gently as I could, from his grasp: but no sooner had I succeeded, than he snatched up the other piece, and threw it on the fire, driving the screen down at the same time with great violence. The fire was strong, and the lace dry, so that its destruction was the work of a moment. At the expense of burning my hand and arm, I saved a fragment, and I really became sick with terror and vexation. Jenny desired me not to vex myself; for it was easy to say that the screen only fell by accident, and that my lord would be a good boy, and say he saw it fall, and that the lace which hung on it fell into the fire; 'and then what can my lady say, you know?' cried she, perfectly satisfied with the arrangement. Her story might do very well, I said, provided there was none to witness against us.— 'And who can witness against us?' said she: 'has not the door been shut all the time? Who, then, can witness against us?'—'O Jenny,' returned I, 'there are witnesses whom no door can shut out,—God and our own consciences. If these witness against us, what does it signify whether my lady be pleased or no? I hope I never shall be so wicked as to tell a wilful falsehood.'—'Wicked, indeed!' repeated Jenny, very angrily,—'Where have you lived all your days, I wonder, that you can talk such nonsense! as if servants must not always do such things if they would keep their place? I know more of the world than you do, Mrs. Wisdom, and can tell you, that you will not find many masters or mistresses that do not like better to be imposed upon than to know the truth, when it does not happen to be agreeable. Take my advice, and tell the story as I have made it out, or depend on it you will get yourself brought into a pretty scrape.'

She was called to go up to my lady with her little charge, and I was left alone in a very disconsolate state. The temptation to follow her advice was strong: but, thank God, my principles were stronger; and the consequences of beginning a course of sin, by departing from truth, were so deeply imprinted on my mind, that I was preserved from the snare.

"On telling Jackson what had happened, she was at first thrown into a mighty passion, and would have cast the blame on me, if it had been possible; but, though always unreasonable while her anger lasted, she was too good a woman not to be shocked at the thought of making up a deliberate lie, to deceive her mistress. We were still in consultation, when my lady rang her bell for Jackson, who returned in a moment, to tell me that I must immediately go up and answer for myself; but that, as *my friend* Miss Osborne was there, I need not be afraid, for she would certainly take my part. I went up with a beating heart. As soon as I opened the door, my lady, in a sharp voice, asked me what I had done with her fine lace; adding, that I had better tell the truth at once, than make any evasion. 'I will indeed tell the truth, my lady,' said I; 'and, though I am very sorry for the loss, your ladyship will be convinced that I could not help it, and am not to blame.' I then told the story simply as it had happened; but plainly saw that what I said made no impression. When I had finished, my lady looked me full in the face, her eyes wild with rage and indignation; and, bursting into a sort of scornful laugh, 'A pretty story, truly, you have made out, indeed!" cried she. 'This is all the good of your reading the Bible, forsooth! first, to destroy my lace, through carelessness, and then to lay the blame upon the poor child! the heir of the family! one whom such a creature as you ought to have thought yourself honoured in being permitted to wipe the dirt from his shoes! And yet you dare to lay your faults to his door; to complain of him, and to complain of him to me! What assurance! But I am happy to have detected you: you are a vile hypocrite, and shall no longer be harboured in this house. I give you warning to provide yourself in another place.'—'I am sorry to have offended your ladyship,' said I, very humbly, 'but indeed I have told the truth; and

am sure Jenny cannot be so wicked as not to confirm every word I have said.'—'Pardon me for interfering,' said Miss Osburne; 'but I have such good reason for having a high opinion of Betty's principles, that I am convinced she is incapable of being guilty of what you attribute to her. I could stake my life on her sincerity. Do, my dear madam, take a little time for inquiry before you condemn.'

"This reasonable advice seemed like throwing oil on the fire of my lady's pride, and she became more angry than ever. She, however, desired Jenny to be immediately called. As soon as she entered, she was desired to tell in what manner the accident had happened. 'I am sure, my lady,' said the artful girl, 'it was, as your ladyship says, an accident; for I am sure Mrs. Mason had no intention whatever to drive down the screen, nor do I believe she saw when she did it, for it was in turning round that she pushed it over, and the lace just fell into the fire, and was burned in a moment.'—'And where was Lord Lintop at the time?' asked Miss Osburne.—'I believe he was standing at the table,' returned Jenny, hesitatingly. 'O now I recollect, he was playing with his little coach, the coach which her ladyship gave him, and which he is so fond of, that he would never let it be out of his hand; but indeed he loves every thing that his grandmamma gives him; I never saw so dear a tractable creature in all my life.'—'Are you sure that he was then playing with the coach?' asked Miss Osburne.—'O very sure and certain,' returned Jenny; 'I remember it particularly, because I had just put a string to it, as we went into Mrs. Jackson's room.'—'I shall refresh your memory, however,' said Miss Osburne, rising, and opening the door of a closet, from whence she returned with the coach in her hand. 'This toy has been in that closet since yesterday evening, that I took it from the child when he was going to bed. In this instance, therefore, you have not been correct.'—'That is of no consequence,' said my lady; 'the child might have been playing with some other toy; all I ask is, did he touch the lace?'—'He! poor innocent darling!' cried Jenny; 'no, as I hope to be saved, he was not even near it.'—'O, Jenny, what a sin are you committing!' I exclaimed. But her ladyship commanded me to be silent, and to leave the room.

"I went, grieved and astonished at her injustice, but rejoicing in my innocence. Jackson was very kind to me, and assured me that my lady would come round, but that there would be no good in speaking to her at present. There was indeed no good in it; for all that Miss Osburne said in my defence, only made her more positive in asserting the truth of Jenny's story; and when my amiable friend would have questioned the child, she helped him to all his answers; and it is surprising how soon children can observe who is on their side, and how soon they can learn to practise the little arts of cunning and deceit.

"My leaving the castle was now a thing fixed, and my only consolation was a knowledge of carrying with me the good-will of all that knew me. I was shocked at the thought of being thrown into the world without a friend; but I was reminded by dear Miss Osburne, that the friendship of man is but a bending reed, in comparison of the protection of Him who is, to all that put their trust in Him, a tower of strength. I was now to go in three days, and was not yet provided in a place; but Miss Osburne had written about me to a friend of hers, and I hoped her application would be successful. In the mean time, Lord Longlands arrived at the castle, to prepare his mother for the reception of his intended bride, the heiress of Merriton, whose great fortune made her a more acceptable daughter-in-law to the old lady, than my lord's first wife had been; and Jackson, seeing my lady in such high good humour, thought it a favourable time to soften her in my behalf. She began by telling her, how sorry I was to leave the castle, and then ventured to say many things in my praise, taking care, to contrast all she said in my favour, with the idleness and self-conceit of Jenny. Poor Jackson had reason to repent her zeal; for she found my lady so prepossessed in favour of my adversary, that all she said against her was attributed to spite. And she now saw, that, having accustomed her lady to flattery, she had exposed her to the arts of a more cunning flatterer than herself. In fact, Jenny looked to Jackson's place, and would have succeeded in her designs, had it not been for a very extraordinary accident, which brought all her character to light.

"On the morning that I was to leave the castle, Miss Osburne told Lord Longlands, that his mother was that day to part with the most faithful creature in the world, on account of her having thrown the blame of burning a piece of lace on little Charles. My lord resolved to have the matter investigated fairly before I went; and on my lady's coming in, told her his design. Jenny and I were summoned to appear; and my lord, having first requested, that no one should speak but the person he called on, first desired me to tell my story; and when I had finished, called on Jenny for hers. She began much in the same way she had done before; but, in concluding, added what she had not then said, that I had immediately entreated her not to tell how it happened, but to join me in saying it was Lord Lintop who threw down the screen. She was then beginning a long harangue upon her good will to me, and the hardships she lay under, in being looked down upon by all the servants in the house, because she would not join me in making up a story against her dear innocent child, to save me from my lady's anger. Lord Longlands desired her to stop; and then asked me what I had done with the lace which the child had twisted up, and which I said was torn. I had, I said, given it to Mrs. Jackson. She was called on, and the lace was produced in the state I had described it. On examining it, my lord called for his son, and, taking him on his knee, asked him, if he remembered the story he had told him of the little boy who always spoke the truth? 'Yes, papa,' said the child. 'Then,' said my lord, 'will you be a good boy, like him, that I may love you?'—'Yes, papa.'—'Well, then, tell me truly what you did with the piece of lace you tore from this;' holding up the fragment. The child coloured as red as scarlet; and my lord, kissing him, very mildly, and in a cheerful encouraging voice, repeated the question. 'I—I believe—I hid it, papa,' said he.

"'Where did you hide it, my dear? Tell me truly, and you shall have a ride upon the little horse this very evening.' The boy looked round for Jenny, as fearing to displease her: but her face was hid from him by the back of the chair, and his papa, seeing how it was, asked if Jenny had helped him to hide it? 'No, no.'—'Where then had he put it?'—'He had put it,' he said, 'in the

back of his coat.' This seemed very unintelligible; but as he persisted in it, my lord begged of Miss Osburne to desire one of the maids to bring all the child's clothes into the room. Jenny would have gone for them, but was not permitted to leave the room. As soon as they were brought in, Lord Lintop pointed to his little green coat, and, turning it over, showed a rip in the seam, just by the pocket hole which Miss Osburne enlarged with her scissars, and in a moment produced the lace. 'You are a good boy, indeed," exclaimed my lord, again caressing the child. 'Now tell me, Charles, whether the piece of lace that you threw into the fire was completely burned or not.'—'I don't know indeed, papa, for I was very naughty; but I won't be naughty again, if you will forgive me. I did not intend to tear the lace, but was only making a rope of it about my neck; and so Mrs. Mason flew to take it from me, and I did not like to have it taken, and held it; and we struggled a great while—and—and.'—'And you were angry, and threw the other piece into the fire, to vex Mrs. Mason; did you not?'—'Yes, papa.'—'You are an excellent evidence,' cried my lord, 'and shall have the ride I promised you: but now mark the consequences of being naughty. Look at that woman there (turning to Jenny); see how she is overwhelmed by shame and disgrace, for having wickedly persevered in telling a wicked lie, which she probably thought would never be detected. But liars never escape detection; sooner or later, they fall into their own snares.' Jenny, loudly sobbing, now fell down upon her knees to ask forgiveness; but my lord, waving his hand, bade her instantly leave the room, and deliver up to his mother's maid all that she had in her charge. 'Nor dare, upon your life,' cried he, 'to approach this boy, or to speak one single word to him while you live. Go, vile woman:—had I known your character, I should sooner have seen him in his grave, than placed him under your care!'

"I was really sorry for the poor girl, and was bold enough to intercede for her, but to no purpose. My lord was inflexible: 'for a liar,' he said, 'could have no good principle.'—'His lordship acts wisely and nobly,' cried Miss Osburne; 'and now that no doubt can rest upon the integrity of poor Mason, I hope, madam, you

will not part with her?'—'I have no wish to part with her,' said my lady.—'That is not sufficient,' rejoined Lord Longlands; 'she has been injured, and the injury must be repaired.' Then ringing the bell, he desired the housekeeper and Jackson, with all the other servants, to attend. They quickly obeyed the summons, very anxious to know what was going forward.

"As soon as they were assembled, my lord addressed them in a speech which I shall never forget. 'I sent for you,' said he, 'in order to inform you, that the woman who has left the room, is discarded from my service, on account of her having been guilty of telling a wicked and malicious lie, in order to throw the blame of a trifling accident upon an innocent person. It likewise has been proved to our satisfaction, that the conduct of this young woman has not only been blameless, but highly meritorious; for she has shown that she feared God, by speaking the truth before him with an upright heart. For what you have suffered, Mrs. Mason,' added he, 'both my mother and I are heartily sorry; and my son, who was the first occasion of it, is ready to make you all the reparation in his power, by asking your pardon.—Go, child, and ask Mrs. Mason to forgive you.' I would have prevented his having the mortification, but my lord insisted that he should; and then taking from his purse this large gold piece, he presented it to me, desiring me to keep it as a memorial of the happy consequences that result from a faithful adherence to truth and sincerity.

CHAPTER IV.

History of Mrs. Mason continued.

"My Lord Longlands left the castle for Merritón Hall; and on the day after his arrival, he wrote to Miss Osburne, to inform her, that he had prevailed on his intended bride to take me into her service as her waiting-maid; and hoped Miss Osburne would prevail on his mother to part with me, to which the old dowager did not very readily consent. But, though she made a great favour of it, it was at length happily settled; and on the night that Lord and Lady Longlands arrived at the castle, after their marriage, I entered on my place. I found my young mis-

tress so reasonable, and so sweet tempered, that pleasing her would have been an easy task, even to one less disposed to please her than I was. I was congratulated by all the servants on my promotion, and indeed thought myself the happiest creature in the world. But my happiness was soon overcast; for, amid all the bustle of this first and only gay season of the castle, your dear mother, my kind benefactress, was seized with a fever of a very malignant and dangerous nature. She was three days ill before the dowager-lady could be persuaded that any thing ailed her but a cold; but when the doctor was at last sent for, and explained her complaint, all communication was cut off betwen the tower and the other part of the house; and, as I had already exposed myself to the infection, I was permitted to remain with the dear sufferer, whom I nursed night and day for several weeks. Nor did I ever catch the infection; from which I was preserved, under Providence, by the attention I paid to the doctor's advice; for, though the weather was then cold, I followed his directions in keeping the windows constantly up, so that a current of fresh air passed continually through the room, which was a great comfort to the patient, and I believe tended more to her recovery, than all the medicines she swallowed. At length, she did recover; and much did she then overrate the little service I had in my power to perform. Never shall I forget the day she first was permitted to go down stairs. With what unfeigned piety did she return thanks to the Almighty for her preservation! How earnestly did she pray, that the life He had preserved might be spent in His service, and in the service of her fellow-creatures! And it was so spent; I am certain that it was, though I, alas! had no longer the benefit of beholding her example: for before she recovered, my lord and lady had set off for England, and had reached their seat in Yorkshire, to which I was ordered to follow them by the stage coach.

"I was much agitated at the thoughts of leaving the castle, though I expected to return to it with my lady in the following summer. But it had been my little world, and I was a stranger to all without its walls; and, where I was going, I should have no kind Miss Osburne to direct and counsel me; no one cared for me as

Jackson did, or the old housekeeper, for whom I regularly knit a pair or two of lamb's wool stockings every year as long as she lived. I went away loaded with keepsakes from her and Jackson, and indeed from all the servants in the family, who vied with each other in showing their good will. I did not see the dowager countess; but Jackson told me, she was in such bad humour at my lord taking his son away to send to school, that she could not see any one with pleasure who was going to his house. Your poor mamma suffered more, from this bad temper of the old lady, than the servants did; hut she neither complained of it herself, nor would suffer a complaint of it to be made before her. I durst not even drop a hint of it when we parted, which we did with many tears on both sides.

"I was received very graciously by my amiable mistress, and had the comfort of finding a very well-regulated family, where, though there was a number of servants, there was no confusion; every one's business being so well ordered, and so distinctly defined. My lady, in arranging her household, was much indebted to the advice of an old aunt, a maiden lady who lived with her, and who had a great deal of good seuse, and, with a soher and religious turn of mind, was at the same time so lively and cheerful, that her company was liked by young and old.

"The family soon went to London, where my lord and lady were obliged to go to great assemblies, and to places of public amusement, as other great people do; but Miss Malden never went to any of these places, and, when they were out, spent all her time in reading. As her eyes were weak, she was obliged to employ her maid to read for her, which the poor girl thought a grievous task. Upon her complaining of it to me, I told her how willingly I should relieve her, if she could prevail on her lady to accept my services. On the first evening that she happened to be alone, I was accordingly sent for. The book that she was then engaged in, was a history of the Old World, before the coming of our Saviour. The subject was new to me, and the names were very hard; but, as I took pains, I soon got into the way of pronouncing them. And Miss Malden, observing that I took pleasure in understanding what I read, was so kind as

to take the trouble of explaining to me all the difficult passages. She said she was sensible, that to me it could be of little consequence to know what had been done so many ages ago by great kings and warriors, but that there was no sort of knowledge without its use; that the observations I made upon the consequences of the pride, vain glory, and ambition of those conspicuous characters of whom we read, would improve the powers of my understanding, and open my mind to perceive the value of those Christian principles, which lead to peace here, and happiness hereafter; and would prove, that it was not in the power of all the riches or glory of the world, to give content: for, that to fear God, and keep his commandments, was the end of life. I learned a good deal from the comments of this good lady; and, as all her instructions were given with a view to strengthen me in the performance of duty, I have reason to be thankful for such an opportunity of improvement. My lady had all this time but one drawback on her happiness—the want of children: but at length this blessing also was granted; and, in the sixth year of her marriage, she produced a daughter. The joy of this event was clouded by the death of her good aunt, who expired after a short illness, before Lady Harriot was six weeks old. Her death was the death of the righteous, full of faith, and hope, and joy. She saw that it would be a loss to my lady, whose only fault was an extreme indolence of temper. But she did what she could to counsel her against the consequences; and recommended it to her, to place the whole management of her nursery under my care. My lady told me this, when she proposed it to me, and told me also the reasons she had given, which were too honourable for me to repeat. I knew nothing of the management of children; but resolved to fulfil the trust to the best of my abilities, and to spare no pains to learn the best modes of treating them, in sickness and in health. As the family increased, my duties enlarged; but the only difficulty with which I had to struggle, arose from the obstinacy and self-sufficiency of the nurses. Knowing, however, that I had the authority of my lord and lady on my side, I generally prevailed; and, after two or three months, brought them into my ways.

"Finding it to be the great object with the nurses to

save themselves trouble, I laboured to convince them, that, by firmly adhering to my plan, they would most certainly attain their end; for that nothing could be so troublesome as children, whose tempers were spoiled by mismanagement. Very little trouble, indeed, did these little darlings cost to any of them; and as to myself, the constant vigilance with which I watched over them, was a source of pleasure and delight. From being always kindly treated, and having their little humours checked in the bud, from a certainty that they would never obtain their object by crying, or by peevishness, they were the most docile and tractable little creatures in the world. They learned to be thankful for all that was done for them, and to treat others with respect, as they themselves were treated. As they were never out of my sight, I could answer for it, that they never saw or heard a thing that was improper, nor witnessed a single instance of falsehood or deceit.

"Some months after the birth of Mr. Edward, the fourth and last of her children, my lady went with my lord to Scotland, to pay a visit to the countess-dowager, whom they had never seen since the year they were married, owing to some quarrel about an estate, which the old lady would not give up to my lord, though he had a right to it, and she had no other child but himself. But her heart was set upon the world; and when that is the case, it signifies little whether people be poor or rich, for they still think they can never have enough. I should much have liked to have gone with them; but they resolved on leaving all the children under my care in Yorkshire, except Mr. Meriton, the elder of the two young gentlemen, who was to accompany them, attended by the woman who had been his nurse.

"The two young ladies, and the infant with his nurse, were left entirely to my care; and, thank God, all that I undertook to do for them prospered. In order to be able to instruct them, I was at pains to instruct myself. Lady Charlotte, though little more than five years old, could read very prettily; and in reading, neither she nor any of the other children ever had another mistress, nor had I any trouble in teaching them; for, though I gave them very short lessons, I had got the way of making them attend to their book while they were engaged

with it; and took care, that they should never find it wearisome. When my lord and lady returned, they expressed the highest satisfaction with the progress that their children had made; and made me a handsome present, which was more precious to me, on account of its being a proof of approbation, than ten times its value. I was not, however, to enjoy it in peace; for I soon observed, that it had stirred up the envy of Mrs. Dickens, who, during the time they had been in Scotland, had insinuated herself into my lady's favour; and, conscious of her influence, she took every occasion of showing, that she would not be directed by me.

"The girl who kept Master Edward, had been in a manner brought up to the business under my immediate eye: she was a staid and sober person, of good principles, and very diligent in the discharge of her duty; but she soon became the object of dislike to Mrs. Dickens, who, told my lady in secret a thousand lies of the poor girl. All now went wrong. Contention followed contention. I gave up many things for the sake of peace, every thing indeed, except where the interests of the children were at stake; but there I thought it my duty to be firm.

"I shall not trouble you with an account of all the arts which this wicked woman employed to effect her purpose, and she did effect it; for she had contrived to make my lady think, that I set my judgment above hers, and boasted of having more authority in the nursery than her ladyship had, and that all the people in it were my servants. My lady was too indolent to make strict inquiry into the truth. Mrs. Dickens had made herself agreeable, by flattering her about the children, whom she praised as if they had been more than human creatures; while I, wishing my lady to throw her praise and blame into the proper scales, was at pains to point out their faults, as well as their perfections. Still, however, my lady had too much regard for me to hurt my feelings. In order to gratify Dickens, without appearing to blame me, she, on our going up to town, told me, that my lord and she had resolved to make an alteration in the establishment; to place the two young ladies under my care, and the children in the nursery under the care of Dickens.

"I had nothing to do but to obey. An apartment was

fitted up for the young ladies and me, immediately under the nursery, which was at the very top of the house. I had reason to rejoice in the change, for I once more lived in peace; but I was not without anxiety on account of the dear infants, as I by no means thought the woman, who had been taken on Mrs. Dickens' recommendation to supply the place of Peggy, was at all equal to the charge. But as my opinion was not asked, I had no right to give it, nor indeed had I many opportunities of observation, as our establishments were quite distinct. We came to town in November, and it was now the end of March; the 28th was Mr. Meriton's birth-day, who was then three years old. It was kept with great pomp and splendour; all the first company in London were invited to the great ball that was given on the occasion; and, as the housekeeper had a great deal to do, I gave her all the assistance in my power, which kept me up long beyond my usual time. I was very much fatigued, and consequently very much inclined to sleep; but the habit of watchfulness was so strong in me, that I awoke at every little noise that stirred. I thought I heard a sort of crackling in the nursery over my head, and sat up to listen; but it ceased, and I again returned to rest. In about half an hour, I was again wakened. The room was full of smoke, and the smell of fire so strong, that I had but a moment for recollection; but, thank God, my presence of mind did not forsake me. I flew to the beds of my little charge; and taking up Lady Harriet in my arms, and dragging Lady Charlotte half asleep after me, I hastened to the stairs; the smoke came from above, so that, as we went down, we breathed more freely, and reached my lady's room in an instant. The door was unbolted—it was no time for ceremony—I rushed in; but, mindful of my lady's situation, I spoke as calmly as in such circumstances was possible. I intreated them instantly to rise, but did not wait to say more; for, seeing the smoke increase, I hastened on with the children, crying out 'fire!' to alarm the servants above and below. The housekeeper was the first to hear me: to her I left the children, and again flew up stairs. I met my lord, carrying my lady in his arms, and calling out for help; but I did not stop, for I knew they were in safety. I was soon at the foot of the nursery stairs. But, oh!

what a smoke had I then to pass through! How I got through it, God only knows; for it was his almighty arm that supported me. On opening the nursery door, the flames burst out upon me; but I had wrapped myself in a blanket, which I knew the flames would not lay hold of, as they would upon my cotton night-gown. I could not speak for suffocation; but, getting to the first of the two beds, I dragged off the clothes from Mrs. Dickens, which was all I could do to awaken her. I then seized the child, who slept in a little bed beside her, and was making my way out, when the little infant set up a scream. He slept with his maid in a detached bed, to which the flames had not yet reached; but all between was in a blaze. I made a spring, and reached the place; but no maid was there, only the child alone. I snatched him up beneath my arm, and, again passing by her, made an effort to call out to poor Dickens. She started up, and I thought followed me; but this effort to save her had nearly cost me dear; for I thought I should have expired instantly. Providence restored my strength; and, darting through the flames, I got to the top of the stairs, where, I believe, I fainted; for I fell down the whole flight altogether senseless; nor did I remember any thing further, till I found myself in a strange bed, with strange faces round me.

"I called out to ask if the children were safe. 'They are; they are safe!' returned a voice which I knew to be my lord's. He advanced to my bedside. 'You are my preserver, Mason,' said he; 'thank God you are restored to life. We shall never forget, that you have saved us and ours from destruction. Think, in the mean time, of nothing but of taking care of yourself.'—Pain now reminded me of the escape I had made. The pain I suffered was indeed excessive; nor could it be otherwise, for I had broke my thigh-bone in the fall, and dislocated the joint immediately above; so that I soon knew that lameness for life would be my portion. But the thought of having been instrumental in saving the lives of the family, was a cordial which kept up my heart.

"In a few days, the housekeeper came to see me; and, though she resolved to be extremely cautious, she could not resist the temptation of being the first to tell me all. —'I was scarcely in my senses with fright,' said she,

'but flew, as you desired me, to awaken the servants. And men and women were all up in a minute, some flying one way, and some another, till my lord brought them all to order by his commanding voice. He sent one to alarm the neighbours; one for the fire engines; and one over the way to the Colonel's, to ask shelter for the family; and, placing my lady in a chair by the parlour door, he ran up stairs again in distraction, thinking his sons were lost. The smoke was so thick, he did not see you; but he heard your fall, and received his children from your arms, though you knew nothing of it. Two of the men were at his back; and he made them lift you, and carry you over with the rest: for my lady was by this time carried over likewise, and all the children. In the midst of this bustle, some one called out for James; but no one had seen him. I went to his door, but it was locked. At last he answered. 'Don't you know that the house is on fire?' cried I. He first swore, and then blessed himself; but out he came, sure enough: and who came with him do you think, but Sally, the saucy minx, crying and screaming, that she was ruined! she was ruined!—'Ruined!' cried I, 'who cares for your being ruined? But what will you say to setting my lord's house on fire, and burning all the family in their beds? No more time was there for speaking; the staircase was all in a blaze. The flames came with such speed, that little could be saved even out of my lord's room, except papers, and such like. We were all obliged to fly with what we had on, and all were safe except poor Mrs. Dickens.'—'And did she perish?' cried I, in great agony. —'O yes, poor soul!' returned the housekeeper. 'Never was there any thing so horrid, or so shocking. God, in his mercy, preserve us all from such a dreadful end!'

"Here poor Mrs. Nelson, perceiving how much I was agitated, and recollecting that she had been warned against telling me the woful tale, entreated that I would deny having heard any thing of the matter from her. 'O no,' said I, 'Mrs. Nelson; 'let us never allow ourselves to depart from truth; it is the beginning of all iniquity. But O that unhappy woman! hurried into eternity with all her sins upon her head! without a moment, a single moment, to pray for mercy on her soul! And yet, perhaps, she might, perhaps'

"'No no,' cried Mrs. Nelson, 'she was in no state to pray; for she was in a state of intoxication, utterly deprived of her senses. Sally has confessed all. You never heard such plans of wickedness. Sally, it seems, had been her emissary and confidant, when they lived together at Sir William Blendon's. And it was a view to get her to be under her, that she fell out with Peggy, and got her turned out, and got all the management of the nursery to herself. They then went on at full career, no one to control them, going out, one or another of them, night after night, to the feasts and junkettings, which in this wicked town go on among servants all the winter. Sally was greatly taken out, and had more lovers than any of them among the footmen. Mrs. Dickens did not go to meet lovers, but to get drink; and when she stayed at home, Sally brought her enough to please her; but she never ventured on a great dose till near bed-time, when she was pretty sure of being safe. One night, indeed, my lady came up to the nursery, when she was conscious of being in no condition to speak to her; and what do you think the wicked woman did? It makes one's hair stand on end to think of it! Why, she fell down on her knees, and pretended to be saying her prayers! and, as my lady would not disturb her devotions by speaking, she thought she had a fine escape. O poor woman! little did she think how soon she should be called to answer for this hypocrisy, without a moment's time to pray for mercy on her soul! It seems that on the night of the fire, Sally, having an assignation with James, pressed her to take more than her usual quantity; and, as she was very far gone, she was obliged to help her in taking off her clothes, and in getting into bed, that bed from which she was no more to rise! Sally, after having watched till all was quiet, put out her candle, as she thought; but she confessed she only turned it down, for she never would use an extinguisher; and as the candlesticks have wide sockets, a long piece of small candle can scarcely be put down in them, without the chance of turning over: but she did not wait to see whether it did or no; nor is she certain, whether she might not have let a spark fall into the linen press, where she had just been with the candle; for she says, she never had any fear of fire in all her life, and whenever she

went into a press, always thrust the candle before her, without dread or care. 'It was,' I said, 'from the linen-press that the flames issued, when I entered the room.' 'That might be,' said Mrs. Nelson; 'but the chair with the candle was just beside it, so there is no saying which took fire first.'—'And was there no attempt made to save Mrs. Dickens?' cried I; did she never awake?"—'Yes, yes,' said Mrs. Nelson, 'she awoke, and got to the windows; the people of the street saw her, and heard her scream; and they got a ladder, and put it up; but, before any one could make the top, the floor fell in, and she disappeared."—Here Mrs. Mason was obliged to pause, so much was she agitated with the recollection of this dreadful scene.

