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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BOARDING SCHOOL: FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN A GOVERNESS AND HER PUPILS ***

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THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

THE
BOARDING SCHOOL;

OR

FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN A

GOVERNESS AND HER PUPILS.

WRITTEN FOR THE

AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION

OF

YOUNG LADIES.

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PREFACE.

THOSE persons whose time is devoted to the instruction of youth, have not only abundant opportunities of ascertaining the capacities of their pupils, but of observing their various dispositions, and of noticing the effects which have been produced on them by previous habit and example. It seldom happens that amiability of temper, respectful behaviour to superiors, or kindness to inferiors, distinguish children who in their infancy have been left to the care of menials, or who have been suffered, by the blind indulgence of parents, to gratify their forward inclinations; and it as rarely occurs that those who have had the benefit of good example and parental admonition in the "bud of life," display much propensity to vice as they grow up, unless their morals become contaminated by afterwards forming improper companions. With reference to the effects of early education, it has been most truly said, that

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclin'd."

And though a variety of causes may operate to form the character, or give a bias to the mind, it is a fact not to be controverted, that early impressions are never wholly eradicated, and the magic of some well remembered maxim or parental caution will often come very seasonably to the aid of the most experienced.

In portraying the characters which are introduced in "THE BOARDING SCHOOL," the Author has endeavoured to represent, by contrast, the amiable and unamiable passions; and, by exhibiting them in their true colours, to render her fair and youthful readers as emulous to imitate the one, as they will doubtless be to avoid the other; while the narrative, being of the most familiar kind, will, it is hoped, contribute to their amusement.

[1]

THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

CHAPTER I.

ELIZABETH ADAIR was stooping to prop a rose-tree in a viranda, when she hastily turned to her sister, and exclaimed, "it is useless attending either to plants or flowers now: I must give up all my favourite pursuits."

"But you will have others to engage your attention," returned Jane.

"And will they afford me pleasure? You may as well say that I shall listen with joy to the foolish commands of some parents, and the haughty remarks of others."

[2]

"Let this be our comfort," said Jane, "sensible people always treat the instructors of youth with respect; they neither command with pride, nor complain with insolence."

"But think of the change! We, who have had every indulgence, and no cares to perplex us!"

"My dear Elizabeth, in the day of prosperity we seldom rejoice with thankfulness; but in the time of adversity, when our path is darkened, then we can bitterly repine. Surely we should place our joys and our sorrows against each other, as a defence from a murmuring spirit."

"It is not late trials that trouble me, but future vexations that I dread. You know that I have never been accustomed to stupid, drawling, spoiled children."

[3]

"I hope," said Jane, "you will not have a class of this description to instruct."

"O, all things will be easy to you, for you love children and love teaching; but I have never applied my mind to any thing of the kind: I shall not know how to ask the most simple question in nature."

Jane smiled, as she said, "Since you are so very doubtful of your abilities, I think I will give a short lesson upon teaching. Suppose you ask your pupil if she has learned grammar: if she replies in the affirmative, desire her to explain the nature of the different parts of speech. Then try her abilities in the arithmetical tables, or from the history of England; tell her to relate some particular event in the reign of one of our kings, and go on to other subjects in a similar manner. In the first instance, however, always hear your pupil read; clear, distinct reading, with proper emphasis—I do not mean in a theatrical style—is one test of abilities; give her some pointed passage from history, or from any suitable book."

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"I want an example," said Elizabeth.

"Now, sister, you are trifling, and will lead me to trifle in return."

"In 1199 John signed Magna Charta, the bulwark of English liberty;" or, "the king wept when he found himself a prisoner; but the master of Glamis said—"

[5]

"Go on, my dear Jane: the master of Glamis I will not have any thing to say to."

"You forget," said Jane, "that we are not to finish a sentence with to, or for, or any word so insignificant. Let a little girl read, 'remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,' or something in the same easy, impressive style. But consult my mother: she will give you the best information upon the subject of teaching."

"Ah," said Elizabeth, "my spirits fail when I think of the task! I only wish the first week were over."

"It will pass away like all other things. We have only to be resolute in doing our duty, and leave the rest to Providence. Let us at all times remember our own excellent instructress: her 'authority, when most severe, and mustering all its force, was but the graver countenance of love, watering at once and nourishing the plant.'"

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CHAPTER II.

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It will, perhaps, here be necessary to say something of Mrs. Adair; I will not, however, enter upon her motive for opening a boarding-school. It is a well known fact that the loss of fortune, contracted incomes, or troubles in one shape or another, are the origin of almost all female seminaries. I never heard but of one lady beginning a school, and persevering to the conclusion of a protracted life, without any motive but benefiting a friend. To her credit let me remark, that she never regretted this, as it may justly be styled, "labour of love."

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Mrs. Adair's personal appearance and manner were calculated to excite respect and deference from pupils. The general cast of her countenance was serious, to a degree bordering upon severity; but when she did unbend, the cheerfulness that beamed in her features, and the benevolent expression of her dark and pleasing eyes, invited confidence and regard from every beholder. She had been a widow several years, and was going to commence a school patronized by respectable friends. I shall not attempt to describe her daughters, for beauty is of so perishable a nature, and of so little value without good qualities, it is but time wasted dwelling on the subject. Jane, the youngest, had been some time in a delicate and declining state of health; and, viewing life as uncertain in its tenor, had wisely adapted her mind to passing circumstances. Next to her brightest hopes, was her desire to be useful whilst she remained upon earth.

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Elizabeth had high health and spirits, and could ill brook the idea of the restraint and confinement of a school. But the evening was now arrived previous to beginning "the irksome task," as she styled it.

Mrs. Adair had been looking over her folio, and her daughters were seated at their work, when she observed, "We may consider ourselves particularly fortunate, for I have now the promise of fifteen pupils. Several things, however, we must take into consideration. Elizabeth, you are sometimes a little petulant in temper: remember you must never be rash in deciding, or hasty in punishing; curb the bold, but encourage the timid. We must likewise be cautious to treat the parents of every child with equal respect; not allow ourselves to be dazzled with glittering equipages, or dashing manners. And let us be tender and careful of children who are deprived of a mother: give them all the aid in our power, to make them a credit to their father's house."

[10]

"And I think, my dear mother," said Elizabeth, "it will be necessary to fix children of weak capacities in one class: let all the dunces go together."

[11]

"But we must first weigh their talents justly," returned Mrs. Adair; "and always recollect, that 'children of the present age are the hope of the one to come.'"

"There is one thing I particularly charge you to avoid: never speak in a tone of ridicule of any lady who has previously instructed a pupil; there is something contemptible in trying to depreciate the talents of another. We are not to consider ourselves as supreme in wisdom, for our abilities are moderate; if we can do good, I believe it is the chief merit we can claim."

"I hope one thing," said Elizabeth, "that the young ladies must never be allowed to learn their lessons at meals; for I am persuaded they will think more of the present participle *loving* than of declining the verb *to love*. And I trust likewise, my dear mother, that you will never let them read their own themes at public examinations: for the voice I am certain will tremble when hundreds are listening."

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"We will not talk of public examinations, my dear, until we have tried our own abilities at teaching. But I must caution you never to criticize letters from parents or friends; nor look upon a teacher as a solitary being, without friends and without feelings."

"I hope you do not think I would exact too much, or be unreasonable in any command to a teacher," said Elizabeth.

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"I do not say that you will do so; I only wish to remind you, that we should have due consideration for those persons who are dependent upon us. And now I have only to observe, that we must not think entirely of the time our pupils are to be with us, but extend our thoughts to the period when they will be enabled to judge by what spirit we were actuated. In teaching, punishing, or rewarding, let us always consider whether the means we then pursue will be useful to the young lady in future life."

CHAPTER III.

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ELIZABETH with some degree of impatience stood at the drawing-room window, looking for their first pupil, on the morning the school was opened. At length a carriage drove hastily to the door, and she returned to her seat.

With a flushed and agitated countenance she had now to welcome one of her mother's earliest friends. Colonel Vincent advanced into the room with two daughters, and in a cheerful tone exclaimed, "I hope, my dear Miss Adair, we are your first scholars; we have strained every nerve to surprise you with an early visit, and an auspicious one I hope it will prove."

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"I hope so too, Sir," said Elizabeth quickly; "but I thought we should have had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Vincent."

"She was obliged to go down into the country to visit her father," returned the Colonel, "and deputed me to act for her. I have to beg that you will treat our children as the children of strangers: reward them with favour when they are good, and punish them when they are otherwise. We have confidence in our friends, therefore shall never listen to any idle tales; but my little girl," he continued, as he fondly stroked the hair from the forehead of his youngest daughter, "will I know be tractable and very good."

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"That I will, Papa; only I wish I had my doll, and the cradle. My cousin Eliza has a barrel-organ, a garden-chair, and I don't know how many things, at her school."

"Your cousin has a large fortune, and is a simpleton," cried Caroline, the eldest daughter. "But pray, ma'am, who is to teach music?"

"I shall make the attempt," said Elizabeth; "how far I shall succeed will depend upon my abilities to instruct, and your patience and perseverance in gaining instruction."

"O, ma'am, I have learned seven years of the first masters."

"There has been a wonderful waste of time, and money!" cried the Colonel. "You rattle the keys, as blundering soldiers when commanded to fire: no taste, feeling, or judgment in the execution."

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"But at Madame La Blond's, Papa, I was allowed to play in the very first style, and was always called upon to exhibit to strangers."

A servant at this moment announced "Mrs. Towers;" and a stately female, dressed in the extreme of fashion, with a measured step entered the room, followed by a delicate, interesting looking young lady, but with a very dark complexion. Mrs. Towers moved very profoundly to Elizabeth. "Permit me to introduce Miss Arden as a pupil," she said. "She is from the East, and under our guardianship. For certain causes we removed her from her last seminary; we did not consider it (as she is a young lady of large fortune) sufficiently fashionable. As we understand Colonel Vincent, a man whom every one must applaud, has declared that he and his noble lady will patronize Mrs. Adair, from this circumstance alone I have brought Miss Arden hither."

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Colonel Vincent smiled, and stepped to the window to converse with his youngest daughter. "It is particularly unfortunate, ma'am," added Mrs. Towers, "that the young lady has so very dark a look; but I assure you she is not a creole." Tears started into Miss Arden's eyes, and her cheeks were tinged with a deep blush. Mrs. Towers now made another very low curtsy, with "a good morning, ma'am; I have several visits to pay in this neighbourhood." As she passed the young lady, she whispered something respecting mixture and composition.

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Colonel Vincent now led his daughters to Miss Arden. "Let me introduce the young people to each other," said he; "who I hope will be friends and pleasant companions."

Isabella, his youngest daughter, looked up in her face; and taking her hand, said, "I am sure I shall love this lady, if she will love me."

Her sister turned her head, and with a scornful smile exclaimed, "You are always taken with strangers! I wish Miss Russel would come! I thought she would have been here early."

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"This is an insolent young lady," said the Colonel, looking at his daughter with displeasure. "But my Isabella, Miss Arden, will be grateful for your kindness."

"I have so few, Sir, to regard me," said Miss Arden, "that I shall indeed be happy to gain the love of this little girl."

Elizabeth now asked if she would walk in the garden. "Come, my little pet," said the Colonel, "give me one kiss; and go with this young lady, and try to divert her. And do not forget to bring her with you the first holiday, and we will have a merry day; all your young friends shall be

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invited to meet you.”

In the course of the morning most of the young ladies arrived. It was a complete day of bustle. There were trunks and packages to be removed from the hall into the dressing-room; then one wanted her reticule, and another a book from her bag; and a third was searching her basket for good things, either for her own private eating, or to give to some one to whom she had taken a fancy. Then there were so many conjectures, “who and who such ladies were?” Miss Vincent and Miss Russel, who were declared friends, kept apart from their companions. There were few, indeed, they would deign to notice; and no one, unless her Papa had a carriage. There was an air of scorn in their countenances, which seemed to say, “here is a motley group, indeed!” [22]

Jane had been confined to her chamber the whole of the morning, but in the afternoon strolled into the garden to converse with the young ladies. She soon felt fatigued, and went into the summer-house to rest. There, to her surprise, she beheld a young lady with a melancholy aspect, seated, with her eyes fixed intently upon the floor.

“My dear, why are you here alone?” asked Jane in a tone of kindness; “was there no young lady to walk with you?”

“No, ma’am; the ladies do not wish to associate with me. They object to my complexion: and, I believe, they think that I am without feelings. The little girl would have remained with me, but her sister would not allow her.” [23]

A loud laugh now proclaimed a party approaching the summer-house. Jane was shocked when she heard Miss Vincent exclaim, “Oh, do come in and behold her! she is a complete creole! I never saw so frightful a complexion!”

“The young lady is a stranger to me,” said another, “and I am sure I would not insult her upon any account.”

“That is a voice I know,” said Jane, stepping to the door. “My dear Miss Damer, I wish to speak to you.” Miss Vincent and her friend instantly retreated, and the young lady entered the summer-house with a blushing face. [24]

“Here is a young lady,” said Jane, “who is a stranger; and I may add, that she is in a strange land. In introducing her to you, Miss Damer, I hope I am securing a friend for her: one who will not behold her insulted.”

Tears now rushed from Miss Arden’s eyes. “O! ma’am, I cannot thank you as I feel! Hitherto, I have only known rudeness and unkindness! When I lost my father, I thought, in coming to England—England, so famed for every thing great and noble—that I should be a stranger to all sorrow but that of remembrance.”

Miss Damer was too much moved to express herself as she wished. “Come,” said Jane, in a cheerful voice, “we must not have sorrow at this our first meeting. I perceive that Miss Damer and you will be friends, so come with me; you shall be my guests this evening, and we will leave the other young ladies to my sister.” [25]

With a countenance expressive of kindness, Jane took an arm of each of the young ladies, and walked with them up the garden. As she passed Miss Vincent and her companion, she said very quietly, “Young ladies, I hope you will conduct yourselves better to-morrow.”

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CHAPTER IV.

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WHEN Miss Vincent entered the music-room to receive her first lesson, with haughty indifference she seated herself at the piano, and in a careless manner began a voluntary. Elizabeth, who was reading a letter, now closed it, leisurely opened a book, and desired her to play the lesson to which she pointed.

“This piece, ma’am! Gravana thinks English music despicable.”

“And English manners, I presume?”

“Manners, ma’am! Madame La Blond’s was a fashionable seminary.”

“And what is fashion, my dear?” [27]

“Oh, nothing—nothing, ma’am, but doing as we please: we seldom saw Madame except in evening parties.”

“Then to whom were you indebted for instruction?”

"To our masters, ma'am," said Miss Vincent, in a tone of surprise. "At Madame La Blond's we were instructed in all the sciences; in the nature of valves; the specific gravity of bodies; the astonishing properties of magnetic steel; and how many thousand miles the sun was from the earth."

"And perhaps you were told, by what means Archimedes burned the ships of Marcellus, at the siege of Syracuse?"

"O no, ma'am; but we learned the art of memorizing by hieroglyphics. This formed a part of our morning exercises." [28]

"Pray, my dear," said Elizabeth very gravely, "can you repeat the multiplication table throughout?"

Miss Vincent hesitated. "I know very little, ma'am, of figures: our studies were in general of the highest order. But it was a charming seminary! We had no particular rules; we could go to rest, or rise when we pleased; and favourites were always asked to dance with select parties in an evening."

"I seriously regret," said Elizabeth, "that we have robbed Madame La Blond of so amiable a pupil."

"Madame, I assure you, ma'am, lamented it. She told Papa I was the chief ornament of her school. But he was very angry,—I don't know why; but he questioned me so closely, that I might as well have been before a court-martial. Indeed I am certain he would have ordered me, had I been a private soldier, to the triangle, merely because I said that Madame despised people in trade." [29]

"And your Papa really vindicated trade!"

"Oh, ma'am, the Colonel has strange plebeian notions. I never saw him so angry as he was when I told him that we—I mean ladies of a certain rank—had been the means of sending a merchant's daughter from school, by styling her 'Miss Thimbleton,' and 'the little seamstress.' Her mamma had the meanness, I may say the impertinence, to send vulgar check muslin to be made into a frock, at Madame La Blond's! We took care, however, to break the needles, and burn the thread." [30]

"I hope you have finished your remarks: be pleased, now, to listen to me. In consequence of the close intimacy that exists between our families, I pass over your presuming manner this morning; but recollect," said Elizabeth with firmness, "that it shall never be repeated. If you dare to disobey, expect punishment. From this time you are never to speak to me, unless I ask a question. Now play the lesson I proposed."

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CHAPTER V.

 [31]

MRS. ADAIR had selected from the first class four young ladies, to regulate the younger pupils. They were to hear them repeat their lessons before they entered the school-room; they were likewise to mark the errors in their exercises, and endeavour, not only to instruct but amuse.

It has been said that by teaching others we gain knowledge ourselves. Miss Damer was fully aware of this truth; all her leisure time, therefore, was devoted to the young people under her care. She had only three, and they had very different abilities: Miss Bruce's capacity was bright, but she loved to defer all to the last moment; there was a mixture of good sense and childishness in her character, and she was warm and impetuous. Isabella Vincent had moderate abilities, but a very persevering temper; whatever she had to learn, she laboured at it with her whole heart, and her disposition was placid and amiable. Miss Grey was a clever girl; she had been at an excellent school, and was proficient in most of the minor branches of education. She was fond of exercising her ingenuity to amuse her companions. One evening she had collected a party round her, intending to divert them with new grammatical exercises. [32]

"Now, ladies," she cried, as she held a paper in her hand, "are you all ready, all prepared to listen and to learn? Miss Isabella Vincent, what are you doing? I am certain you do not mean to attend." [33]

"If she will not attend," said Miss Damer, stepping into the circle, "I am quite prepared—"

"Oh, Miss Damer, are *you* here?" cried Miss Bruce: "we shall have no fun now! I thought you were in the drawing-room."

"Cheerfulness is one thing, fun another; but when they both come together, they are often noisy companions so we must do without them here."