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Mason's Story concluded.

"As soon as the doctors thought it safe for me to speak to them, the children were brought to see me; and you may imagine what joy it gave me to embrace the little darlings, and to hear them tell me, that they knew I had saved their lives; and that God had permitted me to save them, because He loved me for being good. Pretty little creatures! I shall never forget how their fond expressions went to my heart. They were attended by Peggy, who was sent for by my lady, and taken back into her service, as soon as she learned all the history of the impositions practised by Dickens to get her away.

"I was, however, grieved by the bad accounts of my lady's health. She continued poorly; and my lord, thinking she would be better in the country, took a furnished house at Richmond, about four miles from London, where she was shortly after delivered of a dead child. Her recovery was long doubtful; and, by the doctors' advice, my lord went with her to spend the summer at Clifton, for the benefit of drinking the Bristol waters; which had so good an effect on her constitution, that, by the time I went there, I found her restored to almost perfect health.

"On going to Clifton, I was received by my lord and lady more like a friend than a servant. They indeed told me that I was to be as a servant no longer; for that

I was henceforth to be English governess to their children, with a salary of thirty pounds a-year. A Swiss governess for the young ladies had been already some weeks with them; and though I had a sort of prejudice against her at first, on account of her being a foreigner, I soon found that she was a person of great integrity, and had a truly pious and amiable mind. She was as agreeably disappointed in me, as I was in her; for she thought it impossible that a person could be so suddenly raised, without assuming some airs of arrogance and self-conceit. But I had seen enough of this to be upon my guard, lest my heart should be puffed up; and had always thought it a base thing in persons, who saw themselves regarded more than others, to take advantage of it for the indulgence of their own capricious humours. For twelve years, mademoiselle and I went on hand in hand, labouring for the good of our pupils; and had the pleasure of seeing them grow up, under our eyes, promising to be blessings to the land, and the pleasure and glory of all their connections.

"Lady Charlotte was very handsome, and had many admirers, before she was out eighteen; but she had no liking to any of them; and said, should never marry any one whom she could not look up to as a friend and guide. She was just nineteen, when young Sir William Bandon came to spend the Christmas holidays at the Park; and I soon perceived, by the way she spoke of him, that his attentions were agreeable to her. We went up to town, and Sir William soon after declared himself. My lord was highly pleased with his character, so that every thing was soon agreed on, and the marriage was to take place at Easter; but, alas! before Easter, my lord was carried off by a fever of less than a fortnight's duration. By this event, all our joy was changed into mourning. I could not have felt more, if I had lost a father. He was, indeed, as a father to all his dependants; a friend to the poor; and, in his conduct, an example to poor and rich. He had great influence; and he made it his business to exert it for the glory of God, and the good of society. O what a change did his death occasion!—succeeded as he was, by one so little like himself!

"Lord Lintop had, indeed, never been a comfortable son to him; but my lord left him no excuse, for he was

the kindest and best of fathers. My lady, too, had done all in her power to gain his affections; but he had an inveterate prejudice against her, on account of her being a stepmother—a prejudice which, I verily believe, was first sown in the nursery by his maid, Jenny Thomson, who used always to threaten him with a stepmother as with a monster. He was indeed of a cold and reserved temper, and had a very narrow heart; much inclined to avarice, except upon his own pleasures, and they were all of the selfish sort. As my lord died without a will, he immediately entered upon possession of all; my lady having nothing at her disposal but her fortune, and her jointure, which was, to be sure, very great; yet I thought it a sad thing to see her and her children turned out, as it were, of her own house, and obliged to go to seek a place to lay her head. But to her, alas! it was of no consequence where she went: the hand of death was on her, and in three months she followed my lord to the grave.

"I find I must pass over this," said Mrs. Mason, wiping the tears from her eyes; "there is no need of distressing you with an account of all my sorrows. It was the least of them, that I found myself without a home. I had saved of my wages about £150, which my lord's stewart had placed out for me, at five per cent. in the public funds. Lady Charlotte, upon her marriage, presented me with fifty more, and promised to give me twenty pounds a-year, until her own brother, Mr. Meriton, should come of age. I would have refused the annuity; but she insisted on it, saying, she was ashamed it was so little; but that Lord Longlands, taking advantage of a clause in her mother's settlement, had refused paying her fortune till her brother Edward was of age; 'and then,' said she, 'Mrs. Mason,' throwing her arms affectionately round my neck, 'then we may all be happy.' She had written to her brothers, she said; for I forgot to mention, that they had the year before been sent abroad to their travels with their tutor; and are now, I believe, in Switzerland, where Lady Charlotte and Sir William are to see them in their way to Italy. They pressed me to accompany them; but my lameness was such an obstacle, that I could not think of going to be a burthen to them; and, while I hoped that Lady Harriet would be

left at home, I wished to stay, that I might be near her: but at length the guardians consented that she should go with her sister; so I was at once hereft of them all.

"Thus have I been suddenly deprived of all my earthly comforts, and thrown from a state of ease and luxury, into a state of comparative indigence. But how ungrateful should I be to God, were I to repine! How rich would my mother have thought herself with thirty pounds a-year! Ill would it then become me to murmur at the wise dispensations of Providence, which have doubtless been ordered in wisdom and mercy. My first thoughts were to go into a lodging in London, and take in needle-work, by which I should be able to earn a sufficiency for the supply of all my wants. But, from being unable to take exercise, good air has become so essential to my health, that I dreaded the consequences of being pent up in the unwholesome atmosphere of that immense place; and had, besides, such a hankering after my native country, that I wished of all things to return to it. While I was still hesitating, a young man, who came up to London to seek a situation as a gardener, brought a letter to me from a niece of Jackson's, with whom I had continued to correspond; and by his conversation, concerning all the friends of my youth, increased my desire of revisiting scenes that were still dear to my recollection. He told me of a cottage near Hill Castle that was now empty, and advised me to ask it of the young earl, who could not surely refuse such a trifle to one who had been so long in the family, and to whom, as he said, the family owed such obligation. But he was mistaken: I petitioned for it, and was refused. Perhaps to soften the refusal, I was told, that Lord Longlands had resolved against having any cottages on his estate, and was to have them all destroyed.

"True," said Miss Mary, "it is very true, my father was directed to give orders for that purpose, but took the liberty of remonstrating. All that he could do, however, was to prevent the poor cottars from being turned out for another term; but they are all to go at Martinmas, and, as fast as their houses are empty, they are to be thrown down. The cottage you wish for is already demolished to the very ground, and has left the place so desolate! It goes to one's heart to see it. But, after

refusing it to you, the owner can have no heart. I hope you will never ask another favour from him while you live?"—"I hope I shall have no need," replied Mrs. Mason. "But though I should have been thankful for his granting my request, I have no right to resent his refusal."—"And I shall thank him for refusing you, if it brings you to live nearer us," said Miss Mary.—"Though I shall be at double the distance, still it won't be far," returned Mrs. Mason: "I take up my residence at Glenburnie."—"At Glenburnie!" repeated Miss Mary; "what place can there be at Glenburnie fit for you to live in!"—"O I shall make it fit," said Mrs. Mason; "and if I be useful to the good people there, I shall think myself fortunate in my choice. On being refused by Lord Longlands, I gave up all thoughts of settling on his territories, and made inquiries in the neighbourhood of Merriton. Through the friends of the young man I have already mentioned, I heard that the only relation I have in the world was married to one of the small farmers in Glenburnie; and to this couple I applied to take me as a lodger. I had great difficulty in bringing them to the point, as they feared I would not be pleased with the accommodation; but at length I so far succeeded, that I fixed to live with them three months upon trial. From all that I have heard, no situation could be more suitable to my purpose. In a place where money is scarce, my income, slender as it is, may be useful. After a life of full employment, I could not be happy in idleness; and as these good people have a large family, I shall have among them the constant and delightful employment of training youth to usefulness and virtue."

Miss Mary began to express her fears of the trouble which Mrs. Mason was about to bring upon her own head, when her father entered; and from the way in which he spoke upon the subject, she soon saw that he had already discussed it, and knew Mrs. Mason's determination to be unalterable. They, however, prevailed upon her to remain their guest for another night; and obtained her promise, that if her situation at Glenburnie proved uncomfortable, she would return to Gowan-brae.

CHAPTER VI.

Domestic Sketches.—Picture of Glenburnie.—View of a Scotch Cottage in the last Century.

Early on the following morning, Mr. Stewart and Miss Mary consulted together, on the means they should employ to render Mrs. Mason's situation at the farmer's somewhat comfortable; and, after some deliberation, resolved, that they would postpone all preparations for that purpose, till they had visited the place, and seen what the house afforded. In the course of their conversation, Miss Mary expressed her surprise, that so good a couple as the Earl and Countess of Longlands should not have thought it an incumbent duty to make ample provision for one who had rendered them such important services. "You are mistaken," said Mr. Stewart; "they were not deficient in gratitude; and, to my certain knowledge, my lord intended to settle on her a liberal independency; but delayed to do what he imagined might at any time be accomplished; and after his death, his lady gave herself up to the indulgence of grief, so as utterly to forget every duty; but of this you will have no hint from Mrs. Mason: for hers is truly a good mind, and one that sees every thing in the best light. She knows not what I have endeavoured to do for her with the present lord; and she shall never know it, for it would only hurt her to be assured of his total want of liberality and gratitude." Mr. Stewart was here interrupted by the unexpected entrance of his eldest daughter, and her friend Mrs. Flinders, whose animated looks bespoke the near prospect of some new scheme of pleasure. After a few preliminary remarks on the fineness of the season, Mrs. Flinders gradually disclosed the purpose of her visit, which was to obtain Mr. Stewart's consent to his daughter's accompanying her to the Edinburgh races. Mr. Stewart was adverse to the proposal; nor did Mrs. Flinders' assurances of the great advantages to be derived to a young lady, from being introduced to all the people of fashion at the races, produce the least alteration in his sentiments. But he had not firmness to resist the torrent of entreaty; and, after he had permitted a reluctant consent to be extorted from him, the remaining articles were easily

adjusted. His daughter had no difficulty in obtaining from him the money requisite for the purchase of new dresses; and her sister, ever willing to promote her gratification, promised to pack up, and send her, with other things, some handsome ornaments that had been presented to her by a near relation, to whom she had paid attention in a fit of illness.

Elated with her victory, Bell seemed to tread on air; and, after she got into the carriage, called out to her sister, that she should write her a full account of the race week. She bowed graciously to her father, as the carriage drove off; but he appeared not to notice the salute. Pensive and dissatisfied, he returned to the house, and found Mary with Mrs. Mason, giving her an account of all that had just passed.—"Well," said he, addressing himself to Mrs. Mason, "you have heard of the new trouble that has been prepared for me by this giddy woman, to whom Bell has unfortunately attached herself? These races! How unfit a scene for a young woman in my daughter's station; and under how unfit a conductor will she there appear! I wish I had been more firm; but I could not. O that she were not too headstrong to take advice, and too self-sufficient to think that she stands in no need of an adviser."—"But, sir," said Mrs. Mason, "have you not a right to dictate to your daughter what company she ought to keep? If you really think Mrs. Flinders an improper associate, why do you permit her to go to her house?"—"Because," replied Mr. Stewart, "I cannot bear to see my child unhappy. I have not courage to encounter sour looks, and all the murmurings of discontent. This girl, who is, when in good humour so lively and engaging, treats every opposition to her will as an act of cruel tyranny; and I cannot bear being treated by the child I doat on as a tyrant."—"Still, my dear sir," said Mrs. Mason, "as Miss Stewart is not deficient in understanding, you might, I think, teach her the propriety of submitting to your will."—"Alas!" returned Mr. Stewart, "she always thinks herself in the right; and it is utterly impossible to convince her, in any instance, that she is otherwise. Her mind got a wrong bias from the first, and I fear it is now too late to think of curing it. But I have myself to blame. Had she been brought up with the rest of my family, she

would never have been thus froward and intractable; yet I know not how our other children escaped spoiling, for my wife was all tenderness and indulgence."—"True," replied Mrs. Mason; "but her indulgence would be of a nature tending to foster the best affections of the heart, not the indulgence of the passions, which engenders pride and selfishness."—"Your distinction is a just one," said Mr. Stewart; "but unhappily her grandmother could not discriminate; and after the death of my parent, Bell came home to us, when I saw that she was too unmanagable for her mother's gentle spirit to control; and I therefore urged sending her to a school, where a daughter of a friend was going; but there, alas! instead of getting quit of her bad habits, she lost the good that counterbalanced them, and acquired so many foolish notions about gentility, as have utterly destroyed all relish for domestic happiness. Think of her flying off, as she has done, the very day that we expect her brothers home from school! Is it not heartless?"—"So she will admit when she is herself a mother," replied Mrs. Mason. The rest of her speech was lost; for, from the bark of joy which the dogs began to send forth, Mr. Stewart perceived that his sons were near at hand, and eagerly flew out to meet them. They were already folded in Mary's arms, and sprung to their father with all the alacrity of confiding love. Every care was now forgotten: without doors and within, above stairs and below, all was holiday at Gowan-brae. Mrs. Mason was no unmoved spectator of the joyful scene. She readily consented to postpone her departure till the following day, and promoted, by her cheerfulness, all the amusements of the evening.

In order to gratify the boys, it was proposed, that the whole party should accompany Mrs. Mason to Glenburnie, on an Irish car, a vehicle well adapted to such excursions, and which was consequently a great favourite with the younger part of the family. Just as they finished an early dinner, the car was brought to the door. Robert, the eldest boy, begged leave to drive; to which, as the roads were good, and the horse steady, Mr. Stewart made no objection. The old gray, which was moved forward by a few gentle strokes of the whip, brought them, in less than two hours, into the road that turns in to the Glen, or valley of Gleuburnie. They had not

procceded many paces, until tbey were struck with admiration at the uncommon wildness of the scene, which now opened to their view. The rocks, which seemed to guard the entrance of the Glen, were abrupt and savage, and approached so near each otber, that one could suppose them to have been riven asunder, to give a passage to tbe clear stream whicb flowed between them. As they advanced, the hills receded on either side, making room for meadows and corn-fields, through which the rapid burn pursued its way, in many a fantastic maze.

The road, which winded along tbe foot of the hills, on the north side of the Glen, owed as little to art as any country road in the kingdom. It was very narrow, and much encumbered by loose stones, brought down from the hills above by tbe winter torrents. Mrs. Mason and Mary were so enchanted by the change of scenery, which was incessantly unfolding to their view, that they made no complaints of the slowness of their progress, nor did they much regret being obliged to stop a few minutes at a time, where they found so much to amuse and delight them. But Mr. Stewart had no patience at meeting with obstructions, which could have been so easily obviated; and, as he walked by tbe side of the car, expatiated upon the indolence of the people of the Glen, who, though they had no other road to tbe market, could contentedly go on from year to year, without making an effort to repair it. "How little trouble would it cost," said he, "to throw the smaller of these loose stones into these holes and ruts; and to remove the larger ones to the side, where they would form a fence between the road and the hill! There are enough of idle boys in the Glen to effect all this, by working at it for one hour a-week during the summer. But then their fathers must unite in setting them to work; and there is not one in the Glen, who would not sooner have his horses lamed, and his carts torn to pieces, than have his son employed in a work that would benefit his neighbours as much as himself!"

As he was speaking, they passed the door of one of these small farmers; and immediately turning a sharp corner, began to descend a steep, which appeared so unsafe, that Mr. Stewart made his boys alight; and, going to the head of the horse, took his guidance upon him-

self. At the foot of this short precipice, the road again made a sudden turn, and discovered to them a misfortune which threatened to put a stop to their proceeding any further for the present evening. It was the overturn of a cart of hay, occasioned by the breaking down of the bridge, along which it had been passing. Happily for the poor horse that drew this ill-fated load, the harness by which he was attached to it, was of so frail a nature, as to make little resistance; so that he and his rider escaped unhurt from the fall, notwithstanding its being one of considerable depth. At first, indeed, neither boy nor horse was seen; but as Mr. Stewart advanced to examine, he heard a child's voice in the hollow, exclaiming, "Come on, ye muckle brute! ye had as weel come on! I'll gar ye! I'll gar ye! That's a gude beast now; come awa! That's it! Ay, ye're a gude beast now."

As the last words were uttered, a little fellow, of about ten years of age, was seen issuing from the hollow, and pulling after him, with all his might, a great long-backed clumsy animal of the horse species, though apparently of a very mulish temper. "You have met with a sad accident," said Mr. Stewart; "how did all this happen?"—"You may see how it happened plain enough," returned the boy; "the brig brak, and the cart couppet."—"And did you and the horse coup likewise?" said Mr. Stewart.—"O ay, we a' couppet thegether, for I was riding on his back."—"And where is your father, and all the rest of the folk?"—"Whar sud they be but in the hay-field! Dinna ye ken that we're takin' in our hay? John Tamson's and Jamie Forster's was in a wook syne, but we're aye ahint the lave."

All the party were greatly amused by the composure which the young peasant evinced under his misfortune, as well as by the shrewdness of his answers; and, having learned from him, that the hay-field was at no great distance, gave him some halfpence to hasten his speed, and promised to take care of his horse till he should return with assistance. He soon appeared, followed by his father, and two other men, who came on stepping at their usual pace. "Why, farmer," said Mr. Stewart, "you have trusted rather too long to this rotten plank, I think" (pointing to where it had given way): "If you remember, the last time I passed this road, I told

you that the bridge was in danger, and showed you how easily it might be repaired?"—"It is a' true," said the farmer, moving his bonnet; "but I thought it would do weel eneugh. I spoke to Jamie Forster and John Tamson about it; but they said they wadna fash themselves to mend a brig that was to serve a' the folk in the Glen."—"But you must now mend it for your own sake;" said Mr. Stewart, "even though *a' the folk in the Glen* should be the better for it."—"Ay, sir," said one of the men, "that's spoken like yoursel'! Would every body follow your example, there would be nothing in the world, but peace and good neighbourhood. Only tell us what we are to do, and I'll work at your bidding, till it be *pit mirk*."—"Well," said Mr. Stewart, "bring down the planks that I saw lying in the barn-yard, and which, though you have been obliged to step over them every day since the stack they propped was taken in, have never been lifted. You know what I mean."—"O yes, sir," said the farmer, grinning, "we ken what ye mean weel eneugh: and indeed I may ken, for I have fallen thrice owre them since they lay there; and often said they sud be set by, but we *couldna be fash'd*."

While the farmer, with one of the men, went up, taking the horse with them, for the planks in question, all set to work, under Mr. Stewart's direction, to remove the hay, and clear away the rubbish; Mrs. Mason and Mary being the only idle spectators of the scene. In about half an hour, the planks were laid, and covered with sod, cut from the bank; and the bridge now only wanted a little gravel to make it as new. This addition, however, was not essential towards rendering it passable for the car, which was conveyed over in safety; but Mr. Stewart, foreseeing the consequences of its remaining in this unfinished state, urged the farmer to complete the job on the present evening, and promised to reimburse him for the expense. The only answer he could obtain was, "Ay, ay, we'll do't in time; but I'se warrant *it'll do weel eneugh*."

Our party then drove off, and, at every turn of the road, expressed fresh admiration at the increasing beauty of the scene; the rocks became more frequent, and more prominent, sometimes standing naked and exposed, and sometimes peeping over the birch and the rowan-trees,

which flourished abundantly on the steep banks. At length, the village appeared in view. It consisted of about twenty or thirty thatched cottages, which, but for the smoke that issued from the chimneys, might have passed for so many stables or hogsties, so little had they to distinguish them as the abodes of man. That one horse, at least, was the inhabitant of every dwelling, there was no room to doubt; as every door could not only boast its dunghill, but had a small cart stuck upon end directly before it; which cart, though often broken, and always dirty, seemed ostentatiously displayed as a proof of wealth.

In the middle of the village stood the kirk, an humble edifice, which meekly raised its head but a few degrees above the neighbouring houses. It was, however, graced by an ornament of peculiar beauty. Two fine old ash-trees, which grew at the east end, spread their protecting arms over its lowly roof, and served all the uses of a steeple and a belfry; for on one of the loftiest branches was suspended the bell, which, on each returning Sabbath,

Rang the bless'd summons to the house of God.

On the other side of the church-yard stood the manse, distinguished from the other houses in the village by a sash window on each side of the door, and garret windows above; which showed that two floors were, or might be inhabited; for the house had such a sombre air, that Mrs. Mason, in passing, concluded it to be deserted.

As the houses stood separate from each other at the distance of many yards, she had time to contemplate the scene; and was particularly struck with the numbers of children, which, as the car advanced, poured forth from every little cot to look at the strangers and their uncommon vehicle. On asking for John MacClarty's, three or four of them started forward to offer themselves as guides; and, running before the car, turned down a lane towards the river, on a road so deep with ruts, that, though they had not twenty yards to go, it was attended with some danger. Mrs. Mason, who was shaken to pieces by the jolting, was very glad to alight; but her limbs were in such a tremor, that Mr. Stewart's arm was scarcely sufficient to support her to the door.

The aspect of the dwelling, where she was to fix her residence, was by no means inviting. The walls were substantial; built, like the houses in the village, of stone and lime: but they were blackened by the mud which the cart-wheels had spattered from the ruts in winter; and, on one side of the door, completely covered from view by the contents of a great dunghill. On the other, and directly under the window, was a squashy pool formed by the dirty water thrown from the house, and in it about twenty young ducks were at this time dabbling. At the threshold of the door, room had been left for a paving-stone; but it had never been laid, and, consequently, the place became hollow, to the great advantage of the younger ducklings, who always found in it a plentiful supply of water, in which they could swim without danger. Happily, Mr. Stewart was provided with boots, so that he could take a firm step in it, while he lifted Mrs. Mason, and set her down in safety within the threshold. But there an unforescen danger awaited them; for there the great whey-pot had stood since morning, when the cheese had been made, and was at the present moment filled with chickens, who were busily picking at the bits of curd which had hardened on the sides, and cruelly mocked their wishes. Over this, Mr. Stewart and Mrs. Mason unfortunately tumbled. The pot was overturned, and the chickens, cackling with hideous din, flew about in all directions, some over their heads, and others making their way by the inner door into the house.

The accident was attended with no farther bad consequences than a little hurt upon the shins; and all our party were now assembled in the kitchen: but, though they found the doors of the house open, they saw no appearance of any inhabitants. At length, Mrs. MacClarty came in, all out of breath, followed by her daughters, two big girls of eleven and thirteen years of age. She welcomed Mrs. Mason and her friends with great kindness, and made many apologies for being in no better order to receive them; but said, that both her gudeman and her thought that her cousin would have stayed at Gowanbrae till after the fair, as they were too far off at Glenburnie to think of going to it; though it would, to be sure, be only natural for Mrs. Mason to like to see all the

grand sights that were to be seen there; for, to be sure, she would gang many places before she saw the like. Mrs. Mason smiled, and assured her she would have more pleasure in looking at the fine view from her door, than in all the sights at the fair. "Ay, it's a bonny piece of corn, to be sure," returned Mrs. MacClarty, with great simplicity; "but then, what with the trees, and rocks, and whimplings o' the burn, we have nae room to make parks of ony size."—"But were your trees, and rocks, and wimplings of the burn, all removed," said Mr. Stewart, "then your prospect would be worth the looking at, Mrs. MacClarty: would it not?" Though Mr. Stewart's irony was lost upon the good woman, it produced a laugh among the young folks, which she, however, did not resent, but immediately fell to busying herself in sweeping in the hearth, and adding turf to the fire, in order to make the kettle boil for tea. "I think," said Miss Mary, "you might make your daughters save you that trouble;" looking at the two girls, who stood all this time leaning against the wall.—"O poor things," said their mother, "they have not been used to it: they have enough of time for wark yet."—"Depend upon it," said Mrs. Mason, "young people can never begin too soon: your eldest daughter there will soon be as tall as yourself."—"Indeed she's of a stately growth," said Mrs. MacClarty, pleased with the observation. "And Jenny there is little ahint her; but what are they but bairns yet, for a' that? In time, I warrant, they'll do weel enough. Meg can milk a cow as weel as I can do, when she likes."—"And does she not always like to do all she can?" said Mrs. Mason. —"O we manna complain," returned the mother; "she does weel enough."

The gawky girl now began to rub the wall up and down with her dirty fingers; but, happily, the wall was of too dusky a hue to be easily stained. And here let us remark the advantage which our Scotch cottages in general possess over those of our English neighbours; theirs being so whitened up, that no one can have the comfort of laying a dirty hand upon them without leaving the impression; an inconvenience which reduces people to the necessity of learning to stand upon their legs, without the assistance of their hands.

CHAPTER VII.

A Peep behind the Curtain.—Hints on Gardening.

WHILE Mrs. MacClarty was preparing tea for her guest, Mrs. Mason cast her exploring eye on the house and furniture. She soon saw, that the place they were in, served in the triple capacity of kitchen, parlour, and bed-room. The furniture consisted, on one side, of a dresser, over which were shelves filled with plates and dishes, which she supposed to be of pewter; but they had been so bedimmed by the quantities of flies that sat upon them, that she could not pronounce with certainty as to the metal they were made of. On the shelf that projected immediately next the dresser, was a number of delf and wooden bowls, of different dimensions, with horn spoons, &c. These, though arranged with apparent care, did not entirely conceal from view, the dirty nightcaps, and other articles, that were stuffed in behind. Opposite the fire-place were two beds, each enclosed in a sort of wooden closet, so firmly built as to exclude the entrance of a breath of air, except in front, where were small folding-doors, which were now open, and exhibited a quantity of yarn hung up in bunches—affording proof of the goodwife's industry. The portable furniture, as chairs, tables, &c. were all, though clumsy, of good materials; so that Mrs. Mason thought the place wanted nothing but a little attention to neatness, and some more light to render it tolerably comfortable.

Miss Mary Stewart took upon herself the trouble of making tea, and began the operation, by rinsing all the cups and saucers through warm water; at which Mrs. MacClarty was so far from being offended, that she stepped to a huge Dutch press, and having taken from a store of nice linen, which it presented to their view, a fine damask napkin, of which she begged her to make use. —"You have a noble stock of linen, cousin," said Mrs. Mason. "Few farmers' houses in England could produce the like; but I think this is rather too fine for common use."—"For common use!" cried Mrs. MacClarty; "na, na, we're no sic fools as put our napery to use! I have a dizen tableclaiths in that press, therty years old, that were never laid upon a table. They are a' o' my

mother's spinning. I have nine o' my ain makin' forby, that never saw the sun but at the bookin washing. Ye needna be telling us o' England!"—"It is no doubt a good thing," said Mrs. Mason, "to have a stock of goods of any kind, provided one has a prospect of turning them to account; but I confess, I think the labour unprofitably employed, which, during thirty years, is to produce no advantage; and that linen of an inferior quality would be preferable, as it would certainly be more useful. A towel of nice clean huck-a-back would wipe a cup as well, and better than a damask napkin."—"Towels!" cried Mrs. MacClarty, "na, na, we manna pretend to towels; we just wipe up the things wi' what comes in the gait." On saying this, the good woman, to show how exactly she practised what she spoke, pulled out from between the seed-tud, and her husband's dirty shoes, a long blackened rag, and with it rubbed one of the pewter plates, with which she stepped into the closet for a roll of butter. "There," says she, "I am sure ye'll say, that ye never ate better butter in your life. There's no in a' Glenburnie better kye than ours. I hope ye'll eat heartily; and I'm sure ye're heartily welcome."—"Look, sister," cried little William; "see there the marks of a thumb and two fingers! Do scrape it off, it is so nasty."—"Dear me!" said Mrs. MacClarty: "I did na mind that I had been stirring the fire, and my hands were a wee sooty; but it will soon scrape aff: there's a dirty knife will tak it aff in a minute."—"Stop, stop," cried Miss Mary: "that knife will only make it worse: pray, let me manage it myself."—She did so manage it, that the boys, who were very hungry, contrived to eat it to their oatcakes with great satisfaction; but, though Mrs. Mason made the attempt, her disgust was so augmented by the sight of the numerous hairs, which bristled up upon the surface of the butter when spread, that she found it impossible to proceed. Here, thought she, is a home, in which peace and plenty seem to reign; and yet these blessings will not be sufficient to afford me any comfort, from the mere want of attention to the article of cleanliness. But may I not remedy this? She looked at Mrs. MacClarty; and in the mild features of a face, which, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of slovenly dress, and four days' soil (for this

was Thursday), was still handsome, she thought she perceived the candour that might be convinced, and a good-nature that would not refuse to act upon conviction. Of the countenances of the two girls, she could not judge so favourably. The elder appeared morose aud sullen, and the younger stupid and insensible. She was confirmed in her opinion, by observing, that though their mother had several times desired them to go to the field for their father, neither of them stirred a step.

"Do you not hear your mother speaking to you?" said Mr. Stewart, in a tone of authority. The eldest coloured, and hung down her head; the younger girl looked in his face with a stupid stare, but neither of them made any answer. "*Ye'll* gang, I ken, my dear," said Mrs. MacClarty, addressing herself to the younger; "O ay, I ken ye'll gang, like a good bairn, Jean."

Jean looked at her sister; and Mrs. MacClarty, ashamed of their disobedience, but still willing to palliate the faults which her own indulgence had created, said, "that indeed they never liked to leave her, poor things! they were so bashful; but that in time they would do weel eneugh."—"They will never do well, if they disobey their mother," said Mr. Stewart: "you ought to teach your children to obey you, Mrs. MacClarty, for their sakes as well as for your own. Take my word for it, that, if you don't, they, as well as you, will suffer from the consequences. But come, boys, we shall go to the field ourselves, and see how the farmer's work goes on."

Mrs. MacClarty, glad of his proposal, went to the door to point the way. Having received her directions, Mr. Stewart, pointing to the pool at the threshold, asked her how she could bear to have such dirty doors. "Why does not your husband fetch a stone from the quarry?" said he. "People who are far from stones and gravel may have some excuse; but you have the materials within your reach, and by half a day's labour could have your door made clean and comfortable. How, then, can you have gone on so long with it in this condition?"—"Indeed, I kenna, sir," said Mrs. MacClarty; "the gudeman just canna be fash'd."—"And cannot you be fashed to go to the end of the house to throw out your dirty water? Don't you see how small a drain would

from that carry it down to the river, instead of remaining here to stagnate, and to suffocate you with intolerable stench?"—"O, we're just used to it," said Mrs. MacClarty, "and we never mind it. We cou'dna be fash'd to gang sae far wi' a' the slaistery."—"But what," returned Mr. Stewart, "will Mrs. Mason think of all this dirt? She has been used to see things in a very different sort of order; and, if you will be advised by her, she will put you upon such a method of doing every thing about your house, as will soon give it a different appearance."—"Ay," said Mrs. MacClarty, "I aye feared she would be owre nice for us. She has been sae lang lang amang the Englishes, that she maun hae a hantel o' outlandish notions. But we are owre auld to learn, and we just do weel eneugh." Mr. Stewart shook his head, and followed his sons, who had by this time disengaged the gate from the posts, to which it had been attached by an old cord of many knots.

While Mr. Stewart had been engaging the farmer's wife in conversation at the door, his daughter had been earnestly exhorting Mrs. Mason to return to Gowan-brae, and to give up all thoughts of remaining in a situation in which she could not probably enjoy any degree of comfort: but Mrs. Mason adhered inflexibly to her resolution of making a trial of the place; and, on Mrs. MacClarty's entrance, begged to see the room she was to occupy.

"That you sal," said Mrs. MacClarty; "but, indeed, it's no in sic order as I could wish, for it's cram fou o' woo'; it was put in there the day of the sheep-shearing, and we have never ta'en the fash to put it by; for, as I said before, we did not expect my cusine till after the fair." She then opened the door that was placed in the middle, exactly betwen the two beds, the recesses of which formed the entry of the dark passage through which they groped their way to the spens, or inner apartment, which was nearly of the same size as the kitchen. Mrs. Mason was prepared for seeing the fleeces, which were piled up in the middle of the floor, but was struck with dismay at the fusty smell which denoted the place to be without any circulation of air. She immediately advanced to the window, with the intention of opening it for relief. But, alas! it was not made to open; and

she heard, for her comfort, that it was the same with all the other windows in the house. The bed, which was opposite to it, was shut up on three sides, like those in the kitchen. At the foot was a dark closet, in which Mrs. Mason's trunk was already placed. Between the window and the fire-place was a large chest of drawers of mahogany; and on the other side the window, an eight-day clock in a mahogany case. The backs of the chairs were of the same foreign wood, betokening no saving of expense; yet all had a squalid and gloomy aspect.

Mrs. MacClarty tossed down the bed to show the fineness of the ticken, and the abundance of the blankets, which she took care to tell were all of her own spinning. She received the expected tribute of applause for her good housewifery, though Mrs. Mason could not help observing what a risk she ran of having it all lost for want of air. "See the proof of what I say," said she "in that quantity of moths! they will soon leave you little to boast of your blankets."—"Moths!" repeated Mrs. MacClarty, "there never was sic a sight o' moths as in this room; we are just eaten up wi' them, and I'm sure I kenna how they can win in, for no ae breath o' wind ever blew here!"—"That is just the thing that induces them to breed in this place," returned Mrs. Mason; "plenty of air would soon rid you of the grievance: since the window is unfortunately fast, I must beg to have a fire kindled here as soon as your maid comes from the hay-field."—"A fire!" repeated Mrs. MacClarty, "I thought you had fund it owre warm."—"It is not to increase the heat that I ask for a fire," returned Mrs. Mason, "but to increase the circulation of air. If the doors are left open, the air will come sweeping in to feed the fire, and the room by that means be ventilated, which it greatly stands in need of. I can at present breathe in it no longer."

By the help of Miss Mary's arm, Mrs. Mason got out into the open air, and gladly assented to her friend's proposal of taking a view of the garden, which lay at the back of the house. On going to the wicket by which it entered, they found it broken, so that they were obliged to wait, until the stake which propped it was removed. Nor was this the only difficulty they had to encounter:

the path, which was very narrow, was damp by sippings from the dirty pool; and on each side of it, the ground immediately rose, and the docks and nettles which covered it, consequently grew so high, that they had no alternative but to walk sideways, or to separate.

"Ye'll see a bonny garden if ye gang on," said Mrs. MacClarty; "my son's unco proud o't."—"I wonder your son can let these weeds grow here so rank," said Miss Mary; "I think, if he is proud of the garden, he should take some pains to make the entrance to it passable."—"O, it does weel eneugh for us," returned the contented mother; "but saw ye ever sic fine suthernwood? or sic a bed o' thyme? We hae twa rose-bushes down yonder too; but we canna get at them for the nettles. My son gets to them by speeling the wa'; but he would do ony thing for flowers. His father's often angry at the time he spends on them."—"Your husband, then, has not much taste for the garden, I suppose," said Mrs. Mason; "and indeed so it appears; for here is ground enough to supply a large family with fruit and vegetables all the year round; but I see scarcely any thing but cabbages and weeds."—"Na, na, we have some leeks too," said Mrs. MacClarty, "and green kail in winter in plenty. We dinna pretend to kickshaws: green kail's guide eneugh for us."—"But," said Miss Mary, "any one may pretend to what they can produce by their own labour. Were your children to dress and weed this garden; there, might be a pretty walk; there, you might have a plot of green pease; there, another of beans; and under your window you might have a nice border of flowers to regale you with their sweet smell. They might do this too at very little trouble."—"Ay, but they canna be fash'd," said Mrs. MacClarty; "and it does just weel eneugh."

Mr. Stewart now appeared, and with him the farmer, who saluted Mrs. Mason with a hearty welcome, and pressed all the party to go in and taste his whisky, to prevent, as he said, the tea from doing them any harm. As the car was now ready, Mr. Stewart begged to be excused from accepting the invitation; and after laying a kind injunction on Mrs. Mason, to consider no place so much her home as Gowan-brae, he set off with his family on their return homewards.

CHAPTER VIII.

Family Sketches.

Mrs. Mason, unwilling to give trouble, and anxious not to disgust her new acquaintances by the appearance of fastidiousness, gave no further directions concerning her apartment than was barely necessary towards putting it in a habitable state. This being done, she entered cheerfully into conversation with the farmer, whom she found possessed of much plain good sense, and a greater stock of information than she could have supposed within his reach. She was struck with the force and rationality of his observations on various subjects, and almost sorry when their chat was interrupted by a call to supper, which was now upon the table. It consisted, besides the family dishes of sowens and milk, of a large trencher full of new potatoes, the first of the season, and intended as a treat for the stranger. The farmer and his three sons sat down on one side, the goodwife and her two daughters on the other; leaving the arm-chair at the head for Mrs. Mason, and a stool at the foot for Grizzy, who sat with her back to the table, only turning round occasionally to help herself.

When all were seated, the farmer, taking off a large blue bonnet, which, on account of his bald crown, he seldom parted with through the day, and, looking round to see that all were attentive, invited them to join in the act of devotion, which preceded every meal, by saying, "Let us ask a blessing." Mrs. Mason, who had been so long accustomed to consider the standing posture as expressive of greater reverence, immediately stood up; but she was the only one that moved, and the farmer, with great solemnity, pronounced a short, but emphatic prayer. This being finished, Mrs. Mason was desired to help herself; and such was the impression made by the pious thankfulness, which breathed in the devotional exercise in which she had just engaged, that viands less acceptable to her palate would at that moment have been eaten with relish. The sowens were excellent; the milk was sweet; and the fresh-raised potatoes, bursting from the coats in which they had been boiled, might have feasted a queen. Mrs. Mason was liberal of her praise; and both

the farmer and his wife were highly gratified by her expressions of satisfaction. The meal concluded, as it had begun, with prayer; and Mrs. Mason retired to her room, under the full conviction, that, in the society of people who so sincerely served and worshipped God, all the materials of happiness would be within her reach.

Her bed appeared so inviting, from the delicate whiteness of the linen, that she hastened to enjoy in it the sweets of repose; but no sooner had her head reached the pillow, than she became sick, and was so overcome by a feeling of suffocation, that she was obliged to sit up for air. Upon examination, she found that the smell which annoyed her proceeded from new feathers put into the pillow before they had been properly dried, and when they were consequently full of the animal oil, which, when it becomes rancid, sends forth an intolerable effluvia. Having removed the annoyance, and made of her clothes a bundle to support her head, she again composed herself to sleep. But, alas! in vain; for the enemy, by whom she was now attacked, she found to be sworn against sleep. The assault was made by such numbers in all quarters, and carried on with such dexterity by the merciless and agile foe, that, after a few ineffectual attempts at offensive and defensive warfare, she at length resigned herself to absolute despair. The disgusting idea of want of cleanliness, which their presence excited, was yet more insufferable than the piercing of their little fangs. But, on recollecting how long the room had been filled with the fleeces, she gladly flattered herself that they were only accidental guests, and that she might soon be able to effect their banishment. As day advanced, the enemy retired; and poor Mrs. Mason, fatigued and wearied, at length sunk to rest. Happily, she was undisturbed by the light; for, though her window, which was exactly opposite to the bed, was not shaded by a curtain, the veil of dust which it had contracted in the eighteen years it had stood unwiped, was too thick to permit the rays of the sun to penetrate.

As the clock struck eight, she hastened out of bed, vexed at having lost so much of the day in sleep; and, on perceiving, when about half-dressed, that she had in her room neither water nor hand-basin to wash in, she threw on her dimity bed-gown, and went out to the kit-

chen to procure a supply of these necessary articles. She there found Meg and Jean; the former standing at the table from which the porridge dishes seemed to have been just removed; the latter killing flies at the window. Mrs. Mason addressed herself to Meg; and, after a courteous good-morrow, asked her where she should find a hand-basin. "I dinna ken," said Meg, drawing her finger through the milk that had been spilled upon the table.—"Where is your mother?" asked Mrs. Mason.—"I dinna ken," returned Meg, continuing to dabble her hands through the remaining fragments of the feast.—"If you are going to clean that table," said Mrs. Mason, "you will give yourself more work than you need, by daubing it all over with the porridge. Bring your cloth, and I shall show you how I learned to clean our tables, when I was a little girl like you." Meg continued to make lines with her forefinger. "Come," said Mrs. Mason, "shall I teach you?"—"Na," said Meg, "I sal dight nane o't; I'm gain' to the schul."—"But that need not hinder you to wipe up the table before you go," said Mrs. Mason. "You might have cleaned it up as bright as a looking-glass in the time that you have spent in spattering it and dirtying your fingers. Would it not be pleasanter for you to make it clean, than to leave it dirty?"—"I'll no be at the fash," returned Meg, making off to the door as she spoke. Before she got out, she was met by her mother, who, on seeing her, exclaimed, "Are ye no awa yet, bairns? I never saw the like. Sic a fight to get ye to the schul! Nae wonder ye learn little when you're at it. Gae awa, like gude bairns; for there's na schulin the morn, ye ken: it's the fair day."

Meg set off after some farther parley; but Jean continued to catch the flies at the window, taking no notice of her mother's exhortations, though again repeated in pretty nearly the same terms. "Dear me!" said the mother, "what is the matter wi' the bairn? What for winna ye gang, when Meg's gane? Rin, and ye'll be after her or she wins to the eud o' the loan."—"I'm no ga'an the day," says Jean, turning away her face.—"And what for are no ye ga'an, my dear?" says her mother.—"Cause I hinna gotten my questions," replied Jean.—"O but ye may gang for a' that," said her mother: "the maister will no be angry. Gang, like a gude bairn."—

"Na," said Jean, "but he will be angry, for I didna get them the last time either."—"And what for didna ye get them, my dear?" said Mrs. MacClarty, in a soothing tone.—"Cause 'twas uneo kittle, and *I couldna be fash'd*," replied the hopeful girl, catching, as she spoke, another handful of flies. Her mother, finding that entreaties were of no avail, laid her commands upon her daughter to depart immediately; but she had too often permitted her commands to be disputed, to be surprised at their being now treated with disrespect. Jean repeated her determined purpose of not going to the school that day; and the firmer she became in opposition, the authoritative tone of the mother gradually weakened; till, at length, by saying, that, if she didna gang to the schul, she sudna stand there, she acknowledged herself to be defeated, and the point to be given up.

Mrs. Mason, who had stood an unobserved spectator of this scene, was shocked at such a contempt of parental authority, as she believed must inevitably produce consequences of the most deplorable nature. She came forward, and, stopping the little girl as she was slinking out at the door, asked her, "if she really meant to disobey her mother, by staying from school?" Jean made no answer; but the indulgent mother, unwilling that any one should open her eyes to that to which she resolved to be blind, instantly made her spoilt child's apology, by observing, that "the poor thing hadna gotten her questions, and dinna like to gang, for fear o' the maister's anger."—"But ought she not to have got her questions, as her master enjoined, instead of idling here all the morning?" said Mrs. Mason. "O ay," returned Mrs. MacClarty, "she shu'd ha' gotten her questions, nae doubt; but it was uneo fashous, and ye see she has nae a turn that gait, poor woman! but in time she'll do *weel eneugh*."—"Those who wait till evening for sunrise," said Mrs. Mason, "will find that they have lost the day. If you permit your daughter, while a child, to disobey her parent and her teacher, she will never learn to obey her God."—"Hoot," said Mrs. MacClarty, who did not perfectly comprehend the speech, "maidens' bairns are aye weel-bred, ye ken, cousin; but I fear ye hinna sleepit weel, that ye have been sae lang o' rising. It's a lang time since the kettle has been boiling for your break-

fast."—"I shall be ready for it very soon," said Mrs. Mason; "but I came in search of a basin and water, which Grizzy has forgot to put in my room; and until I wash, I can proceed no farther in dressing myself."—"Dear me!" replied Mrs. MacClarty, "I'm sure you're weel eneugh. Your hands ha' nae need o' washing, I trow. Ye ne'er do a turn to file them."—"You can't surely be in earnest," replied Mrs. Mason. "Do you think I could sit down to breakfast with unwashed hands? I never heard of such a thing, and never saw it done in my life."—"I see nae good of such nicety," returned her friend; "but it's easy to gie ye water eneugh, though I'm sure I dinna ken what to put it in, unless ye tak ane o' the porridge plates: or may be the calf's luggie may do better, for it 'll gie ye eneugh o' room."—"Your own basin will do better than either," said Mrs. Mason. "Give me the loan of it for this morning, and I shall return it immediately, as you must doubtless often want it through the day."—"Na, na," returned Mrs. MacClarty, "I dinna fash wi' sae mony fykes. There's aye water standing in something or other, for ane to ca' their hands through when they're blacket. The gudeman, indeed, is a wee conceity like yoursel', an' he coft a brown basin for his shaving in on Saturdays; but it's in use a' the week, haddin' milk, or I'm sure ye'd be welcome to it. I sal see an' get it ready for you the morn."

Poor Mrs. Mason, on whose nerves the image presented by this description of the alternate uses of the utensil in question, produced a sensible effect, could scarce command voice to thank her cousin for her civil offer. Being, however, under the necessity of choosing for the present, she, without hesitation, preferred the calf's bicker to the porridge plate; and indeed considered the calf as being so much the cleanlier animal than his mistress, that she would in every way have preferred him for an associate. Mrs. Mason was not ill pleased to find that she was to breakfast by herself: the rest of the family, having long ago finished their morning repast, were now engaged in the several occupations of the day.

The kail-pot was already on the fire to make broth for dinner; and Mrs. MacClarty busied in preparing the vegetables which were to be boiled in it. When her

guest, on hearing her desire Grizzel to make haste and sit down to her wheel, thought it time to remind her, that her bed was still to make, and her room to be put in order; and that Grizzy's assistance would be necessary for both. It was not easy to persuade the good woman, that it would not be time enough in the dusk of the evening; but as Mrs. Mason declared it essential to her comfort, Grizzy was ordered to attend her, and to do whatever she desired. By her directions, the stout girl fell to work, and hoisted out the bed and bed-clothes, which she carried to the barn-yard; the only place about the house where there was a spot of green grass. The check curtains followed, and in their removal effected the sudden ruin of many a goodly cobweb, which had never before met with the smallest molestation. When the lower vallence was removed, it displayed a scene still more extraordinary: a hoard of the remains of all the old shoes that had ever been worn by any member of the family; staves of broken tubs, ends of decayed rope, and a long *et cetera* of useless articles, so covered with blue mould and dust, that it seemed surprising, the very spiders did not quit the colony in disgust.

Mrs. Mason sickened at the sight. Perceiving what an unpleasant task she should be obliged to impose on her assistant, she deemed herself in justice bound to recompense her for the trouble; and, holding up a half-crown piece, told her, that if she performed all she required of her on the present occasion, it should be her own. No sooner was Grizzy made certain of the reward, than she began in such good earnest, that Mrs. Mason was glad to get out of the room. After three large buckets full of dirt and trumpery had been carried out, she came to Mrs. Mason for fresh instructions. Then proceeded to wash the bed-posts with soap and water. After which, the chairs, the tables, the clock-case, the very walls of the room, as well as every thing it contained, all underwent a complete cleaning.

The window, in which were nine tolerably large panes of glass, was no sooner rendered transparent, than Grizzy cried out in ecstasy, that she cou'd na have thought it would have made sic a change. "Dear me! how heartsome it looks now, to what it us't!" said the girl, her spirits rising in proportion to the exertion of her activity.

—"And in how short a time has it been cleaned!" said Mrs. Mason. "Yet had it been regularly cleaned once a-week, as it ought to have been, it would have cost far less trouble. By the labour of a minute or two, we may keep it constantly bright; and surely few days pass, in which so much time may not be spared. Let us now go to the kitchen window, and make it likewise clean." Grizzy with alacrity obeyed. But before the window could be approached, it was found necessary to remove the heap of dusty articles piled up in the window-sill, which served the purpose of family library, and repository of what is known by the term *odds and ends*.

Mrs. MacClarty, who had sat down to spin, did not at first seem willing to take any notice of what was going forward; but on perceiving her maid beginning to meddle with the things in the window, she could no longer remain a neutral spectator of the scene. Stopping her wheel, she, in a voice indicating the reverse of satisfaction, asked what she was about. Mrs. Mason took it upon her to reply. "We are going to make your window bright and clean for you, cousin," said she. "If you step into my room, and take a look of mine, you will see what a difference there is in it; and this, if these broken panes were mended, would look every bit as well."—"It does *weel eneugh*," returned Mrs. MacClarty. "It wants nae cleanin; it does just *weel eneugh*. What's the gude o' takin' up the lass's time wi' nousense? She'll break the window too, and the hairns hae broken eneugh o't already."—"But if these panes were mended, and the window cleaned," said Mrs. Mason, "you cannot think how much more chearful the kitchen would appear."—"And how long would it bide clean if it were?" said Mrs. MacClarty. "It would be as ill as ever or a month; and wha cou'd be at the fash o' aye cleanin' at it?"—"Even once a-month would keep it tolerable, but once a-week would keep it very nice; your little girls might rub it bright of a morning, without the least trouble in the world. They might learn too to whiten the window-sill, and to keep it free from rubbish, by laying the books, and all these articles, in their proper places, instead of letting them remain here covered with dust. You cannot imagine what good it would do your young people, did they learn by times to attend to such matters;

for, believe me, cousin, habits of neatness, and of activity, and of attention, have a greater effect upon the temper and disposition than most people are aware of."

"If my bairns do as weel as I hae done, they'll do weel eneugh," said Mrs. MacClarty, turning her wheel with great speed. Mr. MacClarty's voice was just at that moment heard calling on Grizzy to drive the fowls out of the corn-field, which necessarily put a stop to all further proceedings against the window. Mrs. Mason, therefore, returned to her own apartment; and, greatly pleased with the appearance which it now assumed, chearfully sat down to her accustomed labour of the needle. On taking a view of her present situation, and comparing it with the past, she carefully suppressed every feeling that could lead to discontent. Instead of murmuring at the loss of those indulgences, which long habit had almost converted into necessaries of life, she blessed God for the enjoyment of such a state of health, as none of the luxuries of wealth could purchase; and for which, those who possessed them so often sighed in vain. Considering all the events of her life as ordered under the wise dispensation of Providence, she looked to the subordinate situation in which she had been placed, as a school, in which it was intended that she should learn the important lesson of humility; and when she looked back, it was for the purpose of inquiring, how she had fulfilled the duties of the lot assigned her. She was now, for the first time in her life, completely her own mistress; but she was already sensible, that the idea of a life, completely independent of the will of others, is merely visionary; and that, in all situations, some portion of one's own will must necessarily be sacrificed. She saw that the more nearly people approached each other in their habits and opinions, the less would the sacrifice be felt; but while she entertained a hope of being able to do more good in her present situation, than she could in any other, she resolved to remain where she was. "Surely," said she to herself, "I must be of some use to the children of these good people. They are ill brought up, but they do not seem deficient in understanding; and if I can once convince them of the advantage they will derive from listening to my advice, I may make a lasting impression on their minds."

While engaged by these reflections, as she busily pursued her work, she was startled by a sudden noise, followed by an immediate diminution of light; and, on looking up, perceived her window all over bespattered with mud. A tittering laugh betrayed the aggressors, and directed her attention to the side where they stood, and from which she knew they could not retreat without being seen. She therefore continued quietly on the watch, and in a little time saw Jean and her younger brother issue from the spot, and hastily run down the bank that led to the river. Mrs. Mason had been for above twenty years employed in studying the tempers and dispositions of children; but as she had never before seen an instance of what appeared to be unprovoked malignity in the youthful mind, she was greatly shocked at the discovery; and thought it incumbent on her to inform their mother of the incident, and to give her opinion of it in the plainest terms.

Mrs. MacClarty, perceiving that Mrs. Mason had something extraordinary to communicate, stopped her wheel to listen; and, when the window was mentioned, asked, with great anxiety, if it were broken. "No," said Mrs. Mason: "the mud they threw at it, was too soft to break the glass. It is not to the injury done the window, that I wish to call your attention, but to the dispositions of your children; for what must the dispositions be, that lead them to take pleasure in such an act?"—"Hoot," said Mrs. MacClarty, "is that it a'? Ane wou'd hae thought the window had been a' to shivers, by the way you spoke. If it's but a wee clarted, there's nae sae muckle ill done. I tald ye it was nonsense to be at sae muckle fash aboot it; for, that it would na get leave to bide clean lang."—"But if your children were better taught," said Mrs. Mason, "it might get leave to bide clean long enough. If the same activity, which they have displayed in dirtying it, had been directed into proper channels, your cottage might have been kept in order by their little hands, and your garden, and all about your doors, made neat and beautiful. Childreu are naturally active; but unless their activity be early bent to useful purposes, it will only lead them into mischief. Were your children" ——"Hoot," said Mrs. MacClarty, peevishly; "my bairns are just like other folks. A' lad-

dies are fou o' mischief. I'm sure there's no a yard i' the town where they can get a flower or apple keepit for them. I wonder what ye would hae said, if ye had seen the minister's yets, the day after they were painted, slaked and blacket a' owre wi' dirt, by the laddies frae the schul."

"I would have said," returned Mrs. Mason, "what I said before, that all that hent to mischief in the children, arises from the neglect of the parents, in not directing their activity into proper channels. Do you not think, that each of these boys would, if properly trained, find as much amusement in works that would tend to ornament the village, or in cultivating a few shrubs and flowers to adorn the walls of their own cottages, as they now appear to find in mischief and destruction? Do you not think, that that girl of yours might have been so brought up, as to have had more pleasure in cleaning a window of her father's house, than in bedauhing it with mud? Allowing the pleasure of being mischievously active, and the pleasure of being usefully active, to be at present equal; do you think that the consequences will not be different? '*Train up a child in the way he should go*,' says Solomon; and depend upon it, that, in the way you train him, he will go, whether you desire it or not. If you permit a child to derive all his pleasure from doing ill to others, he will not, when he is grown up, be inclined to do much good. He will, even from his youth, be conscious of deserving the ill-will of his neighbours, and must of course have no good-will to them. His temper will thus be soured. If he succeeds in life, he will be proud and overbearing: if he does not, he will become sulky, and morose, and obdurate."