"But we did not think you would come to us this evening," said Miss Grey. "Oh, do, Miss Damer, leave us to ourselves one half hour."

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"First let me read the paper you are trying to conceal."

"You will only think it nonsense," said Miss Grey; "but don't be angry, I beg, for it was only for our diversion."

Miss Damer began to read:

'Mrs. Adair, substantive proper.'

"Very improper to take this liberty." 'Singular number, feminine gender, indicative mood, perfect tense; face, mind, and figure, in the superlative degree.—Miss Warner inclining to the acute accent.'

"But what is she?" asked Miss Damer.

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"A noun proper, certainly, and of the singular number."

'Miss Cotton, demonstrative pronoun; compare *good*, and she is in the superlative degree.

'Miss Hilton, voice semi-vowels; in the primitive order by nature, governed by a queer looking definite article.

'Miss Vincent, manner the imperative mood; self, first person singular; mind, imperfect tense; eyes, positive; voice, in the superlative degree; nose, the interrogative point.

'Miss Bruce, an interjection, or an interrogative.'

"True," said Miss Damer, "particularly where books are concerned."

"Well, I do love books!" said Miss Bruce; "I do think I could read every one in Mr. Chiswell's shop without being tired. Have you a new one to lend me, Miss Damer?"

[36]

"If you say all your lessons well, and are good this week, I will lend you a very amusing and instructive tale."

"But what is the title?" asked Miss Bruce.

"It is one word, meaning a mark of folly in young ladies. But I must finish the grammatical exercise."

'Miss Rothman, a section sufficiently curved.'

"You should not have made this remark, Miss Grey. When you ridicule deformity you shew a want of feeling; and, what is of more consequence, you prove that you treat with contempt the works of your Creator. Miss Rothman's talents, and amiable temper, we cannot too highly prize."

[37]

'Miss Russel, an index to point out disagreeables; make her an article, and she will prove a bad one of the definite order.'

'The little Rhymer, a brace; and Miss Wise, a verb neuter.

'Miss Damer, auxiliary verb, or substantive proper; first person singular, face—' Miss Damer stopped a moment, and then went on with, 'Miss Jane Adair,—temper, syntax; consisting of concord and government; speech, a preposition; voice, liquids; face, mind, and figure, in the superlative degree; as the verb to be loved, second person singular, indicative mood, present tense, to myself and others. The remainder, excepting Miss Arden, may be classed with mutes, crotchets, irregular verbs, quotations, and parallels.'

[38]

"I wish," cried Isabella, "I could write exercises, or a theme, or something, I don't care what."

"And what is to prevent you, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing at all, Miss Damer, if I could but tell what to write."

"Tell how the world was made," said Miss Bruce, "that would be a very good subject."

"I cannot do that, I am sure! I do not know what stars are made of, they twinkle so; nor what makes flowers look so pretty, and smell so sweet; nor where the wind comes from, or what it is: it touches me, but I cannot touch it."

[39]

"You have never read 'Evenings at Home,'" said Miss Bruce, "or you would know that 'wind is but a quantity of air put into violent motion.'"

"But what is the air? Tell me this."

"A clear thin fluid, certainly, and the earth is a vast ball; it would soon break its bounds, were it not attracted by the sun."

"But who preserves it in its regular motion?" asked Miss Damer.

"Oh, Miss Damer," exclaimed Miss Bruce, "all the stars, and the moon, and the trees, and all that we behold had but one to make them, and one to support them—the Great Almighty Maker, who gave me my voice to speak, my mind to think, and my eyes to look at the wonders of his

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works.”

“I wish I knew how I speak, and look, and think,” said Isabella.

“My dear little girl,” said Miss Damer, “very wise people are ignorant in many things. Learn to be good: it is the best knowledge.”

“I do say my prayers every night and morning, and I’m sure I love papa and mamma dearly, and I try to love every body.”

“This is one way certainly to be good, if you obey your parents as well as love them, and think of your prayers when you are repeating them.” [41]

“I am sure, Miss Damer, I should love you, you are so good. I never could learn my lessons without you assisted me.”

“Because you are a dunce,” said Miss Bruce.

“We shall see who will be the best girl and the best scholar, ‘the bright and idle one,’ or my little friend, with ‘patience and perseverance.’”

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CHAPTER VI.

 [42]

A CARRIAGE and four, as it is styled, stopping suddenly at the gate, caused a little bustle. Amongst Mrs. Adair’s pupils, some were ready to look, and others to exclaim, “who can they be?” “what a beautiful girl!” and “what a nice little boy! but I fear he is lame!” “Oh, look! do look at that queer old lady following them out of the carriage! How oddly her nose is turned! and what a droll bonnet!” “I wonder whether they will dine with us!” “I should like to know who they are.”

While these exclamations were uttered, Miss Vincent pursued other means of gaining intelligence of the new comers. She stole softly into the hall, and screened herself from observation, in a narrow passage leading to the store-room. The next moment she beheld a tall girl, an elderly lady, and a little boy ushered into the parlour. She listened to hear their names announced, but in vain. As she was returning to the school-room, the hall door was opened by Elizabeth. She hastily retreated into the passage: but betrayed herself by stumbling over a stand of plants, that had been placed there, till they could be conveniently removed. [43]

Elizabeth, hearing the noise, quickly stepped towards the passage, and perceiving her pupil, said very coolly: [44]

“Botanizing, my dear! I fear you require light upon the subject; if there is any rare, very curious plant, give it the name of ‘Caroline Vincent,’ unless you prefer ‘the Spy detected.’”

Mortified at the discovery, Miss Vincent hastened to the school-room, her face flushed with vexation; and as she rushed past Miss Damer, who was standing near the door, exclaimed, “go out of my way, can’t you?”

“Certainly! But what has alarmed you so?”

Jane now entered the room; and Miss Russel, who had been leaning through the window, hastily turned to Miss Vincent, and exclaimed, “I do believe, Caroline, there is a coronet upon the carriage! but I cannot make out either the strawberry leaves or the balls.” Jane mildly reproved her for leaning through the window, contrary to the rules of the school. [45]

The moment she had quitted the room Miss Russel exclaimed, “These teachers give themselves strange airs!”

“You should speak with more respect of Mrs. Adair’s daughter, I think,” said Miss Damer; “excepting in fortune, Miss Jane Adair is superior to any person here.”

“But you will allow that she is a teacher, I hope.”

“And does it lessen her merit? If any particular class of females are worthy of respect, surely ladies who instruct young people are entitled to it; they are the guardians of morals and of manners. But in every school there are one or two ungrateful ones.” [46]

“Hear the oracle!” cried Miss Vincent. “Another Daniel come to judgment!”

“Rude manners and loud words do not intimidate me,” said Miss Damer, with modest firmness. “I again repeat, that a person who can instruct us in any one branch of education is entitled to—”

“What?” asked Miss Vincent imperiously.

“Deference. More I cannot urge, to a young lady who has been at Madame La Blond’s. But I [47]

must not say more: for I should not deserve this," extending her medal towards Miss Vincent, "were I to be the promoter of quarrels."

Miss Vincent hastily caught the medal, broke the ribbon, and threw them across the room, exclaiming, "it is these baubles that make you so insolent!"

The young ladies with one accord flew to the medal. Miss Arden however, was the fortunate person. On securing it, and returning it to her companion, she said, "accept this symbol of peace from my hand, my dear friend. As for Miss Vincent, I just view her as the passengers in the mail coach viewed the fly, for she makes herself equally ridiculous."

"It is a pity that Miss Vincent is the daughter of so brave a man!" cried Miss Cotton. "Who would suppose that one of our greatest heroes was her father!" [48]

"Father! how vulgar!" returned Miss Russel. "Pray who is your papa, Miss Cotton, that you presume to give yourself these airs, and speak in this manner?"

"My papa, Miss Russel, is a plain country gentleman, and I may say with truth that he reigns in the hearts of his children, and has taught them to 'honour and obey their father and their mother, that their days may be long in the land.' But you fashionable young ladies, 'who press to bear such haughty sway,' are exempt from this code, for there is no express command to honour *pas* and *mas*." [49]

"I hope Mrs. Adair will never give another medal," said Miss Damer.

"You deserved it," cried Miss Cotton with warmth, "and I hope you will always be rewarded for excelling, in every thing you attempt."

"A person must be envious indeed," said Miss Arden, "who can for a moment feel hurt at another being rewarded!"

"Had they your temper," cried Miss Cotton, "envy would indeed be unknown; but medals of merit, as they are styled, certainly create strife."

"But heroes, poets, and artists are distinguished by many proofs of regard," observed Miss Arden; "why should we be against a reward to merit here?" [50]

"You do not consider," said Miss Cotton, "great men, have great minds; but we have very little ones."

"I can only say, I pity any one with a malicious temper: and a person must have one, indeed, who can envy Miss Damer; for she never provokes to anger, or gives offence."

"And pray how are you to answer for Miss Damer?" asked Miss Vincent.

"I wonder you ask this question," returned Miss Arden. "From the first day I came into this house I had reason to dread you; and love, and esteem, Miss Damer. Though I was a stranger to every one, you made me a subject of ridicule;—but I will not tell you of all your unkindness." [51]

"Pray how long have you been, in studying this set speech?"