"Weel," said the farmer, who had been listening to the latter part of the conversation, "it's a' true that ye say; but how is it to be helpit? Do you think corrupt nature can be subdued in ony other way than by the grace of God?"—"If I read my Bible right," returned Mrs. Mason, "the grace of God is a gift, which, like all the other gifts of divine love, must be sought by the appointed means. It is the duty of a parent to put his children upon the way of thus seeking it; and, as far as it is in his power, to remove the obstacles that would prevent it."—"The minister himsel' could speak nae

better," returned the farmer. "But when folks gie their bairns the best education in their power, what mair can they do?"—"In answer to your question," replied Mrs. Mason, "I will put one to you. Suppose you had a field which produced only briers and thorns, what method would you take to bring it into heart?"—"I would nae doubt rute out the briers and thorns, as weel as I could," returned the farmer.—"And after you had opened the soil by ploughing, and enriched it by the proper manure, you would sow good seed in it, and expect, by the blessing of Heaven, to reap, in harvest, the reward of your labour," said Mrs. Mason.—"To be sure I would," said the farmer.—"And do you imagine," said Mrs. Mason, "that the human soul requires less care in culturing it, than is necessary to your field? Is it merely by teaching them to say their questions, or even teaching them to read, that the briers and thorns of pride and self-will will be rooted up from your children's minds?"—"We maun trust a' to the grace of God," said the farmer.—"God forbid that we should put trust in ought beside," returned Mrs. Mason: "but if we hope for a miraculous interposition of divine grace, in favour of ourselves, or of our children, without taking the means that God has appointed, our hope does not spring from faith, but from presumption. It is just as if you were neither to plough, nor sow your fields, and yet expect that Providence would bless you with an abundant crop."—"But what means ought we to use, that we do not use?" said the farmer. "We send our bairns to the schule, and we tak them to the kirk, and we do our best to set them a gude example. I kenna what we could do mair."—"You are a good man," said Mrs. Mason, with complacency; "and happy will it be for your children if they follow your example. But let us drop all allusion to them in particular, and speak only of training up youth to virtue, as a general principle. By what you say, you think it sufficient to sow the seed: I contend for the necessity of preparing the soil to receive it; and say, that without such preparation, it will never take root, nor vegetate."—"I canno' contradict you," returned the farmer; "but I wish you to explain it better. If you mean that we ought to gie our bairns lessons at hame, I can tell you we have not time for it, nor are we book-learned eneugh

to mak fine speeches to them, as the like of you might do; and, if we were, I fear it wad do little gude."—"Believe me," replied Mrs. Mason, "set lessons and fine harangues make no part of my plan of preparation, which consists of nothing else than a watchful attention to the first appearances of what is in its nature evil, and, whether it comes in the shape of self-will, passion, or perverseness, nipping it in the very bud; while, on the other hand, I would tenderly cherish every kindly affection, and enforce attention to the feelings of others; by which means I would render children kind-hearted, tractable, and obedient. This is what I call the preparation of the soil: now let us see the consequences.—Supposing that, of two children, one has from infancy been accustomed to constant and cheerful obedience, while the other has never been taught to respect any will but his own. Which of those two, on being instructed in the divine precept, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' will be most likely to enter into the spirit of the commandment? And what doth the gospel teach? Doth it not urge us to subdue all selfish and vindictive passions, in order that we may cherish the most perfect love to God and man? Now, if we have permitted our children to indulge these passions, how do we prepare them for practising the gospel precepts? Their duty to God and man requires, that they should make the best use of every power of mind and body: the activity natural to youth, is a power included in this rule; and, if we permit them to waste it in effecting mischief, and in destroying or disturbing the happiness of others, can we say that we are not counteracting the express will of our Divine Master?"

Before Mrs. Mason had finished her speech, her voice was drowned in the noise of a violent quarrel that had taken place between the farmer's two elder sons. Perceiving that the dispute would not be easily settled, she retired to her room; but was overtaken in the passage by Mrs. MacClarty, who said in a whisper, "I houp ye'll say nacthing o' Jenny's playing the truant frae the schule. Her father manna ken o't, he wad be sae angry."—"Alas," said Mrs. Mason, "you know not how much you are your child's enemy! But I shall be silent."

CHAPTER IX.

Domestic Rebellion.

Mrs. Mason enjoyed the reward of her exertions, and of Grizzel's labour, in a night of sweet and uninterrupted repose. She was awakened at early dawn by the farmer's calling his sons to get up, to prepare for the labours of the day; and, looking out, beheld the clouds already decked in the colours of the morning, inviting her to the most glorious sight on which the eye of man can look. The invitation was not given in vain: she rose, and dressed herself, and, taking her staff and crutch, she sallied from her room, earnestly wishing to escape observation.

Having taken the road towards the river, she, on its first turning, found herself in full view of the waterfall, and was arrested by admiration at the many beauties of the scene. Seating herself upon a projecting rock, she contemplated the effulgent glory of the heavens, as they brightened into splendour at the approach of the lord of day; and, when her eyes were dazzled by the scene, turned to view the living waters, pouring their crystal flood over the craggy precipice, shaded by the spreading boughs of birch and alder. The good woman's heart glowed with rapture: but it did not vainly glow, as does the heart or the imagination of many a pretender to superior taste; for the rapture of her heart was fraught with gratitude. She saw the God of nature in his works, and blessed the goodness which, even in the hour of creation, ordained, that they should not only contribute to the use, but add to the enjoyments, of the human race. What are all the works of man, what all the pomp and splendour of monarchs, compared with the grandeur of such a scene? But the sights that are designed by man, as proofs of his creative skill, are only to be seen by the rich and great; while the glorious works of God are exhibited to all.—Whilst she pursued this thought a little farther, it occurred to Mrs. Mason, that all that is rare, is in general useless; and that all that is most truly valuable, is given in common, and placed within the reach of the poor and lowly. "Let the poor then praise Thee!" she exclaimed. "Let the lowly in heart rejoice in thy

salvation. Let us rejoice in the light which shines from on high, to illumine the soul, as thy sun illumes the earth! O that man would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his mercies to the children of men."

While Mrs. Mason was thus indulging the grateful feelings of her heart, by sending up her tribute of praise to the Almighty Giver of all good, her ears were suddenly assailed by the harsh sound of discord; and, on moving a few steps, she discovered that a violent dispute had taken place between the farmer and his eldest son. In the hopes of making peace, she advanced towards them; but before she turned the corner, she paused, doubting whether it were not better to take no notice of having heard the fray. The voices stopped; and proceeding, she saw the farmer hastily unsaddling a horse; and the son at the same moment issuing from the door, but pulled back by his mother, who held the skirt of his coat, saying, "I tell ye, Sandie, ye manna gang, to anger your father."—"But I sal gang," cried Sandie, in a sullen tone. "I wanna be hindered. I sal gang, I tell ye, whether my father likes or no."—"Ye may gang, ye door loon," says the father; "but if ye do, ye sal repent it as lang as ye live."—"Hoot na," returned the mother, "ye'll forgie him; and ye had as weel let him gang, for ye see he winna be hindered!"—"Where is the young man for going to?" asked Mrs. Mason. "Whar sud he be for ga'an to, but to the fair?" returned the mother; "it's only natural. But our gudeman's unco particular, and never lets the lads get ony daffin."—"Daffin!" cried the farmer; "is drunkenness daffin? Did na he gang last year, and come hame as drunk as a beast? And ye wad hae him tak the brown mare, too, without ever spearing my leave! saddled and bridled too, forsooth, like ony gentleman in the land! But ye sal baith repent it: I tell ye, ye'se repent it."—"O, I didna ken o' the mare," said the too easy mother.—"But is it possible," said Mrs. Mason, addressing herself to the young man; "is it possible that you should think of going to any place, in direct opposition to your father's will? I thought you would have been better acquainted with your duty, than to break the commands of God, by treating your parents in such a manner."—"I am sure he has been weel taught," said the mother; "but I kenna how it is, our bairns never

mind a word we say."—"But he will mind you," said Mrs. Mason, "and set a better example of obedience to his brothers and sisters, than he is now doing. Come, I must reconcile all parties. Will you not give me your hand?"—"I'll no' stay frae the fair for naebody," said the sullen youth, endeavouring to pass; "a' the folk in the Glen are ga'an, and I'll gang too, say what ye wull." Mrs. Mason scarcely believed it possible that he could be so very hardy, until she saw him set off with sullen and determined step, followed by his mother's eye, who, on seeing him depart, exclaimed, "Hegh me! ye're an uneo laddie." The farmer appeared to feel more deeply, but he said nothing. Grasping the mane of the mare, he turned to lead her down the road to his fields, and had advanced a few steps, when bis wife called after him to inquire what be was going to do with the saddle, which he carried on his shoulders. "Do wi' it!" repeated he; "I have naething to do wi' it!" Then, dashing it on the ground, he proceeded on with quickened pace dowu the steep.

"Wae's me!" said Mrs. MacClarty, "the gudeman taks Sandie's doorness mickle to heart!"—"And is it any wonder that he should take it to heart?" said Mrs. Mason; "what can be more dreadful to a parent, than to see a son setting out in life, with such dispositions? What can be expected of one who is capable of such undutiful behaviour?"—"To be sure," said the gudewife, "the lad's unco wilfu'. There's nae gude iu hindering him; for he maun aye tak his ain gait. But a' lads are just the same; and the gudeman shou'd na be sae hard on him, seeing he's yet but young."

"Mistress!" balloocd the voice of Grizzel from the house; "I wish ye wad come and speak to Meg. She winna be hinderit putting her fingers in the kirn, and licking the cream."—"If I were at you," cried Mrs. MacClarty, "I'd gar you"——

She was as good as her word; and, in order to show Mrs. Mason the good effect of her advice, she ran that moment into the kitchen, and gave her daughter a hearty slap on the back. The girl went a few steps further off, and deliberately applied her tongue to the back of her hand, where part of the cream was still visible. "Go, ye idle whippy!" said her mother; "and let me see how

weel ye'll ca' the kirn."—"I winna kirn the day," returned Meg; "I'm ga'an to milk the kye. Jean may kirn; she has naething else to do."—"I'm aye set to kirn," says Jean, whimpering. "I never saw sic wark. I tell yc, I wonna kirn mair than Meg. Grizzy can milk the cows hersel'. She doesna want her help."—"But, girls," said Mrs. Mason, "when I was a little girl, like either of you, I never thought of choosing my work; I considered my business to follow my mother's directions. Young people ought to obey, and not to dictate."—"Hear ye that!" said Mrs. MacClarty; "but Jean will gang to the kirn, I ken, like a good bairn; and she sal get a dad o' butter to her bread."—"But I wonna haet frae the hairing knife," said Jean; "for the last I got stack i' my throat."—"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Mason, in amazement; "how does your butter come to be so full of hairs? Where do they come from?"—"O, they are a' frae the cows," returned Mrs. MacClarty. "There has been lang a hole in the milk sythe, and I have never been at the fash to get it mended. But, as I tak aye care to sythe the milk through my fingers, I wonder how sae mony hairs win in."—"Yc needna wonder at that," observed Grizzel; "for the house canna be soopit but the dirt flees into the kirn."—"But do you not clean the churn before you put in the cream?" asked Mrs. Mason, more and more astonished.—"Na, na," returned Mrs. MacClarty, "that wadna be canny, ye ken. Naebody hereabouts would clean their kirn for ony consideration. I never heard o' sic a thing i' my life."

Mrs. Mason found it difficult to conceal the disgust which this discovery excited; but, resolving to be cautious of giving offence, by the disclosure of her sentiments, she sat down in silence to watch the farther operations of the morning. While Jean was slowly turning the churn, with unwilling hand, her mother was busily employed in making the cheese. Part of the milk destined to that purpose was already put on the fire, in the same iron pot in which the chickens had been feasting, and on which the hardened curd, at which they had been picking, was still visible towards the rim. The remainder of the milk was turned into a large tub, and to it that upon the fire was added, as soon as it was of a proper heat. So far, all was done well and cleverly. Mrs.

MacClarty then took down a bottle of runnet, or yearning, as she called it, and having poured in what she thought a sufficient quantity, tucked up the sleeve of her gown, and, dashing in her arm, stirred the infusion with equal care and speed.

"I believe, cousin," said Mrs. Mason, hesitatingly, "I believe—you forgot to wash your hands."—"Hoot!" returned the gudewife, "my hands do weel eneugh. I canna be fashed to clean them at every turn."—"But you go about your work with such activity," rejoined Mrs. Mason, "that I should think it would give you little trouble if you were once accustomed to it; and by all that I have observed, and I have had many opportunities of observation, I believe, that, in the management of a dairy, cleanliness is the first, the last, the one art needful."—"Cleanly!" repeated Mrs. MacClarty; "nae ane ever said that I was na cleanly. There's no' a mair cleanly person i' the parish. Cleanly indeed! ane wad think ye was speaking to a bairn!"

Mrs. Mason offered a few words in explanation, and then retired to her own apartment; to which she saw it would be necessary to confine herself, in order to enjoy any tolerable degree of comfort. She therefore began to consider how it might be rendered more airy and commodious; and after dinner, observing that the farmer's mind still brooded on his son's behaviour, she gladly introduced the subject of her projected alterations, hoping thus to divert his thoughts into another channel. The first thing she proposed, was to have hinges for the frame of the window, that it might open and shut at pleasure. To this the farmer said, he should have no objection, only that "he ken'd it wad soon be broken to pieces, blawin' wi' the wind."—"O, but you mistake me," said Mrs. Mason; "I intend that it should be fastened, when open, with an iron hook, as they constantly fasten the cottage windows in England."—"And wha do ye think would put in the cleek?" returned he. "Is there ane, think ye, about this house, that wad be at sic a fash?"—"Why, what trouble is there in it?" said Mrs. Mason; "it is only teaching your children to pay a little attention to such things, and they will soon come to find no trouble in them. They cannot too soon learn to be neat and regular in their ways."—"Ilka place has just its ain

gait," said the gudewife; "and ye needna think that ever we'll learn your's. And, indeed, to be plain wi' you, cousin, I think you hae owre mony fykes. There, didna ye keep Grizzy for mair than twa hours, yesterday morning, soopin' and dusting your room in every corner, and cleaning out the twa bits o' buird, that are for naething but to set your feet on after a'."—"But did you know how dirty they were?" said Mrs. Mason.—"Hoot! the chickens just got their meat on them for twa or three ouks, poor wee heasties! The buirds war a wee thought clarted wi' parritch, but it was weel dried on, and ye wadna been a bit the waur."—"But are the boards the worse for being scoured?" asked Mrs. Mason; "or would they have been the worse, if they had been scoured when you took them from the chickens, or while they were feeding on them?"—"O, to be sure it wad ha been an easy matter to ha' scour't them then, if we had thought of being at the fash," returned Mrs. MacClarty

"In my opinion," rejoined Mrs. Mason, "this *fear of being fashed* is the great bar to all improvement. I have seen, this morning, that you are not afraid of work; for you have exerted yourself with a degree of activity, that no one could excel; yet you dread the small additional trouble, that would make your house cheerful, clean, and comfortable. You dread the trouble of attention, more than the labour of your hand; and thus, if I mistake not, you often bring upon yourself trouble, which timely attention would have spared. Would it not be well to have your children taught such habits of attention and regularity, as would make you more easy, and them more useful, both to themselves and you?"

"As for my bairns," returned Mrs. MacClarty, "if they pleasure me, they do weel eneugh."—"There's a great spice o' good sense in what Mrs. Mason has said though," said the farmer; "but it's no easy for folk like us to be put out o' their ain gate."

In truth, Mrs. MacClarty was one of those seemingly good-natured people, who are never to be put out of their own way; for she could not bear to think it possible, that she might in any thing do better than she did. Thus, though she would not argue in favour of sloth and dirt in general, she nevertheless continued to be slothful and dirty, because she vindicated herself in every particular

instance of either; and though she did not wish that her children should be idle, obstreperous, disobedient, and self-willed, she effectually formed them to those habits, and then took credit to herself for being one of the best of mothers!

Mrs. Mason had discernment enough to see how much pride there was in that pretended contentment, which constantly repelled every idea of improvement. She saw, that, though Mrs. MacClarty took no pains to teach her children what was truly useful, she encouraged, with respect to them, an undefined sentiment of ambition, which persuaded her, that her children were born to rise to something great. Mrs. Mason saw the unhappy effects which this would infallibly produce, upon minds brought up in ignorance: she, therefore, resolved to do all in her power to obviate the consequences; and, from the opinion she had formed of the farmer's sense and principles, had no doubt of his co-operating with her in the work of reformation.

While musing on this subject, as she sat by her window in the twilight, she saw the two younger lads run hastily past; and soon heard from their mother such an exclamation of sorrow, as convinced her, they had been the messenger of bad news. She therefore speedily proceeded *but*, and there she found the poor woman wringing her hands, and lamenting herself bitterly. The farmer entered at the same moment; and on seeing him, she redoubled her lamentations, still calling out, "O Sandy! Sandy! O that I shou'd ha' lived to see this day! O Sandy! Sandy!"—"Sandy!" repeated the alarmed father, "what is the matter wi' Sandy? for God's sake speak. Is my son gane? is he killed?"—"No, no, he's waur than killed! O that I shou'd hae seen this day!"

"Speak, Robert," said Mrs. Mason; "you can tell what has befallen your brother: let your father know the truth." Robert was silent; but the youngest boy eagerly came forward, and said, that "Jamie Bruce had brought word that Sandy was aff to be a soger."—"And where did you see Jamie Bruce?" asked his father.—"It was Rob that spoke wi' him; it was nae me," said the little boy, hanging down his head.—"Where cou'd you, Rob, meet Jamie Bruce?" said the farmer. "Did not I send you to the West Craft? how cou'd you then see ony ane

comin' frae the fair? Speak, sir! and tell truth, I desire you."—"I just thought I wad gang a wee while up to the road to see the folk comin' frae the fair, before I gaid to the Craft," returned Robert. "I kent there wad be time eneugh."—"Ay," said the farmer, sighing; "it's just the way wi' ye a'! ye just do what ye like yoursels! Now, see what comes o't! Here's Sandy done for himsel' wi' a vengeance! He, too, wad do naething but what he liked! See what he'll mak o't now, but to be tied to a stake, and lashed like a dog! a disgrace, as he is, to us a'! I wou'd rather he had ne'er been born!"—"Alace! gudeman," cried the poor mother, weeping bitterly; "alake! hae pity on me, and try to get him aff."—"It will do nae gude," says her husband, in a softened accent, and wiping a tear which stole down his cheek, "it will do nae gude, I tell ye. We shall never hae comfort in him while we live, for he is ane that will never be advised. Ye ken he never minds a word we say: yet I canna think o' his being made a reprobate."—"He need not necessarily be a reprobate in the army," said Mrs. Mason. "I should hope his principles will preserve him from that; and if he behaves well, he will be treated kindly, and may come in time to be promoted. But you are not yet certain that he is enlisted. The person who gave the information, may himself have been misinformed. Make inquiry into the fact, and then take the steps that appear to be most prudent and judicious." The gleam of hope, which was presented in these words, revived the spirits of the disconsolate parents; and the father, in haste, set off for the village, to learn to a certainty the fate of his untoward son.

Evening was now far advanced. The cows, which the boys should have brought home to have milked, were still lowing in the West Croft; and when Mrs. MacClarty desired Robert to go for them, she obtained no other answer, than that "Grizzy might gang as weel as him." Grizzel was busy in washing up the dishes wanted for supper, and which had remained unwashed from breakfast-time till now: they had been left to the care of Meg, who had neglected them, and by this neglect made the task more difficult to Grizzy, who was therefore in very bad humour, and began loudly to complain of Meg and Rob, who, in their turns, raised their

voices in defence, and mutual accusation. The din of the squabble became insufferable. Mrs. Mason retired from it with horror, and shut herself up in her room, where she meditated, with deep regret, on the folly of those, who, having been placed by Almighty God in situations most favourable to the enjoyment of peace and the exercise of virtue, are insensible to the blessing; and, by permitting their passions to reign without control, destroy at once both peace and virtue.

CHAPTER X.

Containing a useful Prescription.

He's gane!" said the farmer, as he opened the cottage door. "It's just as I ken't it wou'd be. They enticed him wi' drink; and then, when his senses war gane, they listet him."—"And sal I never see him mair?" cried his wife. "Will ye no try to get him aff? Maun my bairn gang wi' thae loons and vagabonds, and do at their bidding what he ne'er wad do at ours! O, it will break my heart!"—"No," says the farmer, "I canna think o't! I maun try. Gang, Rob, and saddle the mare. I canna ride lang at a time for this rheumatic; but when it comes, I'll light and walk. It's a fine night, and I may be there lang before the break of day. O Mrs. Mason! little do our bairns think o' the sorrow they bring upon our hearts!"—"I hope," said Mrs. Mason, "all your children now present will take warning, and learn to submit themselves betimes to the duty of obedience; and that you will both enforce that duty, as you are enjoined by God to do it. Take comfort, then, and assure yourself, that this event may turn out in the end to be a blessing." The farmer said, he trusted in God that it might be so; and having provided himself with what money he thought necessary, he, with a heavy heart, departed.

On the following day, many of the neighbours came to inquire for Mrs. MacClarty; and on hearing that the farmer had gone alone, they all expressed a good-natured concern, saying, that he might have been sure there was not a man in the place who would not willingly have gone with him, had he mentioned his intention. By

noon-time he was expected back; but eight in the evening came, and still there was no appearance of his return. Mrs. Mason now became truly uneasy, and was doubly distressed, as Mrs. MacClarty seemed to depend on her for comfort. She proposed asking some of the neighbours to set off on horseback for intelligence, and sent to several; but they all declined the expedition as unnecessary, assuring her, that the farmer must have gone on to the head-quarters of the recruiting party, which were at a town about twelve miles from that in which the fair had been held. This assurance tended to lessen their alarm. They went to bed; but after passing a sleepless night, arose to fresh anxiety; for the first thing they heard was, that a man had passed through Glenburnie, who had seen Sandie at ——— with the recruiting party the night before, and that the farmer had not been there. Jamie Bruce, who had brought the first account of Sandie frae the fair, now offered to go in search of the old man; for whose fate all had, from this intelligence, become anxious. He had scarcely been gone an hour, when Meg came running in from the door, where she had been idling all the morning, and exclaimed, that her father was coming down the loan in a cart!

Mrs. MacClarty, starting up at the news, flew to meet her husband: her cousin followed in great agitation, and soon perceived, that the poor man was too ill to reach the house without assistance. Friendly assistance was at hand, for the cart was already surrounded by the neighbours; but all were so anxious to have their curiosity gratified, relative to the cause, that not one thought of offering a hand, until their questions had been answered. Mrs. Mason at length restored silence, and got the people to help the poor sufferer to his bed; on which he was no sooner laid, than his wife flew to give him a dram of whisky, which she had been taught to consider as the only cordial for fatigue. But Mrs. Mason, observing how very feverish he appeared, begged her to desist; and at the same time hastened the preparation of a dish of tea, which having prevailed on him to swallow, she addressed the people, who crowded round the bed, entreating they would leave him to the repose of which he stood so much in need. This was not a matter so easily to be accomplished: for so eager were they all engaged in conver-

sation, that, among so many louder tongues, her voice had little chance of being heard.

"Hech me!" cries one, "I never heard o' sic a thing i' my life."—"I have gane to the Lammas fair this thirty years," said another, "an' ne'er heard tell o' ony body being robbed in a' my days."—"But I mind o' just sic anotl.er thing happening to auld John Robson, when he cam frae the fair o' Glasgow ae night," said the shoemaker.—"Glasgow!" exclaimed two or three of the women, "Glasgow, by a' accounts, is an unco place for wickedness: but then wha can wonder whar there's sae mony factories."—"There is muckle gude, as weel as ill in't, Janet," returned the shoemaker.

Mrs. Mason, perceiving the dispute likely to grow warm, again entreated them to remember how much their poor neighbour stood in need of sleep. Her efforts to establish quietness, were all exerted in vain. Unfortunately discovering that the poor man was still awake, the most forward teased him with questions; from his replies to which it appeared, that as he had reached within half a mile of the town, he was met at a lonely part of the road, by two men, habited like sailors, who, as he afterwards learned, had been seen begging at the fair, where, to excite compassion, they had pretended to be lame. He was then leading his horse, which they seized by the bridle, and rudely demanded money to drink. He gave them a sixpence; but they said it was not enough, and with many imprecations demanded more. While he hesitated, they knocked him down, and beat him dreadfully with their sticks. They then took from him the old pocket-book, in which he had put the notes intended for his son's release, and left him senseless on the ground. A little before day-break, he so far recovered, as to be able to raise himself; and, looking round for his mare, perceived her grazing by the road-side at no great distance. With much pain and difficulty, he reached the town, and went to the public-house to which he had been directed, as the quarters of the sergeant; but he had the mortification to find, that the sergeant and his recruits had set off at midnight for the head-quarters, and that all hopes of obtaining his son's dismissal were at an end. He was, however, advised to send in pursuit of the robbers; and, having obtained a warrant, lent his mare to

the constable, who promised he should have his money before night; but night came on, and neither constable nor mare returned. He felt himself, in the mean time, grow worse and worse; and, as soon as day appeared, resolved to return home. Ill as he was able to walk, he had got forward to the entrance of the Glen; where finding that his strength entirely failed him, he took refuge in the first cottage, and procured a cart, in which he proceeded as has been related

He was now very ill indeed; the pain in his head and limbs becoming every minute more violent, while the increased flushing in his face gave evident proof of the fever which burned in every vein. The only precaution which the good people appeared now to think necessary, was carefully to shut the door; and, as a large fire was burning in the grate exactly opposite to his bed, the effect was little short of suffocation. Mrs. Mason perceived this, and endeavoured to remedy it, but in vain. The prejudice against fresh air appeared to be universal. Neither could she get any creature to understand, how much harm the din of so many voices was likely to occasion. Mrs. MacClarty, who, from being accustomed to speak to her children in an exalted pitch, in order to enforce attention, had herself contracted a habit of speaking loud, was quite insensible to the noise that now buzzed in the ear of her sick husband, and would on no account run the risk of offending any of her neighbours, by refusing them admittance to the bedside.

The fever, in consequence, increased. Mrs. Mason, seeing that it was likely to be attended with danger, proposed sending for the doctor; but Mrs. MacClarty acceded to the general opinion, that it would be *time enough* to send when he became worse. "But if you wait until he becomes worse," said Mrs. Mason, "it may then be too late. A fever may be stopped in the beginning, which, if permitted to go on for a couple of days, it may be impossible to cure. We at present are ignorant of the nature of the fever with which your husband is attacked, and may therefore administer what is improper. I have no notion of drugs doing much good in any case; but what I want to have advice for is, to be put upon the proper way of managing his disorder. You are, by the advice of your neighbours, giving him a variety of things, which,

for aught you know, may all have opposite properties, and, though they may each have done good in some instances, may all be equally unfit in the present. Take my advice, so far at least, as, until you send for a doctor, to give him nothing but plenty of cooling drink."—"Na, na," returned Mrs. MacClarty, "I ha' nae sic little regard for my gudeman, as to gie him naething but water and sour milk whey, as ye wad hae me. What has done gude to ithers, may do gude to him; and I'm mistaen if auld John Smith hae na as mickle skeel as ony doctor amang them." Auld John Smith just then arrived, and, after talking a great deal of nonsense about the nature of the disorder, took out his rusty lancet, and bled the patient in the arm, at the same time recommending a poûltice of herbs to be applied to his head, and another of the same kind to his stomach; desiring, above all things, that he might be kept warm, and get nothing cold to drink.

Poor Mrs. Mason was greatly shocked to see the life of a father of a family thus sported with by an ignorant and presuming blockhead; but found, that her opinions were looked upon with the eye of jealous prejudice; and that, while she continued the advocate of fresh air and cooling beverage, she must lay her account to meet with opposition. In spite of auld John Smith's infallible remedies, the farmer became evidently worse. When he was past all hope, the doctor was sent for; who, on seeing him, and inquiring into the mode of treatment he had received, solemnly declared, that if they had intended to kill him, they could not have fallen on a method more effectual. He did not think it probable that he would live about three days; but said, the only chance he had was, in removing him from that close box in which he was shut up, and admitting as much air as possible into the apartment. After giving some further directions concerning the patient, he warned them of the infectious nature of the disease, and mentioned the necessity of taking every precaution against spreading so fatal a disorder. Without listening to what was said in reply, he mounted his horse, and was out of sight in a minute.

No sooner did the fatal sentence which the doctor had pronounced, reach the ears of the unhappy wife, than she gave way to utter despair. The neighbours, who

had been watching for the doctor's departure, poured in to comfort her; but Mrs. Mason, resolving to make a vigorous exertion in behalf of the poor man's life, represented, in strong terms, the necessity of an immediate compliance with the doctor's directions, and proposed, that all should go home but those who could lend assistance in removing him to her room; where, as she had now got the window to open, he would at once have air and quiet. To this proposition, a violent opposition was made by all the good people assembled; in which Mrs. MacClarty loudly joined, declaring, "she wou'd never see her gudeman turned out o' his ain gude warm bed into a cauld room. She cou'dna bear the thoughts o' ony thing sae cruel."—"Is it not more cruel," said Mrs. Mason, "to let him remain here, to be stifled to death by the bad air, which now surrounds him, and which no one can breathe in safety? By removing him, he has at least a chance of recovery: here he can have none."—"If it's the wull o' God that he's to dee," said Peter MacGlashon, who was the oracle of the parish, "it's a' ane whar ye tak him: ye canna hinder the wull o' God."—"It is not only the will of God, but the *command* of God, that we should use the means," said Mrs. Mason. "We should do our utmost, and then look up to God for his blessing, and for resignation to his will. When we do not make use of the reason he has bestowed upon us, we are at once guilty of disobedience and presumption."—"That's no soond doctrine," said Peter; "it's the law of works."—"No," returned Mrs. Mason, "it is the law of faith, to which we show our obedience by works. If, contrary to the command of God, we run upon our own destruction, or permit the destruction of a fellow-creature, we do not show faith but contempt. Every one of you here present, who comes to lend assistance to the family, is performing an act of charity and benevolence, such as God has commanded us to perform to each other; but whoever comes without that intention, and, knowing that he can be of no use, puts his life to needless risk, and, by tempting Providence, commits an act of sin."—"Say ye sae?" said limping Jacob, the precentor, rising from the seat he had just taken by the bedside; "ye speak with authority, I maun confess. But how can ye prove the danger?"—"It is easily proved," replied Mrs.

Mason. "You know that God has ordained, that life should be preserved by food taken into the stomach, and air breathed into the lungs. If poison is put into our food, we all know the consequence. Now it has been clearly proved, that poisonous air is equally fatal to life as poisoned food. By the breath of persons in fever, and other infectious diseases, the air is thus poisoned; and hence arises the necessity of admitting a current of air to carry off the infection."—"But, madam," said a pale-faced man, "if that were true, the air that gaed out wad poison a' the toon. What say ye to that?"—"I say," returned Mrs. Mason, "that if you were to take an ounce or two of arsenic, and put it into that dram-glass full of water, you would run the immediate risk of your life by swallowing it; but that, if you were to dissolve the same quantity in yonder tub, with ten gallons of water, the risk would be diminished; and that, if you were to put it in the river, all the people of Glenburnie might drink of the water without injury. The bad air which surrounds our poor friend in that close bed, is the arsenic in a glass of water: it cannot be breathed with impunity. Had he been placed, as I at first recommended, the greater quantity of air would have diminished the danger; but let us still do what is in our power to remedy the evil."—"I never heard better sense in my life," said the pale-faced man; "if either me or my wife can do you any good, we shall stay and help you; if no, we shall gang hame, and remember you in our prayers. I shall never forget what you have now told us as lang as I live."—"I hae nae faith in't," said Peter MacGlashon; "it's a' dead works; and if I warna sae sick, I wad gie her a serced o' doctrine; but I kenna what ails me, I'm uneo far frae weel."

Peter then went off; and all the rest of the people, one by one, followed his example. In a short time, the pale-faced stranger returned, and, addressing himself to Mrs. Mason, said, "that though he was but a stranger in Glenburnie, yet, as he was the farmer's nearest neighbour, he thought it his duty to offer his services to the utmost, in the present situation of the family; and that, though he was now convinced of the danger, he would willingly encounter it to be of use. He had," he said, "lately suffered much from sickness himself, and therefore he

knew how to feel for those that suffered." There was something in this man's manner that greatly pleased Mrs. Mason, and she frankly accepted his kind offer, pointing out where his assistance might be essentially useful to Mrs. MacClarty, who, oppressed with fatigue, had, by her persuasion, gone to take a little rest. While she was speaking to him, the minister of the parish came in. Learning from Mrs. Mason the state of insensibility to which the sick man was now reduced, he desired his children to be called, in order that they might benefit by the impression which such serious acts of devotion are calculated to make; and when they were assembled, he, with solemn fervency, supplicated the God of all mercy and consolation, in behalf of the sufferer and his afflicted family. While he spoke, tears flowed from the eyes of the most insensible; and Mrs. Mason was not without hope, that the spirit of obedience, which he prayed might henceforth fill the hearts of the children, would be seen in its effects; and that, sensible of the misery which self-will and obstinacy had produced, they would learn to reverence their Creator, by keeping the passions which opposed his law under due subjection.

CHAPTER XI.

An Escape from earthly Cares and Sorrows.

Mrs. Mason's apprehensions, concerning the consequences of the infectious air, were too effectually realised. While the farmer yet hovered on the brink of death, his wife, and Robert his second son, were both taken ill; and great reason there was to fear, that the fever might go through the whole family. By means of the surgeon, who was immediately sent for, an account of Mrs. Mason's distressed situation reached her friends at Gowan-brae; and no sooner were they informed of it, than the car was despatched for her with a trusty servant, by whom Miss Mary wrote, earnestly entreating her not to permit any scruples to prevent her compliance with their request. Mrs. Mason might, indeed, have been well justified in leaving a house where she had not now a bed to sleep on, she having insisted upon Mrs. MacClarty's occupying hers.

Had Mrs. MacClarty continued in health, she would have gone without hesitation; because she saw that her cousin's mind was too full of prejudice, to permit her to reap any benefit from one who had the advantage of more experience than herself; but now that the poor woman was in a state of suffering, and incapable of giving any directions, Mrs. Mason would on no account leave her. Having returned a grateful answer to her friends at Gowan-brae, she dismissed their messenger, and proceeded in arranging the business of the family, with all the prudence and activity which become natural to minds that have been long accustomed to exertion. She was no longer troubled with useless visits from the neighbours, whom she had partly offended, and partly terrified, by her discourse on the nature of infection. Peter MacGlashon, her great opponent, had taken to his bed on going home, and was now dangerously ill of the fever; and auld John Smith and his wife had happily been affronted by sending for the doctor; so that few came near the house, excepting William Morrison, the pale-faced stranger, whom we have already mentioned, and Peggy his wife, a very clever sensible woman.

The minister, and his niece, were particularly attentive. The former paid Mrs. Mason a daily visit; and, as often as circumstances would permit, performed the sacred offices of his function in devout and fervent prayer. The latter came in person to solicit Mrs. Mason to sleep at the manse; but William Morrison and his wife had anticipated her in the offer of a bed; and as their house was near at hand, she preferred going there, especially as Peggy had undertaken the management of Mrs. MacClarty's dairy, and also the preparation of all the victuals. Meg and Jean were sent to assist her in these offices; but she found them so obstinate and unmanageable, that they were rather a hinderance than a help. Nor was Grizzy of much greater use. Strong and active as she was, she seemed to feel every thing a trouble that she was desired to do; and, though she would have lifted a heavy burden without murmuring, grumbled sadly at being desired to rince a few cups or basins, and still more at the fatigue of putting them in their proper places. This was, however, insisted upon by Mrs. Mason, under whose directions all was preserved in order. In the

attendance on the persons of the sick, she was assisted by an old woman of the village; but all the medicines were administered by her own hands. She was anxious to have Robert removed from the dark and airless passage in which he lay; but he so violently opposed the measure, that she could not get it effected, so that she was obliged to leave him to his fate; and after the third day, the doctor gave little hopes of his recovery. As to his poor father, his death had been for some time hourly expected; but towards the evening of the twenty-fourth day, he appeared somewhat to revive. His senses returned; and, observing Mrs. Mason by his bedside, he asked her for his wife and children. On his repeating the question, Mrs. Mason found herself under the painful necessity of informing him of the situation of his wife and son; to which he made no other answer, than that they were in the hands of a merciful God, and in life and death he submitted to His will.

On the minister coming in, he spoke to him in the same strain of pious resignation. "I know," he said, "that my hour is at hand; but, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, knowing that the Redeemer of the world has paved the way. He will guide his flock like a shepherd, and none that believe on him shall be lost." After much conversation of the same kind, in which he evinced the faith and hope of a Christian—that faith and that hope, which transform the deathbed of the cottager into a scene of glory, on which kings and conquerors might look with envy, and in comparison of which all the grandeur of the world is contemptible—he desired to see his daughters and his little boy. They came to his bedside, and with a feeble and broken voice, he spoke to them as follows: "My dear hairns, it is God's will that I should be ta'en frae you; but God can never be ta'en frae you, if you learn by times to put your trust in him, and pray for his Spirit to subdue the corrupt nature in your hearts. I have grievously wranged you, I maun confess; the thought of it is heavy on my heart. For though I weel knew the corruption that was in your natures, I did not teach you to subdue it, so as to put you in the way of God's grace, which is promised to the obedient. It has pleased God to punish me for this neglect. Through the

mercies of the Saviour I hope for pardon; but I cannot die in peace till I warn you of the consequences of continuing in a contentious and disobedient spirit. If it pleases God to spare my dear wife,"—here his feelings overpowered him, and his voice was so choked by sobs, that it became quite inarticulate.

All remained profoundly silent; and at length the dying man so far recovered as to be about to proceed, when the door, which at his desire had been shut, flew suddenly open; and Sandie, with hasty and tremulous steps, ran in, crying, "Hide me, hide me, mother! for God's sake find out some place to hide me in!"—"Sandie!" exclaimed the dying man, "is it indeed my son, my son Sandie? Thank God, I sal see him ere I die, to gie him my blessing. Come, Sandie, winna ye come to me? Dinna be frightened. Ye have cost me sair; but God kens how truly I forgie you: come and tak my blessing." Sandie uttered a deep groan; and, hiding his face with both his hands, fell prostrate at his father's bedside. The minister raised him up, and bade him take comfort. "Comfort!" cried he, "oh! there's nae comfort for me; I have been the death of my father: is it not me that has brought his gray hairs wi' sorrow to the grave?"—"But your father has forgiven you," said the minister; "he is ready to give you his blessing."—"And will you bless me?" said Sandie; "O my father! I dinna deserve your blessing; but let me anes mair hear your voice."—"God Almighty bless you, my son, and give you a heart to serve him, and to walk in his ways."—"Is it not Sandie that I hear?" cried his mother, rushing to the bedside, and clasping her son in her arms; "O Sandie, what have ye brought upon us a'?"

There was no time to answer; for the exertion was so much beyond her strength, that she would have fallen lifeless on the ground, had not her son prevented it by clasping her to his breast. "My mother! Have I killed my mother too!" exclaimed the affrighted youth, hanging over her with a look of inexpressible horror. "Yes," uttered a loud and rough voice from behind, "you would rather kill twenty mothers than fight the French; but (swearing a horrid oath) you shan't find it so easy to get off next time, my lad." Two others sprung forward at the same moment, and laid hold of their prisoner, who

was too much stupified by the variety of emotions to make any resistance, or even to utter a single word.

"Gentlemen," said the minister, gently laying his hand upon the hand of the foremost, as it eagerly grasped the young man's shoulder, "there is no occasion to use any violence. You are, I suppose, in the performance of your duty; and, I give you my word, you shall here meet with no resistance; but, in the name of the parents who gave you birth, I conjure you to act like men, and not like savage brutes."—"We are no savages," returned the foremost; "we are his Majesty's soldiers, and come to execute his Majesty's orders on the body of this deserter, who will be tried and shot, as sure as he stands there."—"It may be so," said the minister; "only give him a few minutes to take leave of his dying parents."—"O my poor mother," cried Sandie, "must I be torn from you! what, what shall I do? Wretch that I am! it is me, me that has brought you to the grave!"—"You will indeed injure her by this agitation," said Mrs. Mason; "carry her back to her bed; these men will assist you in the office, for I see they are not strangers to humanity."

"God pity the poor woman!" said the corporal, "I shall give her all the help in my power." So saying, he would have taken her from Sandie's arms; but could not prevail on him to part with his burden, though his knees trembled under him, while he carried her through the passage to Mrs. Mason's room, where she was put to bed. She instantly became delirious; and, in her raving, called out, that the house was on fire, and that she and her children would perish in the flames; then, springing up, she caught her son by the arm, continuing to cry, "Help, help!" in a wild and mournful voice, till her strength was exhausted, and she again sunk upon her pillow. The feelings of her son may perhaps be imagined, but cannot be described; nor were any of the by-standers unaffected by the scene. Even the rough soldier felt all the sympathies of his nature working in his breast. He was not, however, forgetful of his duty; for while Mrs. Mason was administering a cordial to the poor mother, he drew his prisoner from the room. On Mrs. Mason's returning to the outer room, she found him standing over his father's bed, his eye fixed upon

the altered countenance of the dying man, who, since the entrance of the soldiers, had never shown any other sign of sensibility, than the utterance of a faint groan. He was now speechless; but his hands were lifted up in prayer. "Come, my brethren," said the minister, "let us unite our prayers to those of the departing spirit The deathbed of a good man is the porch of heaven. To Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death, let us lift the voice of supplication, that living, we may live to him, that dying, we may be received into his glory." The imposing solemnity of the scene aided the views of the venerable pastor, in making a deep impression upon his audience. His prayer, though simple, had all the effects of eloquence upon the heart; and in the breasts of the hardy veterans, touched some chords which had, but for this adventure, lain for ever dormant. Far from hurrying away their prisoner with brutal violence, they patiently waited until he had attained some degree of composure; and then respectfully addressing the minister, they begged that he would exhort the young man not to resist them in the performance of their duty. Mr. Gourlay, sensible of the reasonableness of their request, went up to Sandie, who was then gazing in speechless sorrow on his father's corpse. After speaking with him for a few minutes, he took his hand, and turning to the chief of the party, "Here, friend," said he, "I commit to your care this bruised reed, and I am persuaded that you will treat him with humanity. Go in peace: in all circumstances, perform your duty with the courage that becomes an immortal spirit; and whatever doctrine may be preached to rouse your bravery, believe me, that, even in the field of battle, *it is only a good man that can die with glory.*"

CHAPTER XII.

The Doctrine of Liberty and Equality stripped of all Seditious Import.

The morning of the day on which the farmer was to be buried, was rendered remarkable by the uncommon denseness of an autumnal fog. To Mrs. Mason's eye it threw a gloom over the face of nature; nor, when it

gradually yielded to the influence of the sun, and, slowly retiring from the valley, hung, as if rolled into masses, mid way upon the mountains, did the changes thus produced excite any admiration. Still, wherever she looked, all seemed to wear the aspect of sadness. As she passed from Morrison's to the house of mourning, the shocks of yellow corn, spangled with dew-drops, appeared to her to stand as mementos of the vanity of human hopes, and the inutility of human labours. The cattle, as they went forth to pasture, lowing as they went, seemed as if lamenting, that the hand which fed them was at rest; and even the robin-red-breast, whose cheerful notes she had so often listened to with pleasure, now seemed to send forth a song of sorrow, expressive of dejection and wo.

The house of the deceased was already filled with female guests; the barn was equally crowded with men; and all were, according to the custom of the country, banqueted at the expense of the widow and orphans, whose misfortunes they all the while very heartily deplored. Mrs. Mason's presence imposed silence upon the women; but, in the barn, the absence of Sandie, who ought to have presided at his father's funeral, was freely descanted on; and the young man either blamed or pitied, according to the light in which his conduct happened to be viewed. The poor child, on whom the office of chief mourner thus devolved, looked grave and sad: but he was rather bewildered than sorrowful; and, in the midst of the tears which he shed, felt an emotion of pleasure from the novelty of the scene.

At length Mr. Gourlay rose, and all was hushed in silence. Every heart joined in the solemn prayer, in which the widow and the orphans were recommended to the throne of grace. The bier was then lifted. From the garden, to which she had retired apart from the crowd, Mrs. Mason viewed the solemn procession, which, as the rocks reverberated the dismal note of the church-bell, tolling at measured intervals, slowly proceeded to the destined habitation of the dead. The hoary-headed elders, who had the place of honour next the corpse, thought, as they looked on it, on the unblemished life of him who had been so long their associate in its duties; and wept for the man in whom they hoped their children's children would have found a friend. The distant

farmers, who had bought and sold with him, paid the tribute that was due to his character and integrity; while those with whom he had lived in the constant intercourse of kindness and good neighbourhood, betrayed, in their countenances, the sorrow of their hearts.

Mrs. Mason continued to gaze after the mourners, till an angle of the wall of the churchyard intercepted her view; soon after, all was still. The last toll of the bell died away upon the distant hills, and gave place to a silence particularly solemn and impressive. It denoted the conclusion of that ceremony which returns *dust to dust.* "Where now," thought she, "are the distinctions of rank? Where those barriers, which, in this world, separate man from man? Even here, sorrow embalms the memory of the righteous alone. When selfishness is silent, the heart pays its tribute to nought but worth. Why, then, should those of lowly station envy the trappings of vanity, that are but the boast of a moment, when, by piety and virtue, they may attain a distinction so much more lasting and glorious? To the humble and the lowly are the gates of Paradise thrown open. Nor is there any other path which leads to them, but that which the Gospel points out to all. In that path may the grace of God enable me to walk, so that my spirit may join the spirits of the sanctified—the innumerable host, that, out of every tribe, and nation, and language, shall meet together, before the throne of the Eternal, to worship, and give praise, and honour, and glory, to him that liveth for ever and ever."

From these solemn meditations, Mrs. Mason was called to witness the reading of the farmer's will. He had performed the duty of an honest man, in making it while he was in perfect health; wisely thinking, that if he deferred it till the hour of sickness, he might then neither have the ability nor inclination to give his mind to worldly cares. To his wife, he bequeathed a free cottage in the village, and an annuity which he considered equal to her wants. To each of his younger children, he left the sum of forty pounds; and to his eldest son, the farm, burthened with the above provision for the rest of the family. In case the elder son should choose to go abroad or enter into business, the farm was to go to the second, and the elder to have only a younger child's por-

tion. By a clause in the will, the widow was to retain possession of the farm till the Candlemas after her husband's death. So much more consideration had this humble cottager for the feelings of a wife, than is often shown in the settlements of the rich and great. The minister, who read the will, addressed himself, in finishing it, to the friends and neighbours who were present; and proposed that they should alternately lend their assistance in managing the business of the harvest for the widow and her family. The proposal was readily agreed to by the men; while Mrs. Mason, on her part, cheerfully undertook the superintendence of the household work and dairy, until her cousin should be so far recovered as to be able to resume the task.

As soon as all the strangers were dismissed, Mrs. Mason informed her cousin of the arrangements that had been made, with which she appeared perfectly satisfied. Depressed by grief and sickness, she still considered her recovery as hopeless, and submitted to her fate with that species of quiescence, which is often a substitute for the true spirit of resignation.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Force of Prejudice.

The business of the family had never been so well conducted, as since its mistress had been incapacitated from attending to it. By the effects of forethought, order, and regularity, the labour was so much diminished to the servant, that she willingly resigned herself to Mrs. Mason's directions, and entered into all her plans. The girls, though at first refractory, and often inclined to rebel, were gradually brought to order; and, finding that they had no one to make excuses for their disobedience, quietly performed their allotted tasks. They began to taste the pleasure of praise; and, encouraged by approbation, endeavoured to deserve it; so that, though their tempers had been too far spoiled to be brought at once into subjection, Mrs. Mason hoped, that, by steadiness, she should succeed in reforming them.

Mrs. MacClarty, who was not so changed by sickness, or so absorbed in grief, as to be indifferent to the world

and its concerns, fretted at the length of her confinement, which was rendered doubly grievous to her from the hints she occasionally received of the new methods of management introduced by Mrs. Mason, which she could on no account believe equal to her own. Her friend and benefactress became the object of her jealousy and aversion. The neighbours, with whom she had cultivated the greatest intimacy, encouraged this dislike; and, on all their visits of condolence, expressed, in feeling terms, their sense of the sad change that had taken place in the appearance of the house, which, they said, was now sae *unco*, they wad scarcely ken it for the same place.

"Ay!" exclaimed the wife of auld John Smith, who happened to visit the widow the first evening she was able to sit up to tea, "ay, alake! it's weel seen, that, whar there's new lairds, there's new laws. But how can your woman and your bairns put up wi' a' this fashery?" —"I kenna, truly," replied the widow; "but Mrs. Mason has just sic a way wi' them, she gars them do ony thing she likes. Ye may think it's an eery thing to me, to see my poor bairns submitting that way to pleasure a stranger in a' her nonsense."—"An eery thing, indeed!" said Mrs. Smith. "Gif ye had but seen how she gar'd your doehter Meg clean out the kirn! outside and inside! ye wad hae been wae for the puir lassie. I trow, said I, Meg, it wad hae been lang before your mither had set you to sic a turn! 'Ay,' says she, 'we hae new gaits now;' and she lookit up, and leugh."—"New gaits, I trow!" cried Sandy Johnstone's mother, who had just taken her place at the tea-table: "I ne'er ken'd gude come o' new gaits a' my days. It gangs to my heart to see your wark sae managed. It was but the day before yesterday that I eam upon madam, as she was haddin the strainer, as she called it, to Grizzy, desiring her a' the time she poured the milk, to beware o' letting in ane o' the cow's hairs that were on her goon. Hoot, says I, cows' hairs are canny; they'll never choak ye.—'The fewer of them that are in the butter the better,' says she. Twa or three hairs are better than the blink o' an ill ee, says I.—'The best charm against witeheraft is cleanliness,' says she. I doubt it muckle, says I: auld ways are aye the best!"—"Weel done!" cried Mrs. Smith: "I trow ye gae her a screed o' your mind! But here

comes Grizzy frae the market: let us hear what she says to it."

Grizzel advanced to her mistress, and with alacrity poured into her lap the money she had got for her cheese and butter; proudly at the same time observing, that it was more, by some shillings, than they had ever got for the produce of one week, before that lucky day.

"What say you?" cried the wife of auld John Smith: "are the markets sae muckle risen? That's gude news, indeed!"—"I didna say that the markets were risen," returned the maid; "but *we* never got sae muckle for *our* butter, nor our cheese, by a penny i' the pund weight, as I got the day. A' the best folks i' the toon were striving for it. I could ha' seld twice as muckle at the same price."—"Ye had need to be weel paid for it," said Sandy Johnstone's mother; "for I fear ye had but sma' quantity to sell."—"We never had sae muckle in ae week before," said Grizzy; "for you see the milk used aye to sour before it had stood half its time; but now the milk-dishes are a' sae clean, that it keeps sweet to the last."—"And dinna ye think muckle o' the fash?" said Mrs. Smith.—"I thought muckle o't at first," returned Grizzy; "but, whan I got into the way o't, I fand it nae trouble at a'."—"But how do ye find time to get through sae muckle wark?" said the widow Johnstone.—"I never," answered Grizzy, "got through my wark sae easy in my life; for ye see Mrs. Mason has just a set time for ilka turn, so that folk are never rinnin in ane anither's gait; and every thing is set by clean, ye see, so that it's just ready for use."—"She maun hae an unco airt," said Mrs. MacClarty, "to gar ye do sae muckle, and think sae little o't. I'm sure ye ken how ye used to grumble at being put to do far less. But I didna bribe ye wi' haff-croon pieces, as she does."—"It's no the haff-croon she gae me that gars me speak," cried Grizzy; "but I sall always say, that she is a most discreet and civil person; ay, and ane that taks a pleesur in doin' gude. I'm sure, mistress, she has done mair gude to you than ye can e'er repay, gif ye were to live this hunder year."—"I sall ne'er say that she hasna been very kind," returned Mrs. MacClarty; "but, thank the Lord, a' body has shown kindness as weel as her. It's no lessnin' o' her to say, that we hae ither freends forby."

—"Freends!" repeated Grizzy; "what hae a' your freends done for you, in comparison wi' what she has done, and is e'now doin' for you? Ay, just e'now, while I am speaking—but I forget that she charged me no to tell."—"Is na she gane to Gowan-brae?" said Mrs. MacClarty: "what gude can she do me by that?"—"Ay," cried Mrs. Smith, "what gude can the poor widow get by her gaen to visit amang the gentles? Didna I see her ride by upon the minester's black horse, behint the minester's man, and the minester himsel' ridin' by her side?"—"She's no gane to Gowan-brae, though," returned Grizzy; "nor the minester neither: I ken whar they're gane to weel eneugh."—"But what are they gane about?" asked Mrs. MacClarty, alarmed; "is ony thing the matter wi' my puir Sandy? for my heart aye misgi'es me about his no comin' to see me."

Grizzy made no answer. The question was again repeated, in an anxious and tremulous voice by her mistress; but still she remained silent.

"Alake!" cried Mrs. Smith, "I dread that the sough that gaed through o' his having deserted, had some truth in't, though William Morrison wadna let a word be said at the burial."—"O woman! for pity's sake speak," said the widow; "Isna my bairn already lost to me? Wharfor than will ye no tell me what has happened, seein' it canna be waur than what has already befallen me!"—"I promised no to tell," said Grizzy; "but since you will hae it, I maun let ye ken, that if Sandy be not doomed to death this very day, it will be through the exertions of Mrs. Mason."—"Doomed to death!" repeated the widow; "My Sandy doomed to death! my bairn, that was just the very pride o' my heart! Alace! alace! his poor father!"

A kindly shower of tears came to the relief of the poor mother's heart, as she uttered the name of her husband; and as she was too much weakened by sickness to struggle against the violence of her emotions, they produced an hysterical affection, which alarmed those about her for her life. Her life was, however, in no danger. Soon after being put to bed, she became quite composed; and then so strongly insisted upon being informed of every particular relative to her son, that Grizzy was compelled to give a faithful account of all she knew.

"Ye have thought," said she, "that your seein' Sandy while you were in the fever was but a dream; and Mrs. Mason, thinking it best that ye should continue in the delusion, has never contradickit ye. But it was nae dream: your son was here the very day his father died; and ye saw him, and faintit awa in his arms."—"Whar-for than did he leave me?" exclaimed the widow; "What for did he no stay to close his father's eyes, and to lay his father's head i' the grave, as becam the duty o' a first-born son?"—"Alace!" returned the damsel, "ye little ken how sair the struggle was ere he could be brought to part frae the lifeless corpse! Had ye seen how he grasped the clay-cauld hand! Had ye heard how he sobbet over it, and how he begget and prayed but for anither moment to gaze on the altered face, it wad hae gaen near to break your heart. I'm sure mine was sair for the poor lad. And than to see him dragged awa as a prisoner hy the sogers! O it was mair pitifu' than your heart can think!"—"The sogers!" repeated Mrs. MacClarty, "What had the vile loons to do wi' my bairn? the cruel miscreants! was there nane to rescue him out o' their hluidy hands?"—"Na, na," returned Grizzy; "the minister geed his word, that he sudna be rescued. And, to say the truth, the sogers behaved wi' great discretion. They showed nae signs o' cruelty; bat only said, it wadna be consistent wi' their duty to let their prisoner escape."—"And what had my bairn done to be made a prisoner o'?" cried the widow.—"Why, ye ken," returned Grizzy, "that Sandy was aye a wilfu' lad; so it's no to be wondered at, that whan he was ordered to stand this gait, and that gait, and had his hair tugged till it was ready to crack, and his neck made sair wi' standin ajee, he shou'd tak it hut uneo ill. So he disoheyed orders; and than they lashed him, and his proud stamach cudna get o'er the disgrace; and than he ran aff, and hade himsel three days in the muirs. On the fourt day he cam here; and then the sogers got haud o' him, and they took him awa to be tried for a deserter. So ye see, Mrs. Mason than got the minester to apply to the captains and the coronels about him; but they said they had resolved to mak an example o' him, and nae-thing cou'd mak them relent. So a' that the minister said, just gaed for naething; for they said, that by the

law o' court-marshall he maun be shot. Well, a' hoop was at an end; when, by chance, Mrs. Mason fand out, that the major o' the regiment was the son o' an auld friend o' hers, ane that she had kent and been kind to when he was a bairn; and so she wrate a lang letter to him, and had an answer, and wrate anither; and, by his appointment, she and the minester are gane this very day to bear witness in Sandy's favour; and I wad fain hoop they winna miss o' their errand."