"Only whilst you were setting your face to look contemptuously."

"Wonderful! I could not have supposed that a creole had wit! But I forget, you are the heiress of a rich nabob! Pray to what black knight, or noble emperor, are you allied?"

"Oh, fie! fie! how can you be so insolent!" cried Miss Damer.

"Miss Vincent's words do not trouble me: they have lost their power; let her be as severe as she pleases. If she could not display her talent in satire, we should say she was the simple one of Mrs. Adair's school: there are drones and dunces every where." [52]

"My dear Miss Arden, let us cease all disputes," said Miss Cotton; "Miss Vincent and her friend are the most suitable persons to be together, when they are in a quarrelsome mood: let us forbear speaking to them."

"Cotton would make an admirable methodist parson," cried Miss Vincent.

"I wish I could return the compliment; for a good method leads to proper conduct."

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CHAPTER VII.

THE young ladies had always to write an extract from one of the sermons they had heard at church on the sabbath day. In this exercise of memory Miss Damer particularly excelled; the

most difficult sermon she could transcribe almost word for word. This had excited the spirit of envy in Miss Vincent. The week after the dispute upon the medal, when Miss Damer opened her book, wherein she had written a sermon with extreme neatness, she found every line so scrawled, that one word could not be distinguished from another. Surprised at this proof of secret malice, she involuntarily gave the book to Miss Cotton, who was seated by her. Mrs. Adair, however, desired to look at it. After examining every page, she said, and at the same time fixed her eyes upon Miss Vincent, "I pity the young lady who has done this; she has betrayed one of the meanest passions of the human mind." She now looked anxiously round the room; "I see few countenances," she added, "where envy reigns."

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"Miss Vincent, had you ever this book in your hand? speak in a moment—yes, or no: I want no other word!"

"No, ma'am; I never had the book in my hand, I can declare with truth."

"Miss Bruce, is this your work? for I know you are a little busy-body."

[55]

"O no, ma'am! I would not blot any lady's book for the world."

Mrs. Adair now turned to Miss Arden: "my dear, have you been amusing yourself with your companion's book?"

"No, ma'am."

"The mystery, I think, will soon be explained: and I fear I shall find that there has been more artifice than truth in a young lady's assertion. Come hither, Isabella, I wish to speak to you."

Little Isabella's features betrayed confusion and terror: and as she slowly walked up the room, she burst into tears. "Do not be afraid," said Mrs. Adair, in a soothing tone of voice, "I am not angry with you. Tell me plainly how it was. What did your sister say to you?"

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"O, ma'am, she said—O dear, I wish I were at home—"

"Come, speak the truth, my dear. You know you are one of my best little girls. Tell me how you were led into this error. Speak openly, and do not be afraid."

"I have not done it—I mean, I have—O dear, where is mamma?"

"Happy at home, I make no doubt. But were papa and mamma here, it would make no difference, for I must have the truth. Did you mark this book?"

"O dear, yes, ma'am! but I would not have done it, but I must do it. O, sister, you know—you do know—and you will pinch me so! Do, dear, good Mrs. Adair, tell her not to pinch me, for I know I shall scream!"

[57]

"This is a strange account! We must have a little conversation, my dear, in the evening. Correction, or advice, will have no effect with you, Miss Vincent. You are not aware that your conduct will be deeply impressed upon the mind of every young lady present: it will be remembered when you have forgotten the circumstance yourself. I shall expect to see you with your sister."

Mrs. Adair looked round upon her pupils with a countenance of affection and concern. "Young ladies," she added, "it behoves you to conduct yourselves in this house in a manner, that you may go forth into the world with modest confidence, arising from the pleasing reflection that you have fulfilled your duty in all things. Then, in future life, when you unexpectedly meet a school-companion and friend, how pleasant will be the greeting! And when I am old and infirm, should you recollect me, and call upon me as the friend of your youth, how gratifying will it be to my heart to think that I have been one means, in the hands of Providence, of giving to society discreet and amiable women."

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CHAPTER VIII.

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THE vacation now commenced. The physician had ordered change of air for Jane, or rather change of scene: she therefore accompanied Miss Cotton to spend a month with her parents. Elizabeth, however, would not accept any invitation. Mrs. Adair was surprised at the circumstance, knowing that young people are fond of novelty, particularly after the confinement of a school.

"It is strange that you have refused all our friends," she said to her daughter, "especially your old favourite!"

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Elizabeth coloured highly. "My dear mother, teaching has given me the wisdom to value a

comfortable home. How quiet we are this evening! and what a cheerful, blazing fire! and as for this tea, I think I never tasted any thing so fragrant."

"And are these your reasons for remaining at home?"

"O no! but only think how pleasant it is to be free from monotonous voices buzzing in one's ears! To-night I shall go to rest without the fear of being disturbed 'with the sound of the school-going bell,' and shall rise to-morrow an independent being."

"Ah, Elizabeth! is there no vexation, or lurking regret, dwelling upon your mind? your countenance will betray you. Believe me, there are many obstacles to the fulfilment of our wishes in this world. In all things it may be said, 'we look through a glass darkly.' But no more on this head: you have reason, and you must exert it. Be assured of one thing, we are often wisely disappointed in our plans of happiness; if we attain our wishes, we must not expect to be wholly free from care."

[61]

"I have promised to spend a few days with Colonel Vincent's family. You shall go with me to town on Thursday."

"But, my dear mother, you know—"

"I understand you," said Mrs. Adair. "I do not mean that you shall be their visitor; I have another plan in view. I know that Miss Damer is very uncomfortably situated at home, therefore you can call for her, to spend the time here whilst I am absent."

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The morning Mrs. Adair and her daughter arrived in London, Elizabeth sat a few minutes with Mrs. Vincent, and then proceeded to B— Square, where Mr. Damer resided. As she entered the house she beheld all things in confusion; men were employed in packing up china and chandeliers; straw and cord were strewed over the hall floor; and people were running in every direction, carrying trunks, chairs and sofas. Elizabeth inquired for Miss Damer: and was answered by a footman in a very surly tone, that "he knew nothing of her." An elderly, respectable looking female now stepped forward, and begged Elizabeth would follow her. They passed through two empty apartments, and she then gently opened a door into a room which was little more than a closet, the light issuing from a small casement. A band-box, a bookshelf, and a trunk, upon which Miss Damer was seated, close to a grate, containing the dying embers of a fire, were all that Elizabeth could discern. Her pupil started from her seat, with eyes red with weeping, and in a confused tone exclaimed, "Miss Adair here!"

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"I am here, indeed," said Elizabeth; "and I hope I am come to a good purpose. But what has caused this strange confusion? But I beg your pardon," perceiving the distress of her pupil, "I was not aware of what I was saying. You must come with me; I came hither on purpose for you."

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"Then you have heard of our troubles, ma'am?"

"I see them all. But we have not a moment to spare." Guided by the impulse of the moment, Elizabeth dropped upon one knee, opened the band-box, took out a bonnet, and then searched the trunk for a pelisse. Miss Damer looked down upon her dress—

"Never mind your morning dress, my dear: this will cover all," said she, as she assisted Miss Damer with her pelisse; and as she tied the strings of her bonnet, exclaimed, "Now we shall do; but we must go immediately, for the days are short." As they were leaving the room, the elderly female came up to them: "Where are you going, my dear young lady?"

[65]

"Ah, my good nurse, I had forgotten you in my surprise! This is Miss Adair: but I am so confused, I scarcely know what I am doing—only that I am going where I have been most happy! But you will write to me, or see me, or something."

"If you wish to see Miss Damer, come in one of the morning coaches," said Elizabeth.

"I thank you, ma'am, kindly," said the nurse. "You are now in good hands, my dear young lady, so do not fret; Providence, I have often told you, would never desert so dutiful a daughter; and you find an old woman's words may be true. We shall be happy yet, never fear. People cannot forget their own. Never mind if they do: there is an eye over you in all your ways. And there is a death-bed, too," said she in a low voice; "then conscience will be heard—there is no saying, I won't hear; no creeping into corners, and running away. When the arms drop, and the head is weary with anguish, coaxing and paint will not give one jot of comfort; no, nor the sight of the most beautiful face upon earth. Be good, then, my dear young lady, for the evil day will come to us; and what a blessing it will be, if we can say with sincerity, 'the Lord's will be done.'"

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As Elizabeth was stepping into the chaise she suddenly recollected the trunk; and turning to the nurse, desired it might be instantly corded, and given to the driver. A man who was standing at the hall door exclaimed, "but we must first search it."

"Search it, then," cried Elizabeth, haughtily, "but do not detain us in the cold."

"Cold, forsooth!" said the man; "I wonder what people would be at, with their fine carriages! I shall take my own time, I can assure you, ma'am, though your feathers are so high!" [68]

"There is no arguing with vulgar, obstinate people," said Elizabeth, as she drew up the chaise window; she did not consider, that civility is due to every person; it is, however, too much the case with young ladies that they think they have a right to command with authority, and, however unreasonable, that their command must be obeyed.