The suspense in which poor Mrs. MacClarty was now involved, with respect to her son's destiny, appeared more insupportable than the most dreadful certainty. The stream of consolation that was poured upon her by her loquacious friends, only seemed to add to her distress. She made no answer to their observations; but, with her eyes eagerly bent towards the door, she fearfully listened to the sound of every passing footstep. At length, the approach of horses was distinctly heard. Her maid hastily ran to the door for intelligence; and the old woman, whose curiosity was no less eager, as hastily followed. The poor mother's heart grew faint. Her head dropped upon her hands, and a sort of stupor came over her senses. She sat motionless and silent; nor did the entrance of the minister and Mrs. Mason seem to be observed. Mrs. Mason, who at a glance perceived that the sickness was the sickness of the mind, kindly took her hand, and bid her be of good cheer; for that, if she would recover, all her family would do well.

"Is he to live?" said Mrs. MacClarty, in a low and hollow voice, fixing her eyes on Mrs. Mason's, as if expecting to read in them the doom of her son. "Give thanks to God," returned the minister, "your son lives: God and his judges have dealt mercifully with him and you." On hearing these blessed words, the poor agitated mother grasped Mrs. Mason's hands, and burst into a flood of tears. The spectators were little less affected; a considerable time elapsed before the silence that ensued was broken. At length, in faultering accents, the widow asked, whether she might hope to see her son again. "is he no' to come hame," said she, "to fill his father's place, and to tak' possession o' his inheritance? If they have granted this, I will say that they have been mercifu' indeed, but if no"——"Though they have not

granted this," returned the minister, "still they have been merciful, ay most merciful. For your son's offences were aggravated, his life was in their hands, it was most justly forfeited; yet they took pity on him, and spared him: and are you not grateful for this? If you are not, I must tell you, your ingratitude is sinful."—"Oh! you kenna what it is to hae a bairn!" returned Mrs. MacClarty, in a doleful tone. "My poor Sandy! I never had the heart to contradick him sin' he was born, and now to think what command he maun be under! But I ken he'll ne'er submit to it, nor will I ever submit to it either. We have eneugh o' substance to buy him aff; and if we sell to the last rag, he shall never gang wi' these sogers; he never shall."—"You speak weakly, and without consideration," rejoined the minister. "Your duty, as a parent, is, to teach your children to obey the laws of God, and of their country. By nourishing them in disobedience, you have prepared their hearts to rebel against the one, and to disrespect the other. And now that you see what the consequence has been to this son, whom ungoverned self-will has brought to the very brink of destruction; instead of being convinced of your error, you persist in it, and would glory in repeating it! Happily, your son is wiser: he has profited by his misfortunes, and has no regret, but for the conduct that led to them."—"He was enticed to it," cried Mrs. MacClarty; "he never wad hae listet in his sober senses."—"Who enticed him to disobey his father, by going to the fair?" returned the minister; "it is the first error that is the fatal cause of all that follows; so true it is, that when we leave the path of duty but a single step, we may by that step be involved in a labyrinth, from which there is no returning. Be thankful that your son has seen his error; and let it be your business to confirm his repentance, and to exort him, by his future conduct, to retrieve the past; so shall the blessing of God attend him wherever it may be his destiny to go."—"And whar is he to go?" said Mrs. MacClarty.—"To the East Indies," returned the minister. "To-morrow he will be on his way for that fine country, from which he may yet return to gladden your heart."—"Alace, my heart will never be gladdened mair!" said the poor widow, weeping as she spake.

Mrs. Mason was moved by her tears, though vexed by her folly; and therefore spoke to her only in the strain of consolation. But Mr. Gourlay, incensed at the little gratitude she expressed for her son's deliverance, could not forbear reminding her of the predicament in which he so lately stood, and from which he had been rescued by Providence, through the agency of Mrs. Mason. In conclusion, he exhorted her to be thankful to God for having given her such a friend.

"The Lord will bless her for what she has done!" cried Mrs. MacClarty.—"The Lord has already blessed her," returned the minister; "for a heart filled with benevolence is the first of blessings. But," continued he, "she has it still in her power to render you more essential service than any she has yet performed."—"Say you sae?" cried Mrs. MacClarty, eagerly. "Yes," returned Mr. Gourlay; "for if you will listen to her advice, she will instruct you in the art of governing your childrens' passions, and of teaching them to govern themselves; and thus, by the blessing of God, she may eventually be the means of rescuing them from a sentence of condemnation—more awful than the most awful that any human tribunal can pronounce."

The widow felt too much respect for her pastor to dispute the truth of his observation, though she probably entered a silent protest against its obvious inference. She, however, thanked him for his kind intentions; and he immediately after took his leave.

CHAPTER XIV.

By the terms of his father's will, Robert, on his brother's leaving the kingdom, became the legal possessor o the farm. He wanted three years of one and twenty, but, as his mother agreed to assist him in its management, it was thought for the interests of the family, that he should succeed to it without delay. No sooner was this point settled, than the young man, who had ever shown a sulky antipathy to Mrs. Mason, began to treat her with a rudeness that was too marked to be overlooked; nor did he receive any check from his mother for his bearish behaviour, except when she now and then, in a feeble tone, exclaimed, "Hoot, Robby, that's no right,"

The girls, too, who had just begun to appear sensible of the advantage of those habits of diligence and decorum to which Mrs. Mason had introduced them, were no sooner under their mother's direction, than they relaxed into indolence, and became as pert and obstreperous as ever. Mrs. Mason saw that the reign of anarchy was fast approaching, and that her presence was considered by all the family a restraint: she, therefore, determined to come to an explanation on the subject, and as soon as possible to change her quarters.

Accordingly, she took the first opportunity of speaking to Robert and his mother; and, after reminding them, that the term agreed on between her and the late farmer, as a trial of her plan, had nearly expired, she informed them, that she thought it best for both parties, that her stay should not extend beyond it. Robert looked surprised, and even vexed; but it was the vexation of pride. His mother, though much at a loss in what way to take Mrs. Mason's notice, thought it necessary to speak for both; but she did not speak much to the purpose. Jealous of Mrs. Mason's superior sense, and conscious of the obligations she owned to her unwearied benevolence, she felt her presence as a burthen; but, not being able to trace the cause of this feeling to its real source, which was no other than her own ignorance and pride, she durst not, even to herself, own that she disliked her.

"I'm sure," said she,—"I houp—I'm sure—for my part—I say, I'm sure—that, as far as I ken, we hae done a' in our power to mak ye comfortable; but, to be sure, I aye thought it was nae place for you. Our ways were a' sae different, though I'm sure ye hae been very kind. I'm sure we're a' sensible o' that; but young folk dinna like to be contradickit: they're no aye sa wise as ane wad wish them; but they're just neeber-like. I'm sure if it's ony thing they hae said that gars ye think o' leaven' us, I canna help it; but I houp ye'll no blame me; for I'm sure Robby kens how often I hae said, that they ought a' to be civil to you."—"What need ye be clashin' sae muckle about it," cried Robert, interrupting her; "we did weel eneugh before she cam, and we'll do weel eneugh when she's gane." So saying, he went away, banging the door after him with even more than usual violence.

Mrs. Mason took no notice of his behaviour; but, unwilling to continue a conversation so little agreeable, she went to her own room, which she had for the last ten days seldom quitted but at the hour of meals. Disappointed in the hope of finding a home in the house of her kinswoman, and mortified by the seeming neglect of the family at Gowan-brae, none of whom had paid her a visit for several weeks past, her spirits were inclined to sadness; but she would not give way to the depression. Recollecting how mercifully all the events of her life had hitherto been ordered, she chased away despondency by trust in God; and, resolving to act to the best of her judgment, fearlessly left the consequences to his disposal. After some consideration, she resolved to apply to William Morrison and his wife, to take her as a lodger. They were poor; and, therefore, the small sum she could afford to pay, might to them be particularly useful. They were humble; and, therefore, would not refuse to be instructed in matters which they had never before had any opportunity to learn. She might then do good to them and to their children; and, where she could do most good, there did Mrs. Mason think it would be most for her happiness to go. No sooner did she give a hint of her intention to Morrison and his wife, than she perceived that she had judged truly in imagining that her offer would be received with joy. But while they were eagerly expressing their grateful sense of Mrs. Mason's kindness, in giving their house a preference, the sudden recollection of an invincible obstacle seemed at the same moment to have occurred to both. They looked at each other for advice—stopped—hesitated—and seemed so embarrassed, that Mrs. Mason could not avoid observing their dismay.

"What makes you hesitate?" said she. "I am afraid you think seven shillings a-week too little for my board and lodging; but you know I am to find my own wheaten bread, and my own tea, and"——"O madam, you are o'er generous," cried Peggy, interrupting her; "you gie o'er muckle by a great deal; but still I fear that in winter we may not be able to mak things comfortable to you. Were it in simmer, we should do weel eneugh."—"Then why not in winter?" said Mrs. Mason: "I shall advance money to buy coals, if that be all."—"Don't speak of it, Peggy," said William, gently pulling his

wife's sleeve: "though it be winter, we shall do weel eneugh, there's nae fear."—"Na, na, gudeman," returned Peggy, "you're no sae strong yet, as to be able to sleep without a bed through the winter, in this cauld house: it manna be."—"Without a bed!" cried Mrs. Mason; "why should he be without a bed?"—"Why, madam," said William, "as my wife has let the cat out o' the bag, as the saying is, it's as weel to tell you the truth: we have not a bed in the house but ane, and that was bought for us by gude Mr. Stewart of Gowan-brae, at the time that a' our furniture was rouped aff frae our house, at ****."—"Had we been now as we were then," cried Peggy, "how comfortable should we have made Mrs. Mason! She should have had no more to do but just to speak her wishes."—"I don't fear being comfortable enough as it is," said Mrs. Mason; "but what is become of the bed I slept in for so many weeks, and which you so kindly offered for my accommodation, during all the time of Mrs. MacClarty's illness?"—"Oh! the want of a bed was nothing then," returned Peggy: "the weather was warm, and some weel-laid straw did us vastly weel. For my own part, I could put up with it all the year through; but my gudeman has been so weakly since he had the rheumatism, that I wad be feared for his being the waur o't."—"And did you really put yourselves to such a shift, in order to oblige me?" said Mrs. Mason. "What kindness! what delicacy in concealing the extent of the obligation! It grieves me to learn, that hearts so warm should have experienced misfortune: and, by the hint you gave of selling off your furniture on leaving ***, I fear your circumstances have not been so prosperous as I heartily wish them."—"Since my misfortunes have been in some measure brought on by my own indiscretion, I ought not," said William, "to complain."—"Indeed, madam, he does himsel' wrang," cried Peggy: "he never was guilty o' ony indiscretion in his days; but just only trusted o'er far to the honesty o' a fause-hearted loon, that cheated mony a man that kent mair o' business than he did. It was nae fau't o' William's, that the man was a rogue; yet he blames himsel' in a way that vexes me to hear him."—"I do blame myself," said William; "for, had I been contented to go on with my business, as my father did before me, on a scale within

my means, my profits, though small, would have been certain. But I wished to raise my wife and bairns above their station; and God, who saw the pride of my heart has punished me."—"If you only risked your own," said Mrs. Mason, "your ambition was blameless, and your exertions laudable."—"Alas! madam," returned William, "no man that enters into what they call *speculations* in business, can say that he risks only his own: he risks the money of his friends, and of his neighbours, and of all who, from confidence in his honesty, give him trust or credit. Grant that neither friend nor neighbour had suffered—and I hope to God, that, in the end, none will suffer a farthing's loss by me—yet how can I answer to my conscience, for the ruin I have brought upon my wife and children? Nay, Peggy, you must not hinder me to speak. You ken that, had your honest father seen what has happened, it would ha' brought his grey hairs wi' sorrow to the grave. He told me, that he gi'ed ye to me wi' better will than to a richer man, because he kent that I loved ye weel, and wou'd aye be kind to ye; and that the siller he had gathered wi' meikle care and toil, I wou'd na lightly spend upon my pleasure. Oh! I canna bear to think on't! When I look round these bare wa's, and see what I have reduced you to, I think mysel' little better than a villain."

Peggy, hastily brushing away a falling tear, held out her hand to her husband, saying, with a smile, "Ye maun be an unco sort o' villain, William; for I would rather beg my bread wi' you through the warld, than be the greatest lady in the land. But what will Mrs. Mason think of us?"—"I think," said Mrs. Mason, "that you are a worthy couple, and that you deserve to be happy; and will be happy, too, in the end: not the less so, perhaps, for having known misfortune."—"O that you could gar my gudeman think sae!" cried Peggy. "I'm aye telling him, that, if he wad na tint heart, we hae tint naething. We are but young; we hae promisin' bairns, gude health, and the warld for the winning: what should we desire mair? Could we but contrive to mak the house fit to receive you, I should hae nae fears for the future. You wou'd bring a blessing with you; I'm sure you wou'd."

Mrs. Mason obviated every difficulty, by saying that

she meant to furnish her own apartment; and, after a little further conversation, in which every thing was arranged to mutual satisfaction, she set out on her return to the farm, animated by the hope of having it in her power to dispense a degree of happiness to her fellow-creatures. As she slowly proceeded homeward, an elderly man, mounted on a good horse, prepared for carrying double, passed her on the road; and, having stopped a minute at Mrs. MacClarty's door, turned again to meet her. On coming up, he said he was sent by Mr. Stewart of Gowan-brae, with his and Miss Mary's compliments, to beg that she would do them the favour of going there to dinner, and that they should send her back in a few days. Observing that Mrs. Mason hesitated concerning what answer she should give, the faithful old servant proceeded to enforce the message, by telling her, that he was sure it would do them good to see her; "For I am far mista'en, madam," said he, "if they dinna stand in need o' comfort."—"Has any misfortune befallen the family?" asked Mrs. Mason, anxiously."—"I kenna, madam," returned the servant, "whether it can weel be called a misfortune; for a marriage may be a vexation to ane's friends, that's nae misfortune in the end."—"And Miss Stewart has occasioned this vexation, I suppose," said Mrs. Mason.—"Ye guess right," returned the old man. "She has made a match to please hersel'; and, as she has brewed, sae she maun drink. But my poor master taks it sair to heart; and it is e'en hard eneugh, that the bairn should cross him maist that he ne'er crossed in his life." Mrs. Mason made no reply; but, directing him to the stable to put up his horse for half an hour, said she should then be ready to accompany him. Having informed her cousin, in friendly terms, of the arrangements she had made with the Morrisons, and assured her of the continuance of her kindness and good will, she quickly made what little preparations were necessary for her departure; and was on the road to Gowan-brae, before Mrs. MacClarty had recovered her astonishment.

As Mrs. Mason rode from the door, Robert made his appearance. His mother, on seeing him, burst into a violent flood of tears, and accused him as the cause of her losing her best friend: one who, she said, was a credit to her family, and an honour and a credit to them

all. She reminded him of all that she had done for them in sickness—how she had attended his dying father—what exertions she had made to save his brother's life—what care she had taken of the family—how little trouble she had given, and how generously she had paid for the little trouble she occasioned. "And now," cried she, "she'll be just the same friend to the Morrisons she has been to us! I wadna wonder that they got every farthing she has in the world. Scores o' fine silk goons, and grand petticoats and stockings, and sic a sight o' mutches and laces as wou'd fill twa o' Miss Tweedy's shop! Ay, ay, the Morrisons will get it a', and a' her money forby. They'll no be the fools to part wi' her that we hae been: they're owre cunning for that!"

Robert, who, in his treatment of Mrs. Mason, had had no other end in view than the gratification of his own bad temper, was enraged at this representation of the advantages which his neighbour's family were likely to derive from the event. Far, however, from acknowledging that he had been to blame, he insolently retorted on his mother, and poured on her a torrent of abuse. The poor woman attempted to speak in her own justification; but her voice was drowned in the louder and more vehement accents of her hopeful son. She had then no other resource but tears; and bitterly did she weep. Her tears and lamentations aggravated the stings of conscience in Robert's heart: but, where the passions are habitually uncontrolled, the stings of conscience have no other effect than to increase the irritation. Had Mrs. MacClarty been capable of reasoning, how would her soul have been wrung with remorse, had she then said to herself—*There was a time when this boy's passions might have been subdued; when, with a little care, he might have learned to control them.*

CHAPTER XIV.

A Marriage, and a Wedding.

Mrs. Mason had no sooner entered the gate leading up to Gowan-brae, than her kind friends was at the door ready to receive her. "You are very good," said Mr. Stewart, as he conducted her to the parlour; "you are very good in coming to us after our apparent neglect of

you, in circumstances that called for a double portion of attention; but when you know all that has happened, you will forgive us."—"I do know all, my good sir," returned Mrs. Mason, "your trusty old Donald has told me enough to show me how fully your time has been occupied. I feel for the vexation you have suffered; but it is past, and I trust all may yet go well." Mr. Stewart shook his head. "We had better not speak of it," said he, in a melancholy voice.—"Well, we shall not speak of it then," said Mrs. Mason; "I had rather speak of the boys. When did you hear of them? When are they to have a holiday at Gowan-brae?" Having thus given a turn to the conversation, she endeavoured to keep it up with cheerfulness; and so far succeeded, that a stranger would have thought all the party in excellent spirits.

After dinner, as soon as the servant who attended them had left the room, Mr. Stewart became absent and thoughtful. A pause ensued in the conversation, during which Mary kept her eyes anxiously fixed upon her father. Starting at length from his reverie, he turned to Mrs. Mason, and said, it was now time to give her a full account of all that had taken place, but that he found he must leave the task to Mary. "I have not patience to go over it," said he; "but I wish for your advice, and you must therefore know all. I shall be back by the time Mary has finished the recital, and in the mean time must speak to my labourers."

"My dear father!" said Mary, looking wistfully after him as he left the room—"my dear good father will never be happy again!"—"With such a daughter as you, how can he be unhappy?" said Mrs. Mason. "Your duty and affection will soon make him forget the disappointment he has had in your sister, and perhaps this match of her's may not turn out so ill as he apprehends."—"Oh it cannot turn out well!" said Mary; "how can any match turn out well, that begins as this has done, by wounding the heart of so good, so kind a father!"—"Young women seldom argue in this way now-a-days," returned Mrs. Mason: "love is, in the creed of sentiment, and of plays, and novels, a sufficient excuse for the breach of every duty, both before marriage and after it."—"I believe I am as capable of a strong attachment as my sister is," said Mary; "but I could not

love a man, without first esteeming him; and I could not esteem the man, who, in pursuance of his own selfish purposes, led me into the guilt of ingratitude, falsehood, and dissimulation."—"But you know, my dear, that in every clandestine correspondence, art and dissimulation are absolutely indispensible," said Mrs. Mason. "And therefore," cried Mary, "I abhor every thing clandestine. But perhaps I think worse of Mr. Mollins than he deserves. You shall read my sister's letters, and judge for yourself."—"I shall read them afterwards," said Mrs. Mason; "but wish you, in the mean time, to give me some account of what has happened, that I may be prepared to speak upon it with your father. Where did your sister meet with Captain Mollins? Who is he? What do you know of his character, or what did she know of it? It is of those particulars that I long to be informed."—"It is," replied Mary, "in her intimacy with Mrs. Flinders, that all our vexations have originated. Yet Mrs. Flinders meant no harm to Bell. She is a vain showy woman, and liked to have a young person of Bell's appearance in her train; for you know that my sister has naturally a genteel air, and such a taste in dress as sets it off to the best advantage. She was much admired by all the gentlemen who visited at Mount Flinders; but, I know not how it was, but no one endeavoured to keep up the acquaintance, except officers, and students from Edinburgh, and such sort of people, who were in the country only by chance. Still every one spoke of the great advantage and happiness of her being honoured with the friendship of so fine a lady as Mrs. Flinders; for, excepting my father, I do not know a person in the country, that makes such a distinction between being *genteel* and being *respectable*, as would lead them to decline for their children an introduction to whatever was beyond their station. I confess, I thought my father's objections the effects of prejudice; and entertained a hope, that Bell would make a conquest of some man of fortune. With this view, I rejoiced in the prospect of her being seen to such advantage at the races. I did not know that Captain Mollins was to be of the party; for, though he was much at Mount Flinders, his acquaintance with the family was so merely accidental, that it did not warrant his being treated as an intimate.

"You will find, by my sister's letters, how much she was intoxicated by the gay and brilliant scene to which she was introduced at Edinburgh. The attention she met with was indeed sufficient to turn a wiser head; for she danced at the balls with lords and baronets, and was constantly in the parties of a fine lady, a Mrs. Spurton, whose equipage was described in the newspapers, as the finest that had ever appeared. As my sister had no one but me, to whom she could communicate the overflowings of her heart, she gave me a full description of the events of each successive day; and from the delight with which she dwelt on the compliments paid to her beauty by men of a superior rank, I had no suspicion of Mollins being all the time a favourite lover. Nor do I believe he would have proved so at the last, had any of the lords she danced with stepped forward as declared admirers. But, alas! they one by one took leave; and, in ten days after the last of the races, their own party was the only one that remained in Edinburgh. It was then that Bell, for the first time, communicated to me an account of the embarrassment in which she had involved herself, by contracting debts for articles of dress, which, she said, it was absolutely impossible to do without; and which, by Mrs. Flinders' advice, she had taken from the most fashionable milliner and mantua-maker in town. Mrs. Flinders, indeed, told her, that genteel people never paid in ready money, and that many young ladies never paid their bills at all, or entertained a thought of paying them, till they were married; but Bell's early prejudices upon this subject had been so strongly impressed, that she could not easily reconcile herself to this new doctrine. Her pride was mortified at being obliged to implore the forbearance of the tradespeople, at whose expense her vanity had been fed; but the dread of exposing to her father the extent of her extravagance, compelled her to submit to the mortification. Her gay friend laughed at her scruples; and, reminding her of the independent fortune of which she was to come into possession at her marriage, advised her by all means to hasten the period of her emancipation. The independent fortune to which Mrs. Flinders alluded, and which she always presented as very considerable, is in fact no more than fifteen hundred pounds. I always considered the exaggerated reports

which Mrs. Flinders spreads of it, as ill-judged kindness; but my sister viewed it in a different light, and was evidently pleased with the fiction, from which she derived a momentary addition to her consequence. How far Mr. Mollins was deceived by these representations, I know not; but his attentions became now more assiduous than ever. This you will perceive, from the hints incidentally scattered through these letters; but nothing they contain would lead one to suspect, that they had then formed any serious engagement. I was the less suspicious of this, because I was persuaded that Bell would be too proud of having made a conquest of a man of rank and fortune, to conceal a circumstance so flattering. At length, in a few hasty lines, written to inform me that she was next day to set off on a jaunt to the Highlands with the Spurtons, Flinders's, and Mr. Mollins, she so far let me into the secret, as to say, that she approached the crisis of her fate, and that she would soon be either the most miserable, or the happiest of human beings.

"I could not conceal this circumstance from my father, who was far from partaking of the sanguine hopes I entertained of the result. He did not doubt that Mollins was a man of fortune; but he thought the match unsuitable, and declared, that he had never seen any unions so productive of happiness, as those that were cemented by a correspondence in circumstances and views, not only between the parties themselves, but extended to their friends and connections. While we were still debating this point, as we sat at breakfast the following morning, my father received a letter, which he read with such marks of agitation and dismay, as quite appalled me. He threw it to me when he had finished; and, hiding his face with both his hands, burst into tears. I eagerly looked at the signature, but the name was unknown to me. The contents briefly stated, that respect for my father's character induced the writer to inform him, that his daughter was on the brink of ruin; that, by the vain and foolish pair, under whose protection he had unfortunately placed her, she had been introduced to society the most contemptible,—a gambler of the name of Spurton, and his wife, the kept-mistress of a man of quality; and that these worthless people had betrayed her to a needy adventurer, to whom even her small for-

tune was a consideration sufficient to tempt him to the darkest deed of villany,—that of sacrificing a young woman's happiness, and a worthy father's peace.

"On reading this letter," continued Mary, "I boldly pronounced it the work of an incendiary, and entreated my father to be comforted, as I could prove it to be, at least, partly false. That the Spurtons are persons of irreproachable character, I can have no doubt, said I. How else could they get into the society of people of rank and fortune? Were he a gambler, and she a woman of doubtful reputation, do you think that ladies and gentlemen of undoubted character would have gone to their balls, or been partakers of their splendid festivals? Yet that they did so, I can prove; for at one of those balls Mr. Spurton introduced a lord to my sister, and called him his particular friend! This, of itself, is conclusive testimony in their favour. I then endeavoured to persuade him, that all the information given concerning Mr. Mollins was equally false and malicious; and that, though he might be vain and extravagant, and have a thousand faults, he was doubtless a man of fortune, and well received by the world. 'But may he not be the villain to seduce my daughter's affections, and bring her to ruin and disgrace?' said my father. Of that, I replied, I had no apprehensions: I too well knew my sister, to fear that her affections would ever be seduced by love. On the contrary, I was convinced that the man who could most certainly gratify her ambition, would still have in her heart the decided preference.

"By these arguments, I in some degree tranquillized my father's mind; but his anxiety to prevent my sister from taking any irretrievable step, induced him to set off for Edinburgh without delay. Learning, on his arrival there, that the Flinders had set out with the intention of going by Perth to Blair in Athole, he took the same route. At every inn on the road, he received such intelligence as left no room to doubt that he should speedily overtake them; but by the time he reached Perth, he was too much fatigued to pursue the journey on horseback. He therefore was obliged to order a chaise; and, as soon as it could be got ready, proceeded by Dunkeld to Blair, and from Blair onward all the way to Inverness. There, at the door of the head inn, he saw the

three carriages, whose route he had so diligently traced; but what was his disappointment on finding that they were filled with straugers!

"The strangers were not destitute of humanity; and, perceiving how deeply he was chagrined, endeavoured to soothe and tranquillize his spirits. In this they were kinder than his own child, whom, soon after he entered Perth, on his return, he saw talking from the window of the inn, to a gentleman who stood in the street below. As the chaise drew up, she caught the glance of her father's eye, and retreated, uttering a screaming exclamation; Mollins, to whom she had been talking, running at the same time into the house. You may imagine how my father was agitated. He involuntarily pursued his way up stairs to the room where Bell was. As he entered, she threw herself into a chair by the window, and either fainted, or pretended to faint. 'In the name of goodness! what is the meaning of all this?' said my father, addressing himself to Mrs. Flinders, who was holding her smelling-bottle to my sister, who was supported by Captain Mollins. 'Why, Miss Stewart,' cried Mrs. Flinders, 'what can be the matter with you? It is only your father! Bless me, poor dear! what weak nerves you have! Pray, sir, speak to her, tell her you are not angry. Indeed, miss, your papa is not displeased with you. Your papa is'——'She best knows whether I have cause to be displeased with her,' said my father, gravely. My sister, opening her eyes, looked expressively at Mollins, who seemed in great confusion, and as if undetermined what to do. At length, holding up Bell's hand, which was folded in his, and turning towards my father, he stammered out, 'You see, sir, you perceive, sir, this lady, sir, this lady is my wife.'—'And who are you, sir?' cried my father, indignantly. 'I, I, I, sir, am a gentleman,' returned Mollins. 'O yes, sir,' cried Mrs. Flinders, 'we all know that Captain Mollins is quite a gentleman; a man of fortune too. Miss Stewart has had great luck, I assure you; but it was very sly of her to get married, without telling me.'

"My father, without taking any notice of Mrs. Flinders, advanced towards Bell; and, taking her hand in a solemn manner, 'Isabel,' said he, 'infatuated girl that you are! listen to me, I conjure you. By the laws of this

country, you have it now in your power, by acknowledging a marriage with this man, to fix yourself upon him as his wife. But think, I beseech you, before you ratify the sentence of your own misery. For what but misery can be the consequence of a union which substitutes *a falsehood* for the marriage-vow; and which, by the manner of it, proclaims to the world, that the woman had ceased to respect herself?'

"Mollins here began to bluster; but my father silenced him, and proceeded, while Bell wept and sobbed aloud: 'My Isabel, my dear child, have I then been so unkind a father, that you should thus break from my arms, to rush into the arms of—you know not whom? But I mean not to upbraid you; I only mean to tell you, that, however faulty, nay, however guilty, you may have been, your father's arms are still open to receive you, and that peace still waits you in your father's house.'—'Pray, sir,' cried Mrs. Flinders, interrupting him, 'pray think of your daughter's character: after Mollins's declaration, it would be ruined, absolutely ruined!'—'And will such a marriage as this wipe out the stain?' returned my father. 'Is it not saying to the world, that, after having sacrificed delicacy and modesty at the shrine of folly, she stooped to solder her reputation by a falsehood? No, no: if she is thus sunk, thus degraded, let her by humility and penitence purify her own heart, and mine shall be open to receive her. Come, my child, my Isabel, come to that home where no upbraidings'——'Sir,' interrupted Mollins, to whom Mrs. Flinders had been all this time making signals to speak, 'sir, I claim this lady as my wife. Heaven and earth shall not separate us; for am not I her husband? Say, my love, my dearest, fairest creature, are you not mine in the eye of heaven?'—'Speak at once,' cried my father: 'are you that man's wife?'—'Yes,' returned Bell, in a voice scarcely audible, and giving her hand to Mollins as she spoke. 'Poor misguided child!' said my father, 'may you never have cause to repent of the rash act, though it sends a knell to your father's heart!'

"He then turned to go, but was surrounded by the Flinders's, and the other people, all calling out that he must not leave them in ill will; but stay, and be reconciled, and dine with them comfortably. Mrs. Flinders

was flippantly urgent; saying, that she was sure it would be very hard if he bore any resentment against her, for that she had treated his daughter like a sister. 'I can have no resentment,' he returned, 'against any of this party; for I never feel resentment where I have not previously felt respect.' So saying, he quitted them, and went to another room.

"In the evening, he received a note from my sister, entreating to be admitted. I shall at some other time give you a particular account of all that passed: it is enough at present to say, that they consented to remain with him at Perth until they could be regularly married, which they were on the following Monday; after which, they came all together to Edinburgh, where my father had scarcely arrived, before he was seized with what we here call a rose fever; a disorder to which he has been often subject. I set off for Edinburgh immediately on hearing of his illness, and found him much depressed in spirits, but not, the physician assured me, in any danger. My father told me, that Mr. Mollins had been very attentive to him; and that, from all he had seen, he thought him a good-natured, vain, silly fellow. I was glad to find him thus far reconciled; and said all in my power to persuade him, that all might yet turn out better than he expected. He assured me, that he was as willing to hope as I was, but that he could as yet find nothing to rest his hopes upon. 'As yet,' said he, 'I neither know what, nor who, he is: but as he never, upon any occasion, gives a direct and explicit answer to any question, I am at a loss to determine whether the ambiguity of his expressions arises from a confused intellect, or from a desire of concealment. The behaviour of your sister, too, gives me great uneasiness. She keeps aloof from me, as if I were her enemy. Alas! how little have I deserved this of her!'

"The first time I was alone with my sister," continued Mary, "I endeavoured to expostulate with her on the impropriety of keeping at such a distance from her father, and treating him with such reserve: but she immediately flew into a passion, and said that her father had used both her and Mr. Mollins very ill; and that, if Mr. Mollins had taken her advice, he would never have spoken to him again, after the vile aspersions he had thrown

upon his character, by seeming to doubt whether he was a gentleman. Mr. Mollins, she said, despised such base insinuations; and, as his friend Lord Dashmore justly observed, he knew too much of the world to be surprised at the vulgar notions of those who knew nothing of life or manners. For her share, she expected to meet with a great deal of envy and ill nature, and she saw she should not be disappointed.—My dear sister, how thoughtlessly you speak! returned I. Were you married to the greatest lord in Christendom, I should not envy your good luck. But is it not natural, that your father should wish to know the real circumstances of your husband? and does it not seem strange, that either of you should wish to conceal them from him? 'Mr. Mollins has a right to act just as he pleases,' cried my sister. 'I hope no one will dispute that! But, I can tell you, he has not so little spirit as to submit to be questioned. He despises such meanness. No wonder, living, as he has done all his life, in the first of company.'

"A great deal more passed, to as little purpose; my sister getting more and more angry as she spoke. We were interrupted by Mr. Mollins, who entered, holding two open letters in his hand, which he presented to my sister with a careless air, though vexation was visibly painted on his countenance. 'You must give them to your father, my love,' said he, forcing a smile; 'for you know these are his business, not mine.'—'Ah! dear Mollins,' cried Bell, looking at the contents of the letters, 'you know not how you would oblige me by settling these trifles. I will rather want the diamond ear-rings, indeed I will. I will rather do any thing than speak to my father now, he is so peevish and cross.'—'But, I tell you, I can't; upon my faith, my love, I can't,' returned Mollins: 'my steward has run off, and I know not when I may get a remittance. I would not tell you before, for vexing you, though it is of very little consequence; for I shall not lose more than a few hundreds by the rascal. But it puts me to present inconveniences. Pray ask the old gentleman for a hundred pounds at once. It will oblige me. Pray do, and these bills shall be paid directly.'—'A hundred pounds!' cried Bell: 'why, my dear Mollins, I imagine you believe my father thinks as little of a hundred pounds as you do.'—'O the old curmudgeon!'

cried Mollins; 'I forgot what a close hunks he is. But your sister here will coax him into it: I know he can refuse her nothing.'

"It were in vain to attempt describing to you what I suffered, when, worn out by their teazing and urgent importunity, I at length was prevailed on to speak to my father on the subject of my sister's unpaid bills. I anticipated all that he would feel upon the occasion; for though I well knew, that no one regards money less for its own sake than he does, I likewise knew, that few consider extravagance in a light so serious as that in which he views it. He considers it as the parent of every vice, and the grave of every virtue; and has therefore laboured to impress a just abhorrence of it upon our minds. You may then imagine what an effect the knowledge of my sister's extravagance produced upon him. It instantly impressed him with an idea of her levity, and want of principle, which it is impossible to eradicate, and from which he forebodes the most shocking consequences. Had she deigned to make proper concessions, she might perhaps have lessened the impression: but she affects to ascribe all he says to the meanest motives; and, in return for all his tender anxiety for her honour and happiness, speaks to him with the haughty air of a person who has been deeply injured. In short, though my father paid all the expenses of their living with him in Edinburgh, and all the debts my sister had contracted, he got no thanks; but seemed rather to have given offence, than to have conferred obligation. I believe I have mentioned, that, by the terms of my grandfather's will, the sum of fifteen hundred pounds was to be paid to her on the day of her marriage. Mr. Mollins seems to to despise this paltry fortune, as scarcely worth his acceptance. Yet, would you believe it, he, on my father's speaking to him on the subject, the day after we returned home, absolutely refused to permit two-thirds of this to remain in trustees' hands, for the benefit of my sister; and insists on having the whole paid down to him, on the terms of the will! This circumstance—but here comes my father, who will tell you all about it himself."

"Well, Mrs. Mason, Mary has by this time given you a full account of our vexation," said Mr. Stewart. "It

hay be explained in a few words. My daughter will be ne of the many victims to the epidemical frenzy, which as of late spread through our country, the desire of hining in a sphere above our own. People who labour nder this disease, mistake show for splendour, and splenour for happiness; and, while their pulses throb with he fever of vanity, think no sacrifice too great for proouring a momentary gratification to its insatiable thirst. From the palace to the cottage, the fever rages with equal orce; sweeping before it every worthy feeling, and every olid virtue. O my friend! could we but look into the nterior of all the families in the kingdom, what scenes of domestic misery would present themselves to our iew, all originating in this accursed passion for gentility!"

"I believe, indeed," said Mrs. Mason, "that, with regard to my own sex at least, the love of dress, and desire of admiration, have ruined hundreds, for one that has been brought to misery through the strength of other passions."—"True," replied Mr. Stewart; "but it is not to that silly vanity alone that I allude: it is to that still sillier ambition of figuring in a higher station, which destroys all notions of right and wrong, rendering vice and folly, if gilded by fashion, the objects of preference, nay, of high and first regard. What could my daughter Bell have thought of such a silly fellow as Mollins, if he had been the son of a neighbouring farmer?"—"Indeed, my good sir," returned Mrs. Mason, "there is no accounting for the fancies of young people—one sees such marriages. So"——

"Believe me," interrupted Mr. Stewart, "such matches may always be accounted for. No unsuitable marriage ever yet took place but where there was some wrong bias in the mind, some disease lurking in the imagination, which inflamed the vanity in that very way which the marriage promised to gratify. Had Bell's passion for wealth been born of avarice, she would have despised this Mollins; but a man who lived among lords and ladies, was in her eyes irresistible. It is this propensity that will be her ruin. Yes, my good friend, I see it plainly. Their vanity is greater than their fortunes can support. Mollins acknowledges that he is already embarrassed. He will soon be more so: they will live be-

yond their income, in order to keep up with the gay and giddy fools, whose steps they follow. Bell's beauty, her levity, her want of fixed and solid principle;—O Mrs. Mason, what a shocking view does it present! I see her ruin before me. Night and day it haunts my imagination. A foreboding voice incessantly whispers, that, if she ever returns to her father's house, she will return dishonoured and disgraced. May I ere then be laid beside her angel-mother in the silent grave!"

After a considerable pause, Mrs. Mason addressed herself to the afflicted father. She could not in conscience say, that his fears were groundless; but she endeavoured to chequer them with hope, assuring him, that the time would come when his daughter would learn to prize the blessings of domestic happiness, and that the good principles she had imbibed in youth, would prevent her from straying far from the path of duty. At Mr. Stewart's request, she promised to remain at Gowan-brae, until Mr. and Mrs. Mollins returned from Mount Flinders, and then to take an opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Mollins on the subject of her future plans.

CHAPTER XV.

An unexpected Meeting between old Acquaintances.

Mrs. Mason had spent a full week at Gowan-brae, before the quiet of the well-ordered family was interrupted by the return of the new-married pair. They at length came, accompanied by Mr. Flinders, who, with Mr. Mollins, went immediately into Mr. Stewart's business room, Bell meantime going into the parlour. On seeing Mrs. Mason, she drew herself up haughtily, with a look of surprise; and, in return to her salutation, dropped a very distant curtsey. The good woman perfectly understood the meaning of her behaviour; but, not at all discomposed by it, placidly resumed her work.

"Well," said Mary, "I suppose your time has been pleasantly spent at Mount Flinders, as you have stayed so much longer than you inteuded?"—"One's time is always spent pleasantly there," returned Bell. "How can it be otherwise with people who always keep company with people of fashion like themselves? It is some advantage, indeed, to have such neighbours! so gay, and

o agreeable! and we have been so happy! Do you now we never sat down to dinner till six o'clock, nor ave gone to bed till past three in the morning?"—Then," said Mary, smiling, "you dined at the same our that our ploughmen dine all the winter: and as to oing to bed at three in the morning, the shepherd has ept still genteeler hours than you; for I believe, that uring the last week he has never gone to bed till day-reak."—"I wonder how you can talk of such vulgar retches," returned Mrs. Mollins. "If you would but o yourself justice, you might soon rise out of the low phere in which you have been buried. You ought now o aspire to something superior. I am sure, I shall al-ways be happy to assist you; and, with Mr. Mollins's onnections, you may get into the genteelest society when ou please. Do you know that Lord Dashmore has been wo days at Mount Flinders, and paid Mr. Mollins and ne such attention! He has invited us to spend our Christ-nas at Dashmore Lodge. Won't it be charming! But is Lordship has quite a friendship for Mr. Mollins. They played together at billiards all the morning; and Mr. Harry Spend assured me, that Mr. Mollins was by far the most graceful player of the two: but every one observes what a fine figure Mr. Mollins has."—"But, my dear Bell, did not Mr. Mollins tell my father, that business called him immediately to England? how is it, then, that he contrives to spend his Christmas at Dash-more Lodge?"—"How little you know of genteel life!" cried Mrs. Mollins. "Do you think that men of fashion tie themselves down to rules of going here or there to a day, as my father does? Mr. Mollins ought, to be sure, to visit his estate in Dorsetshire this winter; but a few weeks' delay can be of no consequence. And, besides, were he to go there at Christmas time, he must entertain all his neighbours, which, he says, would be a great bore; so he thinks it better to put it off till they have gone up to Parliament, and then he will leave me at Bath, and take a dash down by himself. But I hear the gentle-men coming in; pray, don't say that I mentioned"—

At that moment, the door opened; and Mr. Stewart entered, saying, with a disturbed air, that his daughter's presence was necessary; and that he wished Mrs. Mason and Mary to accompany her to his writing chamber.

While he spoke, Mr. Flinders softly came up, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, "I wish, Mr. Stewart," said he, "I really wish I could persuade you to consent with cheerfulness. You cannot fail to offend Mr. Mollins, by betraying such a want of confidence in his honour. Has he not promised, to make a settlement on Mrs. Mollins suitable to his fortune?"—"Where is his fortune?" cried Mr. Stewart, peevishly; "he may carry it all on his back, for aught I know to the contrary."—"I do assure you, you wrong my friend Mollins greatly," replied Mr. Flinders; "Mr. Spurton told me, he had hunted over his estate in Dorsetshire many times, and that his father kept the best pack of hounds in the country. Do you think, my dear sir, that if I had not known him to be a man of fortune"—— "Pho!" said Mr. Stewart, "if he is a man of fortune, why should he scruple to secure to my daughter this small sum?"—"Because you see, my dear sir, that to settle formally such a trifling matter, would be, in his opinion, a sort of disgrace; and besides, I dare say, he wants the money."—"I dare say he does," said Mr. Stewart, drily, "and he must have it too. But I shall take all here witness to my intentions." Mr. Stewart then advanced to Mrs. Mason to give her his arm; while Mr. Flinders, Mrs. Mollins, and Mary, stepped before them into the other room.

Mollins—who, as they entered, was sitting at the table leaning his head upon his hand, apparently buried in thought—roused himself on seeing them, and was about to speak with his usual flippancy, when, perceiving Mrs. Mason, he started, and momentarily changed colour, his complexion quickly varying from the pale hue of ashes to the deepest crimson. Mrs. Mollins, observing her husband's confusion, went up, and whispered to him, "I don't wonder at your being surprised, my dear, to find such people here; but don't appear to mind it; my father has such odd notions!"—"Does she know me?" cried Mollins, eagerly; "has she told you that she knows me?"—"No," said Mrs. Mason, who overheard the question, "Mrs. Mollins does not know that I have ever had the honour of seeing you; perhaps if she had—But you and I shall talk of that another time, Mr. Mollins. We are here, I understand, just now upon business. I hope I may tell Mr. Stewart, that you are willing to settle his

daughter's fortune in any way he pleases."—"You are very good, Mrs. Mason," cried Mollins, in great confusion; "you were always good. I—I shall be guided by you entirely—only—only promise—you know what I mean—you"——"I do know what you mean," said Mrs. Mason, "and I shall promise to be your friend, if I find that you deserve it." Then, without taking any notice of the exclamations of surprise and astonishment that were bursting from every tongue, she invited Mr. Mollins to a private conference in the adjoining room. In about half an hour, they returned; and Mr. Mollins, addressing himself to Mr. Stewart, said, that as Mrs. Mason had convinced him of the propriety of signing the papers he had showed him, he was now willing to do it immediately. The papers were signed, and witnessed in solemn silence, Mr. Flinders biting his lip all the while, not knowing what to make of the sudden turn which the appearance of Mrs. Mason had given to the business. He began to entertain some unfavourable suspicions with regard to Mollins; but recollecting the obligations he had been under to him for introducing him to two lords, and a sporting baronet at the cockpit, gratitude sealed his lips, and he took leave, without any apparent diminution of regard.

"I am glad that he is gone," cried Mary; "we may now speak freely, and I am sure we all long to know how you and Mr. Mollins come to be so well acquainted. My sister won't say so, but I see she is dying to hear."—"I want to hear nothing about it," cried Mrs. Mollins; "but I know you always take a pleasure in mortifying me; I know you do."—"Bell," said Mr. Stewart, "if Mr. Mollins has no acquaintances of whom he need be more ashamed, I congratulate you. I rejoice at least that I shall now have an opportunity of knowing who and what your husband is; for I confess that"——"And what should you know of any one at Gowanbrae?" cried Mrs. Mollins. "I am sure, if it was not for seeing the Court Calendar at Mount Flinders, I should not have known the names of above twenty people in my life. But you have such a hatred to strangers, and such a prejudice against any one that is in the least genteel, that I believe you would rather have seen me married a shoemaker than to a gentleman."—"You had

better not speak against shoemakers, my dear," said Mrs. Mason, "as you happen to be nearly connected with several of them. I have on my feet, at the present moment, a pair of shoes made by your father-in-law; and though I believe he never was out of his native village, he is a very honest man."—"Mr. Mollins's father a shoemaker!" cried Bell; "I wonder what you will say next. I declare I am quite diverted." She then burst into an hysterical laugh, which ended in a passionate flood of tears. Poor Mary endeavoured to soothe the raging storm, but was repelled with indignation; and Mrs. Mason, who better knew how to treat such cases, begged her to desist until the tempest had spent itself. She then drew near, and in a gentle voice said, "Believe me, I should hate myself, Mrs. Mollins, if I could take pleasure in distressing you; but I have thought it better that you should know the truth, than expose yourself to ridicule, by speaking of your husband's family, or of his circumstances, in such a tone as that you lately assumed."

Mrs. Mollins, who was now quite exhausted, uttered a deep groan; then, after a few heavy sobs, cried, "If I have been deceived, I shall never see him again. No, I shall never live with him. I shall die sooner—Oh!"—then covering her face with her hands, she again wept bitterly. "My dear Bell," said Mr. Stewart, taking her hand affectionately, "you are still my child. Your father's house will be ever open to you. But remember the vows that are upon you. You have bound yourself by ties, that are indissoluble as they are sacred; and though your husband were the lowest, nay even the worst of mankind, your fate is bound in his."—"But her husband is neither the one nor the other," said Mrs. Mason. "He is, as I have told you, the son of an honest tradesman, who lives in a small village in Yorkshire, and"——"And—and—the—the estate in Dorsetshire, how did he come by it?" sobbed Mrs. Mollins.—"He came by it," said Mrs. Mason, "as people who forsake the direct path of truth come by all they boast of, telling one falsehood to support another; a species of lying, which, as it goes under the appellation of quizzing, is often mistaken for wit."—"Scoundrel! villain!" cried Mr. Stewart, vehemently.—"Nay, my good sir, be not so violent," said Mrs.

Mason. "He has been wrong, but he has been led step by step into error; and I really hope his heart is not corrupted. I think it is a proof of it, that he has permitted me to tell all I know concerning him without disguise."

Mr. Stewart beckoning to her to proceed, she thus continued. "When I first saw him, he was about ten years old, and had obtained great praise for managing the horse he rode at our village races. I did not see the race; but I saw the little fellow when he came to my lady for his reward. She liked his appearance, and engaged him for a page; for she had always two that attended in the drawing-room, dressed in coats covered with lace. Jack was a great favourite with all the house. He was indeed a very good-natured boy, but was spoiled among the servants; and as he grew too tall for a page, my lady, when he was about sixteen, got him into one of the offices about court as an under clerk. His salary was very small, but he was highly delighted with the promotion; and might have gone on very well, had he not been led to gambling in the lottery. He had at one time, as we were told, pawned all his clothes, and was on the very brink of desperation, when fortune turned, and he got a prize of about 1500 pounds. The sum appeared to him immense: he gave up his employment, and, purchasing a commission in a newly-raised regiment, commenced his career as a gentleman, and man of fashion. One good trait still remained; he did not forget his friends in this change of circumstances, but sent fifty pounds to his old father, and presents to his mother and sisters, who still speak of him as the best-hearted creature in the world."—"Then there is some good in him!" cried Mr. Stewart. "O yes, there must be some good in him. Come, he is not so bad as I thought, after all."—"Indeed, there is good in him," said Mrs. Mason. "He has only been led astray by vanity, and the foolish wish of being thought a great man. Had he been contented to rest upon his character for respectability, he would never have been otherwise than respectable; but his ambition to be genteel led him into the society of the showy and the dissipated, among whom he spent all his money; and when his regiment was disbanded, he found himself so much in debt, that he was obliged to leave England; and, having met with the Flinders' at Bath, came down to this

country, where he hoped to retrieve his fortune by a lucky marriage. In order to support the appearance of a gentleman, he borrowed money on his half-pay; and having once been asked, whether he belonged to the Mollins's of Mollins Hall, in Dorsetshire, he resolved to acknowledge the relationship, and accordingly gave himself out for the head of the family. You now know as much as I do, excepting with respect to a snare into which he was led by a gambler of the name of Spurton, whom he met at Edinburgh, and which might have led to fatal consequences. But from these he is now happily rescued. I must, however, in justice to poor Jack, say a few words more. He sincerely loves your daughter; and, as he was in quest of a fortune far greater than hers, he would never have married her, but from motives of affection."

"They are, in every respect, upon a footing," cried Mr. Stewart: "if his father is an honest tradesman, what is her father but an honest farmer? Believe me, I am quite relieved. You have taken a weight off my heart, Mrs. Mason, by your account. If he has sense to apply to business, I shall put him in the way of doing it, and all may yet be well. Go, Mary, and bring him to us. I believe the poor fellow is ashamed to show his face."

Mary soon returned, leading in her brother-in-law, who wore, indeed, a very mortified aspect; and, though much cheered by the reception given him by Mr. Stewart, he seemed evidently afraid to approach his wife. Some days elapsed before she could be brought into spirits; but the absolute annihilation of all her vain hopes and aspiring views, had already produced a salutary effect upon her temper.

Of all the plans of life that were suggested to Mollins, that which seemed most agreeable to his wishes was an employment in the West Indies, which he knew it was at present in the power of Mr. Flinders to procure for him. But an application to Mr. Flinders would necessarily be productive of explanations so mortifying, that it was vehemently opposed by Mrs. Mollins, who said she would rather starve, than be so looked down on by Mrs. Flinders, who now respected her, because she thought she was married to a man of fortune. "And if Mrs. Flinders respects her friends only on account of their fortunes, I would not give that pinch of snuff for her

respect," cried Mr. Stewart.—"O it is not fortune that Mrs. Flinders minds," said Mrs. Mollins; "it is only being genteel and stylish—and—and all that."—"And what right has Mrs. Flinders to be genteel and stylish, and all that, exeept from fortune?" returned Mr. Stewart. "Who are those Flinders'? Are they not the grandchildren of old Winkie Flinders, that kept the little publie-house at the end of the green loan? and was not the father of this Flinders transported for hen-stealing? and did he not marry a planter's widow, and defraud her ehildren, who, for aught I know, are now begging their bread; while this Flinders, and his cousin, who was a broken milliner, are revelling in the fortune that should by right have been theirs?"—"O dear sir, you have such a memory for these things! But you know that nobody minds them but yourself; and that all the great people court Mr. and Mrs. Flinders, both in town and country."—"Yes, yes," said Mr. Stewart; "the vulgar of all ranks are mean and selfish. But don't mistake me, Bell: I do not despise the Flinders' on account of their want of birth, but on aeeount of their paltry attempts at concealing the meanness of their origin by parade and ostentation."

After some further discussion, the application to Mr. Flinders was agreed on; but it failed of the expected suceess; so that poor Mollins would still have remained unprovided for, had it not been for the friendship of his wife's eousin, the honest manufaeturer, whose attentions she had treated with such contempt. By the interest of this worthy man, an employment under Government was obtained for Mollins, on condition that he and his wife should live in retirement.

CHAPTER XVI.

Receipt for making a thorough Servant.—Thoughts on Fanaticism.

Mrs. Mason, having with difficulty prevailed on Mr. Stewart to consent to her departure, took the opportunity of the first fine day to set out on her return to Glenburnie. It was hard frost. But, though the air in the shade was keen and piercing, its keenness was unfelt when in the kindly rays of the soul-enlivening sun. Mrs.

Mason, though she had not the eye of a painter or connoisseur, enjoyed in perfection the pleasures of taste, in as far as they arise from feeling and observation; and, as she considered all the beauties of nature as proofs of the divine beneficence, the contemplation of them always served to increase her confidence in the protection of the Almighty, of whose immediate presence they were to her a sacred pledge. To a person thus disposed, every change of season has some peculiar charm, and every object appears placed in a point of view in which all that is lovely is seen to most advantage.

"Yes," said Mrs. Mason, as she cast her eyes over the dazzling prospect, "yes, all the works of God are good and beautiful; all the designs of Providence must terminate in producing happiness and joy. The piercing cold of winter prepares the earth for the production of its summer fruits; and, when the sorrows of life pierce the heart, is it not for the same benevolent purpose? When they are never felt, how many are the noxious weeds that over-run the soil! Let me, then, be thankful for the wholesome correctives that have been sent in mercy. Neither winter nor poverty are without their days of sunshine, their moments of enjoyment. See that group of children upon the ice! how joyously they laugh, and sport, and scamper, little caring how keen the cold wind may blow, if it bring them the pleasure of a slide." Mrs. Mason soon arrived at Morrison's cottage, where she was received with a cordial welcome. On examining her own apartment, she was delighted to find that every thing was arranged far beyond her expectations; nor could she persuade herself, that her room had not undergone some very material and expensive alteration. This striking improvement was, however, merely the result of a little labour and attention; but so great was the effect thus produced, that though the furniture was not nearly so costly as that at Mrs. MacClarty's, it appeared in all respects superior.

Mrs. Morrison was highly gratified by the approbation bestowed upon her labours; and, pointing to her two little girls, told Mrs. Mason how much they had done to forward the work, and that they were proud to find her pleased with it. Mrs. Mason thanked them; and, presenting each with a ribbon as an encouragement for good

behaviour, assured them, that they would through life find happiness the reward of usefulness. "Alas!" said Mr. Morrison, "they must be obliged to work: poor things! they have nothing else to depend on."—"And on what can they depend so well as on their own exertions?" replied Mrs. Mason; "let them learn to excel in what they do, and look to the blessing of God upon their labours, and they may then pity the idle and the useless."—"If you could but get my poor gudeman to think in that way," said Peggy, "your coming to us would indeed be a blessing to our family."—"Fear not," said Mrs. Mason; "as his health amends, his spirits will return; and, in the good providence of God, he will find some useful opening for his industry. But now I must give some directions to my two little handmaids, whose attendance I shall take week about. I see they are willing, and they will soon be able to do all that I require."—"I'll answer for their being willing," cried their mother, looking fondly at the girls; "but ye winna tak it ill, if they shouldna just fa' at ance into your ways."—"If they are willing," said Mrs. Mason, "they will soon learn to do every thing in the best way possible. For any one may soon become a useful servant, by attending to three simple rules."—"To three rules!" cried Peggy, interrupting her; "that's odd indeed. But my gudeman maun hear this. Come, William, and hear Mrs. Mason tell our lassies a' the duties of a servant."—"I fear the kail will be cauld before she gets through them a'," said William, smiling; "but I am ready to listen to her, though it should."—"Your patience won't be long tried," said Mrs. Mason; "for I have already told your girls, that, in order to make good servants, they have only to attend to three simple rules."—"Well, what are they?" said the husband and wife, speaking both at once. They are," returned Mrs. Mason, "*To do every thing in its proper time; to keep every thing in its proper use; and to put every thing in its proper place.*"—"Well said!" cried William; "these same rules would mak a weel-ordered house! my lassies shall get them by heart, and repeat them ilka morning after they say their prayers."