Elizabeth saw that her pupil was too deeply affected to answer any questions, therefore during the ride remained silent. In the evening, however, Miss Damer mentioned that her father had left the kingdom, and with a trembling voice added, "there are circumstances, ma'am, which it would not become me to reveal; when Mrs. Adair returns home, as far as I am at liberty, I will explain the cause of our distress." [69]

"Not another word upon the subject," cried Elizabeth; "I was not attending to you, for this teasing kitten has ruffled all my silks." Elizabeth turned the kitten out of the room, and began to put her netting balls in order, saying at the time, "what have I to do with your father's affairs, my dear? I will not hear any family secrets; for I do not love secrets of any kind. You are in the house of friends: therefore try to be happy. My mother and sister never make professions: by their actions you must judge them. For my part, I would rather have one act of kindness than a thousand promises, or words of praise and comfort. But come and assist me with my silk, for I can do no good with it." [70]

Elizabeth wrote the particulars to Mrs. Adair, and finished her letter with the hope that the promise she had given to their pupil, of having a home with them, would not be disapproved.

Mrs. Adair received this letter with some degree of displeasure. She was not one who was generous for worldly fame; she justly considered that her pupil's friends were the most proper persons to provide for her, and lost no time in calling at her late residence. On her arrival at the house, she found all the shutters closed; an elderly female, however, at the moment stopped and unlocked the door, who proved to be the nurse Elizabeth had seen. [71]

Mrs. Adair followed her into the house, which was quite desolate: not a piece of furniture was remaining. She inquired if Miss Damer had any relations or friends to take care of her. "No, indeed, madam," said the nurse; "her mother's sister is the only near relation, and she has married somebody. It was a sad day for my poor young lady! she was stupified with grief! Her father fled—and the sheriff's officers in the house! All things were in confusion! chairs in one place, carpets upon dining-room tables, satin curtains upon the floor, nothing in its place; and then to see the nice things my good mistress had once so highly prized, handled so roughly! Ah, madam, ladies little think, when they are so delicate in handling their finery, into what brutish hands it may fall at last! But a happy thing it was, that my mistress did not live to see the confusion." [72]

"The young lady!" said Mrs. Adair; "other affairs I have not any thing to do with."

"My young lady, madam! Ah, from a child she knew the right from wrong; but sorrowful was her life, after her mamma's death. She was no squanderer of her father's money—she knew the value of every thing; no waste, no scantiness was her mode. But it was a sad day when she ceased to rule in her father's house. O, Madam, I have seen her so treated! But it will come home at last to those who have triumphed in their wickedness; justice overtakes sinners in the long-run." [73]

Mrs. Adair now inquired if Miss Damer had heard from her father.

"No, Madam; nor dare he return to England; he is too profligate to think of any person but himself, and the painted, gaudy creature and her children who are gone with him. But I hope my young lady will find a friend with you, Madam, for I am sure you are Mrs. Adair."

Mrs. Adair told her to make herself easy respecting Miss Damer, and desired she would go down and spend a day at her house. "It will be a satisfaction to the young lady to see you," she added. [74]

Scarcely was Mrs. Adair seated, on the evening she returned home, when Elizabeth, in a tone of fretful impatience, asked "why her letter had not been answered?"

"I pass over your question," said Mrs. Adair, "to ask why you did not consult me, respecting a provision for Miss Damer?"

"It was impossible! I could not keep her in a state of suspense."

"But do you consider, that bills must be discharged, and that servants' wages and taxes must be paid, before we make even an ideal division of the sums we are to receive from parents? And for Miss Damer, we shall not receive sixpence! And who is to pay for the harp, the pelisse, the bonnet, and the books that her father requested us to purchase? Likewise her washing bills, and many other extras, which of course add to the account." [75]

"O, my dear mother," said Elizabeth with astonishment, "I could not have supposed that you would have thought of these petty things."

"I have more than thought, for they have dwelt upon my mind. Great affairs women seldom have anything to do with; it is in the petty, every-day concerns of life, that we are called upon to be prudent. How many men date their troubles to the thoughtless extravagance and want of economy in a wife! But, for the sake of bringing the subject home to your own bosom, we will suppose that you are a young married woman." Elizabeth blushed, and was attempting to speak, but Mrs. Adair checked her. "You receive your friends, and return your parties in bridal finery; one excursion takes place of another, and gaiety upon gaiety succeeds; this passes over, and with faded dresses, faded looks begin. At least, care sits a little heavy on your husband's brow; he perceives that you are deficient in all the requisites for a good wife; and when he looks round the uncomfortable apartment in which he is seated, his thoughts naturally revert to the home of his youth, and his prudent, excellent mother; you are too much the lady to attend to domestic concerns. 'Servants receive high wages: and they must do their duty.' And what is their duty? Just to please themselves; and tease you for money for trifles, and to go to market. You supply all their wants, without considering what is wasted, and what is really wanted."

"Next we will suppose that a young family demands your aid: nay, your constant care. 'But the fatigue, and the bustle, and the noise of children distract you,' Poor, helpless little things; they have not reason to take care of themselves: additional servants must therefore be engaged. And they are constantly with nurses, who sometimes coax them, sometimes beat them, and sometimes scold them; so, through their mother's idleness, they learn many vicious tricks. Evil grows upon evil. Through your extravagance, and your husband's misfortunes, you are brought to beggary. How do you like this picture?"

"O, mother! you do not think so ill of me! I would do every thing, and submit to every inconvenience, rather than involve the man I should marry in misery."

"Depend upon it, Elizabeth, people live in an ideal world, when they do not think of proper ways and means to provide for a family. The word liberal, in its modern sense, means profuseness to needy adventurers, and idle friends; indifference to the nearest and dearest ties, originate in this misapplied term. A liberal spirit runs into debt to honest tradesmen, and with an unruffled countenance hears of their bankruptcy. The liberal treat as lords, when they know they are only beggars. Believe me, the most estimable characters are those with whom there is the least tendency to this overflowing prodigality of kindness. It is, however, my wish to serve Miss Damer. She shall be educated for a governess. But let us not neglect the old despised adage: 'Be just before you are generous.'"

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CHAPTER X.

FROM the first day that Miss Vincent entered Mrs. Adair's house as a pupil, she was anxious to return to Madame La Blond's. Whilst the Colonel was at home, she knew it would be in vain to mention the subject; but no sooner was he called abroad, than she wrote in the most urgent terms to her mamma to remove her. "I shall never be happy here," she added, in her letter, "for Mrs. Adair is so strict, and tiresome! You will be surprised, mamma, when I assure you that she is quite a sanctified Methodist: we have prayers in a morning, and prayers in an evening, and are obliged to write sermons! She is not by any means a suitable person to finish my education; and there are not five young ladies in the school, whose parents drive four horses. At Blazon Lodge how different! They were all fashionable, excepting two. Do, my good mamma, let me return to my dear Madame La Blond. Miss Adair has actually put me into Murray's small grammar, and I am only in the third class."

In passing through the gallery, Mrs. Adair found the copy of the letter; and whilst she was reading it, Miss Vincent cautiously advanced, looking earnestly upon the floor. On seeing the paper in Mrs. Adair's hands, she hastily exclaimed,

"O, ma'am, that is mine! I have just dropped it: it is a copy of music, I believe!"

"Then I will look it over again," said Mrs. Adair, as she entered the school-room with the paper in her hand.

Miss Vincent followed, with a countenance of scorn and vexation.

"Take your seat, Miss Vincent." Here there was a long pause; the young ladies looked at each other, wondering what was to come next. Mrs. Adair read the copy again. "Why do you censure us so severely?" she asked.

"I only think, ma'am—I think—" and here she hesitated; but at length her former assurance

returned, and she said in a more audible voice, "I think, ma'am, we have too much religion introduced. In the circles where mamma presides, it is never mentioned."

"From my own knowledge of your mamma, I do not think you are exactly correct. But let that pass: and now answer one question: no doubt you are anticipating the time when you will be released from all school duties: when you enter the gay world, how many years do you expect to partake of the joys of a fashionable life?"

Miss Vincent was silent.

"Bating all casualties," continued Mrs. Adair, "forty years of gaiety is the utmost that a female can expect; and in scenes of pleasure, days, months, and years glide swiftly away. The value of time is unknown: at least, it is not properly estimated, till grey hairs, wrinkled features, and a debilitated frame check the career; then eternity, with all its hopes and fears, opens to the view. We will for a moment consider you upon the bed of sickness, surrounded by your family; a physician, with an air of irresolution, writing a prescription, and your anxious countenance denoting the insufficiency of all earthly aid; will the remembrance of balls, routs, and artificial scenes, cheer the dying hour? The moment arrives when you close your eyes upon this world and its vanities; 'ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,' finish the scene! The mouldering earth is lightly scattered over the coffin, and the tomb is deserted by survivors. But remember, a day will come when you will be called to judgment, to answer for your deeds upon earth. In what manner will days, months, and years of folly be justified, in the presence of your Creator and Judge?"

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CHAPTER XI.

A LITTLE time after the discovery of the letter Miss Vincent returned home to her mamma, who had been some time seriously indisposed; and, to the great joy of Mrs. Adair, the following week Miss Russel left the school, to accompany her parents to the Continent.