William kept his word; and Mrs. Mason, finding that she would be supported by the parents, did not despair

of being truly useful to the children, by conveying to them the fruits of her experience. Mrs. Morrison was a stranger to the pride which scorns instruction. She did not refuse to adopt methods that were better than her own, merely because they were new; nor, though she fondly loved her children, did she ever defend their faults. But being early inspired with a desire to please, they did not often stand in need of correction; and stood more in awe of their father's frown, than those who have been nurtured in self-will, stand in awe of a severe beating.

Mrs. Mason had not been many weeks a resident in the family, till the peculiar neatness of William's cottage attracted the notice of the neighbours. The proud sneered at what they called the pride of the broken merchant; the idle wondered how folk could find time for sic useless wark; and the lazy, while they acknowledged that they would like to live in the same comfort, drew in their chairs to the fire, and said, *they couldna be fash'd.* The air of cheerfulness which was diffused around him, had a happy effect upon William's spirits; but the severity of the winter was adverse to the recovery of his health. The rheumatism, which had settled in his left arm, had now rendered it entirely useless, and thus defeated all his schemes of getting into employment. The last sale of his effects had been so productive, that his creditors were paid 17*s.* in the pound; but the remainder of what was due to them lay heavy on his heart; and, notwithstanding his efforts at resignation, the thoughts of what his wife and children must suffer from the pressure of poverty, drew from his bosom many a deep-drawn sigh.

The more Mrs. Mason saw of William, the more deeply did she become interested in his situation; and, as no scheme occurred to her that was likely to improve it, she resolved to consult her good friend the minister, whose mind she knew to be no less active than benevolent. An invitation to dine at the manse was therefore gladly accepted of; and scarcely had she taken her seat, until the subject was introduced, and William's affairs became the topic of conversation. Mr. Gourlay listened, with great attention, to Mrs. Mason's speech; but made no other answer, than by saying, that he should be better able to speak upon the subject after dinner; adding, with a smile, that he never talked well with a hungry stomach.

When the cloth was removed, he said, "Well, madam, now we may, without fear of interruption, enter on the business of poor Morrison, whom I from my heart wish to serve. I have thought of a plan for him, which, if he has no objections to it, will keep him above want. What would you think of his becoming schoolmaster?" —"I should think well of it," replied Mrs. Mason, "if nothing more were required than teaching writing, arithmetic, and reading English."—"Nothing more shall be required of him," replied Mr. Gourlay. "We have suffered enough from the pedantry of a blockhead, who, though he has no more pretensions to being a scholar than my horse, is as proud as he is stupid. Until he came into the office, the school of Glenburnie had always maintained a respectable character; and the instruction which our youth received was, so far as it went, solid and useful. But in the twelve years that it has been kept by Brown, it has, I verily believe, done more harm than good. It could not, indeed, be otherwise; for it was an everlasting scene of riot and confusion."—"I should have thought, sir, that your authority would have been sufficient to introduce better regulations. Is not the parish school in some measure under your control?"—"No," replied Mr. Gourlay; "control is in this country out of the question: nor do I believe that it would answer any good purpose; for who would embroil themselves by opposing the pride and perverseness of an obstinate blockhead, unless when zeal was whetted by personal animosity? and, under such malign influence, control would soon be converted into an engine of oppression."—"But might not your advice, sir,"—— "Advice! Surely, my good madam, you must know too much of the world to imagine that a self-sufficient pedant will ever be advised. No Pope of Rome, in the days of papal power, was ever more jealous of his title to infallibility, than the schoolmaster of Glenburnie. I once, and only once, endeavoured to persuade him how much he would abridge his own labour, and facilitate the improvement of his scholars, by adopting a regular method of teaching, and introducing certain rules into his school: but if I had attempted to take from him his bread, he could not have been more indignant, nor considered himself as more deeply injured. He never forgave me;

and I really believe, that the grudge he entertained against me was the primary motive of his leaving the kirk, and running after some enthusiasts, among whom he has now commenced preacher."—"I have no doubt of it whatever," returned Mrs. Mason; "for, as far as my knowledge extends, I have observed pride to be the ruling principle with all those pretenders to extraordinary sanctity."—"Ah, madam," said Mr. Gourlay, "pride is a powerful adversary! Its dominion is not confined to sect or party; for, alas! those who attack, and those who defend particular points of doctrine, are alike exposed to its influence."—"But is it not proper to expose the errors into which these visionaries betray weak minds?" returned Mrs. Mason.—"Very proper," said Mr. Gourlay, "so that it be done in the spirit of charity. Calmly and wisely to point out the source of bigotry and enthusiasm, were an employment worthy of superior talents; but men of superior talents feel too much contempt for weakness to undertake the task, or, at least, to execute it in such a manner as to answer any good purpose. Men of talents pour upon these enthusiasts the shafts of ridicule, and attack their doctrines with all the severity of censure; but they forget that all enthusiasts glory in persecution. It is in the storm that men most firmly grasp the cloak that wraps them, whatever be its shape. Would we induce them to let go their hold, we must take other methods: we must show them we can approve, as well as censure; and that it is not because we envy the eclat of their superior zeal, or are jealous of their success in making converts, but because we honestly think they have taken an erroneous view of the subjects in question, that we venture to oppose them. Difficult, I confess, it is, to gain access to minds that are imbued with a high opinion of their own superior sanctity; but I am convinced, that much might have been done to stop the progress of fanaticism, by setting forth, in stroug and lively terms, the sin and danger of exalting any one point of the Christian doctrine, so as to make it pre-eminent, to the disparagement of the other Gospel truths, and to the exclusion of the Gospel virtues. We are too rash in accusing such persons of hypocrisy. Hypocrites may in all sects find shelter; but I believe in my conscience, that few of their most zealous friends have been actuated by any

ther principle than honest, though misguided zeal; a zeal, the natural effect of having fixed the attention exclusively on one point, until its importance is exaggerated beyond all bounds. We know, that whatever occupies the imagination will inflame it: but so wisely has the divine Giver of light and life adapted the light of revelation to our present condition, that against this weakness of our nature an ample provision is made, in the equal importance given to all the various truths revealed as objects of faith, and by accepting, as the only test of our sincerity, such a degree of moral purity as it requires our utmost vigilance to preserve. But this bears hard on human pride, and human pride is fruitful in resources. By picking out particular passages, and giving to them such explanation as may afford a basis for peculiar tenets, pride is gratified; and when it can thus form a party, and obtain distinction, the gratification is complete. Whether in religion or in politics, all the individuals who compose a party become, in their own minds, identified with the party they have espoused. Nor, when we preach against them in the same spirit, are we one whit better than they. It is not for the safety of our church establishments, that we ought to sound the alarm, but for the integrity of the whole Gospel truths, which are torn and disfigured by being partially set forth, to the great danger of weak minds, the subversion of sound faith, and the detriment of pure morality."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of one of Mr. Gourlay's parishioners.

CHAPTER XVII

The Duties of a Schoolmaster.—Conclusion.

The day after her visit to the minister, Mrs. Mason took the first opportunity of speaking to Morrison of the scheme which had been suggested. But he had not been trained to the business of teaching, and he feared that it required abilities superior to his. While he expressed his thanks, and intimated his apprehensions, with a simplicity and candour peculiar to his character, his wife, who sympathised more deeply in his gratitude than in his fears, exhorted Mrs. Mason never to mind what her

gudeman said of himself; for that it was just his way always to think lowlier of himself than he need do. "I am sure," continued she, "that not a lord in a' the land writes a more beautiful hand; and as for reading, he may compare wi' the minister himsel'! the kittlest word canna stop him." Observing Mrs. Mason smile, she paused, and then good-humouredly added, "I canna expect every ane to think as highly of my gudeman as I do; but I am sure, that, baith for learning and worth, he's equal to a higher post than schoolmaster o' Glenburnie." "You are perfectly right," cried Mr. Gourlay, who had entered unobserved; "and I believe we are all of the same opinion with regard to your husband's merit. Nay, you need not blush at having praised him, unless indeed you are ashamed at being so unfashionable a wife."—"O sir," returned Peggy, blushing yet more deeply, "we have nothing to do with fashion; but I hope we shall be grateful to God and to our friends for all their kindness, and that you will prevail on William not to put from him such an advantage as this blessed offer." William, fearing that Mr. Gourlay would misinterpret the reluctance hinted at, eagerly declared how joyfully he should accept the employment, did he consider himself fully qualified for discharging its duties. "And it is upon that very circumstance that my hopes of your success are founded," replied Mr. Gourlay. "You are not, I imagine, too proud to be advised?"—"No, indeed, sir, I am not," cried William.—"Then, as you are not wedded to any particular method, you will honestly inquire, and candidly follow, what appears to be the best; nor obstinately refuse to adopt those real improvements that have been suggested by others. By candid inquiry, and vigilant attention, you will soon become qualified for the discharge of an office, the duties of which are, in my opinion, seldom understood. A country schoolmaster, who considers himself hired to give lessons in certain branches of learning, and when he has given these, thinks he has done his duty, knows not what his duty is."—"And what, sir, if I may take the liberty of asking, what, in your opinion, is the nature and extent of the duties incumbent on the schoolmaster who would conscientiously discharge his trust?"—"As a preliminary to the answer of your question," replied the pastor, "let

me ask you what is the end you aim at, in sending your children to school?"—"I send them," returned William, "in order that they may learn to read and write, and cast accounts."—"That is one reason, to be sure," said Mr. Gourlay, "and a good one; but why do you wish them to be instructed in the branches you have mentioned?"—"I wish them to learn to read," returned William, "that their minds may be enlarged by knowledge, and that they may be able to study the word of God; and I have them taught to write and cast accounts, that they may have it in their power to carry on business, if it should be their lot to engage in any."—"That is to say," replied Mr. Gourlay, "that you are anxious to give your children such instruction as may enable them faithfully to discharge their religious and social duties. Your object is laudable; but it is not merely by teaching them to read and write that it is to be accomplished. If their minds are not in some degree opened, they will never use the means thus put into their hands; and if their hearts are not in some degree cultivated, the means of knowledge will lead them rather to evil than to good. Even as to the art of reading, the acquirement of it will be useless, if the teacher has confined his instructions to the mere sounds of words."—"I confess, sir," said William, "I never could find out the reason, why all the children are taught to roar, and sing out what they read, in such an unnatural tone; but as it is the custom, I thought there surely must be some use in it; and, indeed, I know many people, who think it would not be proper to read the Bible without something of the same tone."—"Nothing can be more absurd than such a notion," returned Mr. Gourlay; "for if we sincerely respect the word of God, we ought to do all in our power to render it intelligible to ourselves and others. How else can we expect to profit by the instruction it conveys? If we are once taught at school to connect notions of piety with certain discordant accents, it is ten to one if we ever get so far quit of the impression, as to pay attention to the religious truths that are delivered with a natural and proper accent; while the greatest nonsense and absurdity, if conveyed to our ears in a solemn drawl, will pass for superior sanctity. It thus becomes easy for fools and hypocrites to impose on the credulity of the multitude."—"But, sir," said Mrs. Ma-

son, "it is not by fools and hypocrites alone, that these false tones are made the vehicles of instruction. Of all the excellent sermons given us by the gentlemen who assisted at your preachings, how few were delivered with propriety!"

"I cannot deny the truth of your observations," returned Mr. Gourlay. "It is to be regretted, that those who have early engaged in the study of the learned languages seldom consider the art of reading English an object worthy their attention. They therefore are at little pains to correct the bad method so generally acquired at country schools. With regard to our peasantry, the effects of that bad method are still more unfortunate: it frequently renders their boasted advantages of education useless. This would not be the case, did the schoolmaster consider it his duty to teach his pupils to read with understanding, and carefully to observe whether they know the meaning of the words they utter. This they never can do, if they are not taught to read distinctly, and as nearly as possible in the tone of conversation. Nor is this all: in order to reap instruction from what they read, their minds must be in a state to receive it. Were this attended to by parents, the schoolmaster would have an easy task; but, instead of bestowing this necessary preparation, there seems to be, from the palace to the cottage, a combination among parents of all descriptions, to nurture in the minds of infants all those passions which reason and religion must be applied to subdue. The schoolmaster who lends his endeavours to remedy this evil, renders a more important service to the community, than is in the power of any other public functionary. It should therefore be his first object, to train his pupils to habits of order and subordination, not by means of terror, but by a firmness which is not incompatible with kindness and affection."

"But how," said Morrison, "without punishment, can order and subordination be enforced? and will not punishment beget terror, and terror beget aversion? I should think that a severe schoolmaster never could be beloved, and I fear a lenient one would never be obeyed. This is my great difficulty."—"Did you ever know of a child complain of being punished, when sensible that the punishment was just?" replied Mr. Gourlay. "No:

there is a sense of justice implanted in the human mind, which shows itself even in the first dawn of reason, and would always operate, were it not stifled by the injudicious management of parents, who do not punish according to justice, but according to caprice. Of this, the schoolmaster who follows a well-digested plan, will never be guilty. He will be careful to avoid another common error of parents, who often, by oversight, lead their children to incur the penalty, and then enforce it, when in reality it is they, and not the children, who ought to pay the forfeit. I should pronounce the same sentence on the master, who punished a boy at school for playing, or making noise, if it appeared that he had provided him with no better employment. This is the great fault in all our country schools. The children spend three-fourths of their time in downright idleness; and, when fatigued with the listlessness of inaction, have no other resource, but in making noise, or doing mischief."

"But surely, sir," said William, "the master cannot hear them all say their lessons at once."—"True," replied Mr. Gourlay; "but, while he hears one, may not the others be at work the while? I will show you a book written by one Mr. David Manson, a schoolmaster in the north of Ireland, which contains an account of what he calls his play-school; the regulations of which are so excellent, that every scholar must have been made insensibly to teach himself, while he all the time considered himself as assisting the master in teaching others. All were thus at the same time actively engaged; but so regulated, as to produce not the least confusion or disturbance." Mr. Morrison expressed great satisfaction in having such assistance offered him, with regard to the method of teaching; and begged Mr. Gourlay to give his opinion on the moral instruction which it was the duty of a schoolmaster to convey. In reply to this, Mr. Gourlay observed, that the school in which the greatest number of moral habits were acquired, would certainly be the best school of moral instruction. "Every person capable of reflection attaches great importance to what we call good principles," continued the worthy pastor: "now, what are good principles but certain truths brought habitually to recollection, as rules of conscience, and guides of conduct? Our knowledge of all the truths

of revelation can be of no further use to us, than as they are thus, by being habitually referred to, wrought into the frame of our mind, till they become principles of action and motives of conduct. By a mere repetition of the words in which these truths are conveyed, this will never be effected. The teacher, therefore, who wishes that his instructions may have the force of principles, must endeavour to bring the truths he inculcates into such constant notice, that they may become habitual motives to the will. In a school where there is no order, no subordination, a boy may read lessons of obedience and self-government, day after day, without having any impression made upon his mind. Has he learned to steal and to tell lies, occasional punishment will not be sufficient to enforce the principles of truth and honesty. In order to convert sincerity and integrity into abiding habits of the mind, the love of these virtues must be strengthened by a conviction of the estimation in which they are held by God and man. Falsehood and dishonesty must be rendered objects of abhorrence; and this they will soon become, if constantly and regularly attended by shame and disgrace. This comes to be the more incumbent on the schoolmaster, because lying is too generally considered by the poor as a very slight offence, or rather, indeed, as an excusable artifice, often necessary, sometimes even laudable. It is truly shocking to find the prevalence of this vice in a country that boasts of the degree of instruction given to the poor. But where shall we find the tradesman on whose word one can depend with confidence? Is it among the enthusiasts, who pretend to the greatest portion of religious zeal? No: go to the next town, and bespeak a pair of shoes of one of these saints; will he not solemnly promise that they shall be made by a certain day, while he, in his conscience, knows they will not then have had a single stitch put into them? So it is with tradesmen in every branch of business. And has this want of probity no effect upon the moral character? Is it consistent with the belief of our being accountable to the *God of truth?* And, were the doctrines of our being thus accountable, wrought into our minds as an abiding principle, would it be possible that it should have no greater effect upon our actions? Remember that, in being called to the office of instruc-

tion, you are bound to do all that is in your power to lead the little children unto Him who declared, that for this end he came into the world, *to bear witness to the truth.* With this impression constantly upon your mind, you need be under no apprehensions concerning the success that will attend your labours."

Morrison warmly expressed the gratitude he felt for the instructions of his good pastor, and declared himself convinced, by his arguments, of the nature and extent of the duties he had to perform; but added, that, so far from being deterred, he was more inclined than ever to undertake the task, provided Mrs. Mason would become his coadjutor in the instruction of the girls, for which she should have half the salary of the school. To this proposal Mrs. Mason cheerfully agreed; and, as the heritors had determined to leave the choice of a schoolmaster to the minister, Morrison soon received a regular appointment to the office.

While the repairs were under consideration, Mrs. Mason received a visit from Mr. Stewart, who gladdened her heart by a letter which had been directed to his care. At the first glance, she saw that it had come from Italy, and that the cover had been directed by Lady Harriet Bandon. The letter contained the most cordial assurances of the never-ceasing regard and affection of her beloved pupils, and a short account of their tour; with special injunctions to send them, in return, a particular account of her health, and of all that had happened to her since they parted. A postscript was added by Mr. Meriton, requesting that she would lay out the remittance he enclosed, of twenty pounds, in doing all the good that such a trifle could effect. By thus putting it in her power to gratify her benevolence, the writer well knew he was affording the most delicate proof of his regard. As such, Mrs. Mason received it; but she now found that Mr. Stewart was commissioned to make the comfort of her situation a first object of attention. Her annuity was to be increased, if necessary, to even double the sum at first promised her; but she declined accepting any more than was sufficient for the purchase of some additional articles of furniture for the habitation to which she was soon to remove.

The house allotted to the village-teacher was large,

but incommodious and uncomfortable. The alterations suggested by Mrs. Mason removed these objections, and were favourable to her plans of order and cleanliness. A useless appendage, which projected by the back-door entrance, and which had hitherto been the receptacle of dirt and rubbish, was converted into a nice scullery, where the washing of clothes or dishes was carried on, so that the kitchen was kept always neat and clean. The two little girls had now acquired such a taste for neatness, and such habits of activity, that they not only took unwearied pains to make every thing appear to the best advantage in the kitchen and parlour, but were so orderly and regular in their exertions, that, from the garrets downwards, not a pile of dust found a resting-place, where it might remain unmolested.

Nor was it to the inside of the house that the transformation was confined: without doors, it was perhaps still more remarkable. The school-house being set back from the street, left an area of the width of ten or twelve yards in front of the house; and on this convenient spot the former incumbent had erected a pig-sty, and piled up a dung-hill. Every shower of rain washed part of the contents into the unpaved foot-path, through which the children paddled ancle-deep in mud, up to the school-room door. Morrison, having removed the incumbrances, sowed the area with grass-seeds, and round it made a border to be filled with flowers and shrubs. It was then railed in, leaving a road up to the school, and an entrance, by a neat wicker-gate, to the front door of the dwelling-house. Planting, watering, and rearing the shrubs and flowers, which ornamented the borders of the grass-plot, became the favourite amusement of the elder school-boys; and, being the reward of good behaviour, was considered as a mark of favour, which all were ambitious to obtain. The school-room had been left in a ruinous condition: The tables and benches broken or disfigured; the plaster in some places peeled off the walls, and in others scrawled over with chalk or ochre; the panes of the windows broken, and stuffed with rags; and the floor covered with such a thick paste of dirt, that it was not till after much hard labour, the pavement was rendered visible. All was now put in complete repair; and on the first of May the school opened with forty scholars. They came

pouring in pell-mell, in the disorderly manner to which they had been formerly accustomed; and, observing that the desks and benches were not yet placed, they were proceeding in groups rudely to seize on them; but were arrested by the master, who commanded silence in a tone of such authority, as forced attention. Having formed them into a circle round his chair, he explained to them, that the school was henceforth to be governed by rules, to which he should exact the most complete obedience; and then, examining the boys as to their respective progress, he formed them into separate classes, making the girls meantime stand apart. The boys were then led out of the school, that they might make their entrance in proper order. Those of the first class, taking the lead, were directed how to clean their feet upon the scraper, and well-bound wisps of straw, which served instead of mats. They next placed for themselves their forms and benches, opposite a double slip of wood fixed to the wall, marked No. 1. and stuck full of pegs, for their hats to hang on; the second and third classes marched in, each in their turn, and took their places in equal order. Mrs. Mason, meanwhile, allotted to the girls their proper stations near her chair, at the upper end of the school-room, where they were concealed from view by a screen, which formed a sort of moveable partition between them and the boys.

At first, several of the children were refractory; but, by patience and perseverance, all were so completely brought into subjection, that by the time the minister visited the school at the conclusion of the first month, all the plans he had suggested were completely carried into execution. Each of the three classes were, according to Manson's method, divided into three distinct orders; viz. landlord, tenants, and under-tenants. The landlord prescribed the lesson which was to be received as rent from his tenants. Each of his tenants had one or two under-tenants, who were in like manner bound to pay him a certain portion of reading, or spelling lesson; and when the class was called up, the landlord was responsible to the master, as superior lord, not only for his own diligence, but for the diligence of the vassals. The landlord who appeared to have neglected his duty, or who permitted the least noise or disturbance in his class, was

degraded to the rank of an under-tenant. It became, therefore, his interest not to permit any infringement of the rules. When these were in any instance broken, it became his duty to inform the master, who called the culprit before him, attended by the landlord and tenants of his class. If the tenants who formed his jury found him guilty of the charge, sentence of punishment was immediately pronounced: if idleness was the crime, the culprit was obliged to sit in a corner, having his eyes blindfolded, and his hands tied across; if disobedience had been proved against him, he was imprisoned in a large chair turned to the wall; and if noise, he was obliged to carry a drum upon his back round the school. Nor after punishment did a boy immediately regain his rank; he was obliged to sit apart from his companions the whole of the following day, without being permitted to look upon a book. The lads found this species of punishment more intolerable than manual chastisement; and the consequence of this was highly favourable to the master's views. Mr. Gourlay, having examined the state of each class, distributed to the landlords and head-tenants the premiums provided by Mrs. Mason, who devoted to this use part of the money sent by Mr. Meriton. These consisted of light hoes, small spades, and other implements of gardening, together with parcels of flowerseeds suited to the season of the year. He next visited the girls' school, where Mrs. Mason had encountered greater difficulties than had even occurred to Morrison. She had, indeed, since her residence in Glenburnie, frequently observed, that the female children of the poor had far less appearance of intelligence and sagacity than the males of the same age; and could no otherwise account for this, than by supposing that their education had been more neglected. This, as far as schooling was concerned, was not the case; but while the boys, by being constantly engaged, either in observing the operations that were going on without doors, or in assisting in them, had their attention exercised, and their observation called forth, the girls, till able to spin, were without object or occupation. After the first week, the labour of the wheel became mechanical, and required no exertion of the mental faculties. The mind, therefore, remained inert; and the power of perception, from being so long dormant, became

at length extinct. The habits acquired by such beings were not easily to be changed; for nothing is so intractable as stupidity. But Mrs. Mason, having discovered the root of the disease, judiciously applied the proper remedies. It was her first care to endeavour to rouse the sleeping faculties. To effect this, she not only contrived varieties of occupation, but made all the girls examine and sit in judgment on the work that was done. Considering the business of household work, as not merely useful to girls in their station, as an employment to which many of them would be devoted, but as a means of calling into action their activity and discernment, she allotted to them, by pairs, the task of cleaning the schoolrooms; and on Saturday, the two girls, who had best performed the duties assigned them, were promoted to the honour of dusting and rubbing the furniture of her parlour. As to the rest, the morning was devoted to needle-work, the afternoon to instruction in reading; but whether at the needle or book, she rendered their tasks easy and cheerful, by the pleasautness of her manners, which were always kind and affectionate.

When Mr. Gourlay distributed the rewards prepared for the girls whose behaviour had been most approved, he expressed great approbation at their progress; and particularly noticed their improvement in personal neatness and good-breeding, which assured him of the attention they were likely to pay to the instruction of their teacher in points still more essential; and concluded by giving a suitable exhortation.

Mrs. Mason had not been many months in her employment of schoolmistress, when she received a great addition to her consequence in the eyes of her neighbours, by the accession of Mr. Meriton to the estate and title of Longlands, on the sudden decease of his elder brother. The friendship of Mrs. Mason was considered of great importance, by those who in any way depended on the favour of their superior lord. But even where there was no interested motive, the use which she had already made of his bounty, had a wonderful effect in increasing the opinion of her wisdom. Of all the people in the village, it was to poor Mrs. MacClarty alone, that this opinion came too late to be of any use. When she observed the thriving appearance of the Morrisons, her

heart was torn between envy and regret. Far was she, however, from imputing to herself any blame; she, on the contrary, believed all the blame to rest with Mrs. Mason, who was so unnatural as to leave her own relations, "and to tak up wi' straingers, who were neither kith nor kin to her:" nor did she omit any opportunity of railing at the pride of the schoolmaster's wife and daughters, who, she said, "were now sae saucy as to pretend that they cou'dna sit down in comfort in a hoose that was na' clean soopet." She, for a time, found many among the neighbours, who readily acquiesced in her opinions; but, by degrees, the strength of her party visibly declined. Those who had their children at school were so sensible of the improvement that had been made in their tempers and manners, as well as in their learning, that they could not help feeling gratitude to their instructers; and Mrs. Mason, having instructed the girls in needle-work, without any additional charge, added considerably to their sense of obligation. Even the old women, who had most bitterly exclaimed against the pride of innovation, were inclined to alter their tone. How far the flannel waistcoats and petticoats distributed among them, contributed to this change of sentiment, cannot be positively ascertained; but certain it is, that, as the people were coming from church the first fine day of the following spring, all stopped a few moments before the school-house, to inhale the fragrance of the sweet-brier, and to admire the beauty of the crocuses, primroses, and violets, which embroidered the borders of the grass-plot. Mrs. MacClarty, who, in great disdain, asked auld John Smith's wife "what a' the folks were glowering at?" received for answer, "that they were leuking at the bonniest sight in a' the toon."

"Eh!" returned Mrs. MacClarty, "I wonder what the warld will come to at last, siuce naething can serve the pride o' William Morrison, but to hae a flower-garden whar gude Mr. Brown's midden-stead stood sappy for mony a day! he's a better man than will ever stand on William Morrison's shanks."—"The flowers are a hantel bonnier than the midden tho', and smell a hantel sweeter too, I trow," returned Mrs. Smith.

This striking indication of a change of sentiment in the most sturdy stickler for the *gude auld gaits*, foreboded

ſiſter, but ſhe had a better gown on! When ſhe came near enough to ſpeak to me, ſhe ſaid, "What do you ſit there for, little boy? have you got your taſk by heart? I told her that I ſat there becauſe I did not know where to go! "Why, where is your mammy?" I ſaid my poor mammy was many a mile off! "Then come to my mammy, for we are to have ſome curds and whey this evening, and I will give you my ſhare; I had a little brother, a little white-headed boy like you, but then he would not ſpeak to me, when I kiſſed him, and his lips were ſo cold, and he would not ſpeak to my mammy either, though ſhe cried over him; but my mammy ſays he is in Heaven, but I am ſure you are he!" While we were talking her mother came, and when ſhe ſaw me under the buſh, ſhe took me in her arms; I told her all that I could tell her, and when her huſband came, I thought he would break his

heart

heart at the ſight of me! I told them that I was to meet you all on ſuch a day; they ſent me within two miles of the place by a waggon, and deſired the waggoner to bring me back again; but he uſed me ill on the road, and when he got near the place I quitted the waggon, and knew my road by the old thorn-buſh; but I know my poor young daddy and mammy will break their hearts if I do not ſee them ſoon again!

THE END