"Now we shall go on pleasantly," said Mrs. Adair to her daughters; "the only two disagreeable girls we had under our care are removed: and if ever I have another of a similar description, I will send her home immediately, whatever be the consequence."

Mrs. Adair's mind, at the time she said this, was a little irritated, for she had heard something particularly unpleasant respecting the conduct of her late pupils. She now resolved to be strict in future; never allow the young ladies to be alone, even in the play-ground, nor permit them to spend an hour from the school between the vacations, except by the express desire of parents in particular cases.

When the young ladies heard there would be no half-day holidays between the vacations, there was a general consternation amongst them. Some murmured, and others were satisfied that Mrs. Adair must have good reason for her proceeding. When Miss Bruce heard the new rule, she said to Isabella Vincent, "I never knew such a thing! Not visit this half year! And my Aunt promised to take me to the exhibition, and Miss Linwood's works, and I don't know where! I never knew any thing so provoking! But I will be revenged, that I will!"

"And what will you do?" asked Isabella; "what do you mean by revenge? I am sure it is something very wrong."

"It is only making others feel as well as ourselves, that's all."

"But if they vex us, why should we vex them? I know I always feel sorry when I have made people angry."

"Don't talk to me—I will write such a theme!"

"Ah, Miss Bruce! mamma says we should never do wrong."

"I wish you would not mention your mamma, for it is a very ugly word."

"O, Miss Bruce, I never heard such a thing!"

"I once loved it dearly," said Miss Bruce, in a softened tone. "Those were happy days! I can fancy I see somebody now, sitting up in bed, with her nice white cap, so pale, and so pretty; and somebody kneeling by her, and praying for her, and blessing her. But all would not do, to save one I loved!" Here tears trickled from her eyes: but she suddenly recollected herself; "I must not think of it; it is over, and for ever gone! And now for my theme."

"Poor Miss Bruce," said Isabella, in a soothing tone, "I wish you were my sister, and then you would have my mamma, and she would love you so!"

"And do you think I would give up some one, for all the mamas in the world! No, no—there is

no one like him. But I will mortify Mrs. Adair, that I will! To think that I must not go to my Aunt's on Thursday! And there will be my cousins, and Edward Warner, and Margaret James, and some one who is worth them all; though I don't talk of him as you talk of your Papa."

After musing a few minutes, with her pencil in her hand, and her head resting upon a slate, she joyfully exclaimed, "I have it, I have it indeed!" [91]

"And what have you got?" cried Isabella, as she sprang from her seat, and looked over Miss Bruce's shoulder.

"Only my ideas; neither apples nor plums. But I wish you would not wipe my face with your curls. I have got the clue to my fable; I will have Mrs. Adair, and I think your papa too."

"I am sure you never shall: you never saw papa!"

"Indeed Miss Isabella, you are quite mistaken; I have seen him in shop windows, in magazines, and I am certain he is in a fine gilt frame in our study."

"I wish people would not take such liberties. Papa has no business to be in windows, and other people's frames." [92]

"Why, don't you know that only great writers, and great fighters, and very good men, and very bad men, are noticed that way! If your papa was not good as well as great, he would not be fixed in our house, unless in the servant's room, with Jemmy and Sandy, and the Storm, and Auld Robin Grey. Whatever you may think, it is a very great honour to be noticed by somebody that I could name."

"I have not any thing to do with honour," cried Isabella, "and talking of things I don't know."

"Hush! don't speak! Can't you see that I am busy. I wish I knew what people do when they have great books to write. My thoughts jumble so together, I can't tell what to make of them; it is sad teasing work." [93]

"If Caroline was here, she could tell you what to write."

"And do you think that I should ask a dunce? If I could but begin, I know I could go on." Here Miss Bruce considered a little. "I must think of my thoughts: no, I must write them down."

"O, Miss Bruce, Miss Bruce!" cried Isabella, eagerly, "do look through the window; there is a balloon flying, and a paper boy tied to it!"

"I wish you were flying too: don't you see that I want to write my fable. Let me see: Ass, 1; Farmer Killwell, 2; somebody's papa, but not mine. Turkey, 3; Barn-fowls, 4; Little schoolgirl, 5. O, how shall I put all these words together to make any thing of them! O, that I could but begin! There it is!" said Miss Bruce joyfully; and she wrote several words upon her slate. "Well, there is nothing like a good beginning! I will finish to-night; so now let us go to the ladies," and Miss Bruce skipped out of the room, with her slate and Isabella. [94]

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CHAPTER XII.

 [95]

WITH some surprise, Miss Damer, in looking over the themes, read the following fable:

"One bleak, cold winter morning, an ass and her foals were loitering upon the edge of a wild common; not a tree was to be seen, and scarcely a bit of herbage for their breakfast to be found. 'This is a comfortless life!' said the ass; 'the winds are chilly, the snow will soon fall, and we have not a shed to cover us! What shall we do? for I fear we shall be lost.' The ass turned her head, for she heard the tinkling of bells, and saw a shepherd driving sheep from the common. 'Ah! a happy thought! we will go to Farmer Killwell, and tell our sorrows unto him.' No sooner said than done; they plodded through miry lanes, waded through shallow brooks, and at length arrived at the farmer's gate. The tale was soon told. The farmer pitied their piteous case; 'but,' said he, 'idleness bringeth want. Exert yourselves, and you will find friends. Begin a school at once; here are my poultry, my birds, and my young cattle to teach: not a moment is to be lost.'—'It is a good thing to have a good friend!' said the ass, as she stalked into the farm-yard. Here she brayed with a most audible voice: 'Hearken to me, parents and little ones!' she cried; 'I am come hither to inspire you all with wisdom.' [96]

"The goose, as wise as a goose can be, stared at the speaker; tossed her head on one side, gave a loud quack, and returned to comfort her goslings, who were fluttering in every direction. [97]

"'You little ducklings,' continued the ass, 'don't spread your feet so vulgarly. Mrs. Turkey, I have long sighed for the honour of your patronage: the charming little poults, I hope, will gain new beauties from our exertions. Mrs. Barn-fowl, your chickens are too timid; we shall soon teach

them to hop with grace. As for these awkward maudlin rabbits, I fear we cannot do any thing with them; and these ill-bred creatures, Mrs. Sow's progeny, we cannot attempt to teach.' A sturdy mastiff, who had followed the group of gazers, now barked furiously; dispersed the poultry, pushed Mrs. Sow and her family into the mud; and, spite of Farmer Killwell, drove the ass and her foals out of the farm-yard. A little girl, who was witness to the hubbub, exclaimed, 'Ah! this is excellent! Mrs. Adair has borrowed a garment from the ass, to teach simple ones wisdom; but she will never teach little girls to love new rules.'

[98]

"Where is the moral to your fable?" asked Miss Damer, with some degree of anger.

[99]

"I never thought of the moral; of what use would it be to my theme?" returned Miss Bruce.

"And of what use is any theme or fable without a moral? But I wish to know your motive for writing this ridiculous piece."

"To vex Mrs. Adair, certainly, because she won't let me go to my Aunt's on Thursday."

"And do you really think that it is in your power to vex Mrs. Adair with this trifling nonsense? You may be assured of this, Miss Bruce, the only notice she will take of this childish, insignificant fable, will be to make you read it to the ladies."

"I won't be talked to in this way, though you are my monitress. I will write what I please;" so saying, she snatched the slate from Miss Damer, and in haste rubbed off the words.

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"The wisest thing you could do," said Miss Damer. "Now sit down, and reflect seriously upon your conduct, and then tell me whether you feel quite satisfied with yourself, or whether you are grateful to Mrs. Adair for her care of you, and attention to you. You are the only little girl who has not a mamma: who would be so indulgent, so tender to you, as Mrs. Adair?"

At these words Miss Bruce sobbed violently; but her sorrow was of short duration: "You would vex any thing, Miss Damer, with talking so quietly. I like people to be angry with me, and then I can be angry myself."

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"My dear, I shall not listen to you, so I advise you to cease talking: it is my plan never to argue with unruly little girls. Come, Miss Grey, and Isabella; we will go into the play-ground."

Isabella whispered to Miss Bruce as she passed her; "do, dear Miss Bruce, be good. Why should you vex Miss Damer when she is so kind to you?" Miss Bruce pushed her companion's hand from her shoulder, and turned her face to the wall, and there they found her on their return.

When the bell rang for prayers, Miss Bruce sprang across the room to Miss Damer, who was seated, talking to Miss Arden, and throwing her arms round her neck, she exclaimed, "You must indeed forgive me; I cannot sleep unless you say, 'good night.'"

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Miss Damer turned round, and kissed her: "Now, my dear, I hope you will never offend me again."

"Oh, Miss Damer! I will love you for ever, for forgiving me so soon." The bell rang, and she hastened out of the room.

"Should you not have been a little more stern?" said Miss Arden.

"My dear friend, ask yourself whether you could be so to a little girl who has no mother."

Tears started into Miss Arden's eyes. "I did not think of that."

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CHAPTER XIII.

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ONE evening after school-hours, Mrs. Adair went into Jane's apartment, who at this time was chiefly confined to her chamber, and found her busily employed sealing small parcels. One was directed, "For my friend Miss Damer;" another, "For my dear little Isabella Vincent;" and a third, "For my amiable young friend Miss Arden." Mrs. Adair seated herself with the work in which she was engaged: and as her eyes glanced to the sealed parcels, tears stole down her cheeks.

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"My dear mother," said Jane with tenderness, "I am only making a little preparation before my journey. You must have been aware, some time, that the days of my life were numbered; and they will now be very few. But do not grieve on my account: it is the appointment of One, who is unerring in his ways. Excepting the separation from you and my sister, I feel that I have no regret at leaving this world."

"Death is a subject that I have often contemplated. The grave, and the last perishable garment in which I shall be clothed, have now lost all their terrors. The evening I first arrived at school,

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when my mind was filled with grief at our separation, I remember being greatly shocked at the slow, solemn, deep tones of the village church-bell. I cannot describe my feelings at the time. Sorrow at leaving home rendered the awful muffled peal more dismal to my ears: but from that night I may date my first serious thoughts of another world. I have never troubled my friends with my reflections, but that bell was as a monitor, to warn me that I was not for this world."

Miss Arden now entered the room; and Mrs. Adair gladly escaped, to indulge her tears in secret. With a calm collected countenance she then re-joined her pupils; but at the same time experienced the sorrow of a parent, who knows she is soon to be deprived of a beloved child. For Jane's appearance too plainly denoted, that the period was at hand "when the keepers of the house would tremble." At this time her uneasiness was increased by a melancholy, distressing letter from Mrs. Vincent, urging her not to delay a moment coming to her; that she was to undergo an operation, that would either close life or restore her to her family. Various feelings agitated Mrs. Adair's mind as she read the letter. After a little reflection, she fixed upon the proper mode of acting, and in an hour a chaise was at the door, to convey her to her old friend.

Jane had now been confined wholly to her chamber a fortnight. Her disease was of a fluctuating nature: sometimes she appeared almost in perfect health; at others, as one dropping into the grave. She was seated in an arm-chair, supported with pillows. When Mrs. Adair entered the chamber, one hand rested upon a book that lay open upon a small table, and near the book was her watch; her head was thrown back, and her face was covered with a muslin handkerchief. Mrs. Adair, who had slowly opened the door, now as cautiously advanced; listened to hear her daughter breathe; and then gently raised the handkerchief. Jane started. Afraid of disturbing her, Mrs. Adair remained some time with fixed attention, holding the handkerchief from her face. A hectic flush was upon her cheeks; but her countenance was placid and happy. When she returned into her own chamber, Elizabeth was there, who anxiously inquired if she had seen her sister. "But have you taken leave of her?" she cried.

Mrs. Adair drew the veil of her bonnet over her face, as she said, "taking leave is a trial of all others—" and here she paused; "this is not of any consequence to you."

"O, my dear mother, we have no earthly hope, no support but yourself; let my sister's eyes rest for the last time upon the mother she has so tenderly loved; she will not die in peace unless you are with her."

"My feelings are as irritable as your own," said Mrs. Adair; "leave me to act according to my own judgment: not another word. Bring Isabella to me, for the chaise is at the door."

While the ladies were walking with Miss Wilkins, the teacher, Elizabeth went into her sister's chamber; and at the door met Mrs. Lloyd, the housekeeper, who had been ordered by Mrs. Adair to explain the motive of the journey to Jane.

"O, sister," cried Elizabeth, "how could my mother, so considerate and good as she is, leave you in this state!"

"We cannot tell all her motives," said Jane; "only consider what were my mother's feelings, when she fixed her eyes upon this poor emaciated frame, as she supposed, for the last time."

"It was cruelty in the extreme," cried Elizabeth.

"Do not speak rashly, my dear Elizabeth; we will hope—" and her eyes brightened with an expression of joy, "that all will yet be well; that, through the mercy of Providence, Mrs. Vincent will be restored to health, and that I shall be permitted to remain a little longer with you."

"O, that it were to the day of my own death," exclaimed Elizabeth with fervency. "There are few persons to whom my heart earnestly inclines, and I would have them with me through this life, and all eternity."

"My dear sister, these things are not at our disposal. But let us consider the subject: every night we experience temporary dissolution: and then we are separated, even as if the hand of death had smitten us; when we go to rest, we have no positive assurance that we are to open our eyes again upon the objects of this world; still we project schemes; calculate upon probable and improbable events; but the entire suspension of our faculties is never taken into the account. Yet we are ignorant whether we are to open our eyes on the objects of this world, or that which is to come. I own I have not any desponding thoughts; I rest alone upon the mercies and the merits of a suffering and a redeeming Saviour; he is my sole refuge. To our mother, my conscience acquits me either of intentional errors, or errors of omission. This is a source of the purest consolation; it clears the rough, the thorny path to the valley of death. Elizabeth, my dearest sister, listen to me before I go hence, and be no more seen. Every night recall to mind the actions of the day. Let this be the question you put to yourself: "Have I done my duty in all things?" Where you have failed, let the morning sun, as it rises, be a token to you that another day is given for wise and good purposes; in the grave there is no remembrance of error, no atonement to be made for transgression, for neglect of the social duties of life."

Elizabeth gazed at her sister with feelings of tenderness and sorrow.

"All things pass away," said Jane, as she raised her eyes to her sister's agitated face; "but 'when this mortal has put on immortality,' then Elizabeth, when we meet again, it will not be for transient days, and years, but for ages of eternity."

Exhausted with speaking so long, she pointed to the book upon the table. "The spirit is willing," said she, faintly, "but my voice is weak; will you oblige me, sister?"

"From my heart I will," exclaimed Elizabeth; "would that I could not only oblige, but retain you for our comfort, for this world to my mother will be a wilderness indeed."

"Not so," said Jane, tears flowing into her eyes; "my affectionate, my warm-hearted sister will be my substitute! O, Elizabeth, friend dearest to me, may you be blessed where your heart is fixed." [114]

Elizabeth started, and her countenance became pale as death.

"Sister," Jane slowly added, "you could not keep the secret from me; I have traced it in all your actions; but, rest assured, it will descend with me to the grave."

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CHAPTER XIV.

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ELIZABETH WAS restless and uneasy the whole of the day that her mother had taken her departure for Colonel Vincent's. The evening was wet and gloomy; the young people could not, therefore, take their usual exercise in the play-ground. After sitting some time with her sister and Miss Arden, she sauntered into the school-room, to observe how they were employed. Some of the young ladies were attending to their lessons for the following day. One party had spread the road to happiness upon a work-box; all anxious to attain the desired haven. Another young lady was seated alone, joining the map of Europe. In a corner of the room, apart from all her companions, Miss Bruce was reading the admirable instructive tale "Display." Elizabeth looked over her shoulder, "My dear, I thought you had read that book six months ago." [116]

"O yes, ma'am; but I can read it over and over again: there is not a new book now in the school."

"You mean," said Elizabeth, smiling, "that you have read them all. But can you explain the word "Display?" for I think most young ladies are partial to it, in one shape or another." A carriage now stopped at the door; and Elizabeth exclaimed, "who is in that carriage?" Miss Grey, who was near the window, raised herself upon a box, and looking over the blind, cried, "Mrs. Adair, ma'am, and Miss Isabella Vincent." [117]

Elizabeth hastened from the room, and met her mother at the hall door, joyfully exclaiming, "O, my dear mother, this is an unexpected, welcome pleasure! But how is Mrs. Vincent?"

"Composed and comfortable; the operation was performed yesterday: but it was not my intention to desert you: how could you think so?"

The truth was, Mrs. Adair had called upon the physician, and begged that he would inform her daughter that she would return in the evening: but a press of engagements had prevented his visit to Jane, who now with joy beheld her mother enter her chamber. [118]

"I thought you would return to see me on my journey," she exclaimed; "and you are returned, my dear mother. Blessed be this hour!"

Miss Arden and Miss Damer, from the hour they met in the summer-house, were strict friends. Their capacities were similar, and they were at the head of the different classes. On the days appointed for geography, the young ladies were in a room called the study. Miss Arden had observed that one of the servants, a respectable looking young woman, generally contrived to enter the apartment, and busy herself with one thing or another: but always looked, anxiously at the globes, or the maps, and stopped a moment to listen, either to the teacher or the pupils. Miss Arden noticed the circumstance to her friend; "I will certainly ask Catherine," she said, "if she has any motive in attending to our pursuits; there is something in her countenance that excites my curiosity." [119]

The first time she met her alone, she made the inquiry.

"I have, indeed, ma'am, a motive," said Catherine; "I would give all my wages, could I but learn as you do."

"But of what use, Catherine, would learning be to you? You can read your Bible; and it will shew you all that is necessary for you to know. Your duty as a servant, and the way to heaven, the place where we all hope to meet, when we have done with this world, and its cares." [120]

"Ah, ma'am, I am not satisfied even with knowing this, though it is all that a servant should know."

"I do not understand you, Catherine. Tell me why you wish to gain other knowledge?"

"Because, ma'am, I am most wishful to be useful to my parents. They are poor, and have a large family to bring up. If I could but open a little school in our village, what a blessing should I be to them!"

"Well, Catherine," said Miss Arden, after considering a little, "I will do what I can for you—I mean if Miss Damer approves; for I dare not trust to my own judgment. Meet me in the school-room early to-morrow morning, and I will tell you how it is to be." [121]

When the friends met in the play-ground, they talked the subject over.

"There cannot, I think, be any thing wrong in doing good to a fellow-creature," said Miss Damer, "therefore I think we may venture; but we must rise an hour earlier than usual."

Catherine was delighted when she heard the result of their conference; and, with many expressions of thankfulness, promised to leave a lamp at their door. [122]

The young ladies began the employment of teaching with alacrity. They endeavoured to ground Catherine in those things that would be useful in a village school. But geography her mind was bent upon, so Miss Arden presented to her a book; likewise several little works, which she thought would be useful.

One morning, however, they were surprised in the midst of their lessons. "Begin that line again," said Miss Arden. Elizabeth had walked gently into the room, and now stood by the table where the two young ladies were seated, and Catherine standing. When they beheld her, they all started, and looked aghast. "You are very early at your tasks, young ladies! But I did not know that we had a new pupil. Pray when did she arrive?" [123]

"I beg you a thousand pardons, ma'am, for leading the young ladies to do wrong! It was all my fault," said Catherine.

Miss Arden related the matter plainly as it was.

"I commend Catherine," said Elizabeth, "for her wish to serve her parents; nor am I offended with you, young ladies, for wishing to serve her. But you must beware that we are not to do a wrong thing, even with the very best motives. There is always something mean in acting clandestinely. Why could you not have been candid, and told me her wish? You must not meet here again. Catherine, when you have leisure, continue your lessons; and I will fix upon some other mode of instructing you; at least a proper time, not by the light of a lamp." [124]

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CHAPTER XV.

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WHEN the physician was first called in to attend Jane, he strictly forbade any person sleeping with her: Elizabeth, therefore, removed to a small camp bed, which was placed by her sister.

A few mornings after Mrs. Adair's visit to Mrs. Vincent, Jane suddenly awoke; and in an earnest, quick tone of voice, begged that her sister would come to her. "But first draw aside the window curtain," said she, "That is right. Now come into my bed—only this morning—never—never again."

Surprised at a request so unusual, Elizabeth instantly obeyed. "Do not sit up, sister, nor creep from me; lay your head upon my pillow." [126]

Jane now folded her arms round her sister's neck, and kissed her tenderly.—"This is my first and last proof of affection! O, sister! where—and when shall we meet again?"

The sun had risen, and gilded every part of the room. Jane raised herself, as if by magic. "Let me behold every thing—for I shall never behold any objects upon earth again! This day my soul will be required by my Heavenly Father! Ah, my soul! it is an awful thing to die; even with hope and trust in thy Almighty Power! But Thou art mighty to strike,—merciful and gracious in raising thy servants unto glory." [127]

Jane now paused; other thoughts seemed to arise. Her glazed eyes wandered from object to object. "Ah! there is my writing-desk; give that to my mother! There is my Bible; that is for my dear little favourite! Here is my watch; but I cannot see the minute finger move. It is of no consequence: time will soon be over! Keep it, my dear Elizabeth, and when you look upon it, remember we are to meet again!—Ah! thou bright luminary!" she exclaimed, with fervency, "I hail thee, this, my last morning upon earth, as the evidence of that Being, who will lead me through the valley of the shadow of death, to never-ending glory! What is this life, my dearest Elizabeth, when we come to die? But where is my mother? I am weak—very weak, and faint." [128]

"Let me support you, dear Jane," said Elizabeth, trembling with emotion.

"Well, sister," said Jane, faintly, "you shall support me. I will die in your arms!"

Jane dropped in a state of insensibility upon her pillow. Elizabeth rang the bell; and the next minute Mrs. Adair was in the room. She stepped to the side of the bed where her youngest daughter lay; and, stooping, listened to hear her breathe. "My affectionate, my dutiful child!" Here she ceased, for tears checked her utterance. Jane sighed deeply; her eyes gradually opened, and, at length, rested upon her mother: by slow degrees recollection returned. [129]

"Where could my thoughts be!" she exclaimed in hurried accents. "Is my mother here? Ah, yes! I behold her! I did not know you, indeed I did not! But bless me; bless your daughter."

Mrs. Adair tenderly embraced Jane; and in faltering accents blessed her.

"My dearest, kindest mother, be comforted! We are parting—but to meet again! The trial will soon be over! My hope is fixed upon the promises of a merciful Redeemer! I am only going a little—a very little while before you! How joyful is the thought, that we are not separating for ever!—this is my joy," and her eyes brightened as she spoke, "that I have revered my God, and loved my mother. But this pain;—O, it is violent!—Mother—"...Here the voice ceased; not a sigh, not a whisper was heard. [130]

Mrs. Adair, who had been supporting her daughter, now gently placed her head upon the pillow, and silently led Elizabeth out of the room.

At the door of her own apartment she saw Mrs. Lloyd; and desiring her to take the charge of Elizabeth, who appeared almost convulsed with anguish, instantly returned into the chamber she had so recently quitted. After indulging that grief, which the most unfeeling in some measure experience, when they behold the lifeless remains of a being they had loved, she calmly proceeded to accomplish the desire of the departed, in preparing her for that narrow spot, which confines all that was mighty, rich, noble, excellent—the despised of the world, the neglected of the world; that spot which is the boundary of ambition, and the sure refuge for the distressed. [131]

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CHAPTER XVI. [132]

WHEN Mrs. Adair had retired to her own chamber, on the night of her daughter's decease, and was reflecting upon the awful event of the morning, her attention was drawn from the subject by a low whispering sound. Aware that the teachers and servants were retired to rest, she could not account for the circumstance; she now heard doors slowly opening, and was persuaded that different persons were passing her room. Alarmed, but at the same time collected, she cautiously opened her own door; and perceiving a glimmering light proceed from the chamber where her daughter's remains were laid, resolved to be satisfied, and with light, slow steps, advanced to the spot. There, with surprise, she beheld several of her pupils. At the head of the bed stood Miss Arden, with eyes mournfully bent upon the face of the departed; Miss Damer stooped to kiss the corpse, and then burst into a violent flood of tears. "That smile," said Miss Cotton, "proves that the soul is rejoicing in heaven. Where shall we again behold upon earth one so amiable or so lovely?" [133]

"O, that I may be equally prepared, when my hour comes," cried Miss Arden.

"Hush! hush!" cried Isabella Vincent, in a tone of terror, "did you not hear some one breathe? O, do hide me." She now covered her face with her frock. [134]

Miss Grey took her passive hand, and tried to comfort her. "Look at Miss Jane, and then you will not be frightened; now do look—it is so simple to be afraid; she appears only as if she were asleep. There is not any thing terrible in death, only to wicked people; I am sure I should not be afraid to die to-night."

"I dare not look! indeed I dare not! do take me to my own room."

"You must look at Miss Jane, or you will always be frightened at being alone. You know I am but a little girl as well as yourself; but I should not be afraid to sleep here to-night. Think how good she was! living or dead, she would never injure us." [135]

"O, take me away: I don't know what you are saying; why does not some one speak? O, do somebody speak, or I shall be frightened to death."

Miss Grey whispered to her companion that Mrs. Adair was come into the room.

"Is she? O how glad I am! Now I don't mind." Saying this, she uncovered her face, and crept quietly to Mrs. Adair; who was asking why they had assembled in the chamber at so improper an hour.

"We should have been miserable, ma'am," said Miss Cotton, "unless we had seen Miss Jane to-night; and as we shall never behold her again, we thought, ma'am, you would pardon us. I could not have slept; and the other ladies declared the same."

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"But wherefore did you come, Isabella?"

"O, ma'am, because I dared not to be alone."

"But why are you afraid to look at my daughter?"

"O, I am not afraid now; I will look at Miss Jane," said Isabella with assumed courage; "but do let me take hold of your hand, ma'am; then I know I shall be safe."

"You have better protection than mine, my little girl, or you would be poorly defended. He who made you, he alone can guard you: but there is not any thing to fear from the dead."

Mrs. Adair led her pupil to the head of the bed.

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"Look, my dear, how happy and composed she appears; as quiet and sound as your little brother, when he is asleep."

By degrees, Isabella ventured to turn her eyes upon the corpse; "I am not afraid, I am not afraid indeed," said she, almost gasping for breath. At length her eyes were fixed upon the face of the deceased: "She can't be dead—she must be asleep! But hush! I do not hear her breathe! Where is Miss Jane's breath now, ma'am?" As she said this, she timidly stretched forth her hand, and lightly touched the face of the departed; then hastily starting back, cried; "must we all be so cold—as cold as marble?"

"We must all be so, indeed! There is no warmth, my little girl, when the soul is fled."

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"But what is the soul, ma'am? and where is it?" asked Miss Bruce.

"Your question is beyond my power to answer. The vital spirit, which we call the soul, is given by God, to direct us to do that which is right; and, from childhood to the grave, is our faithful friend. My daughter, whose lifeless remains you are now contemplating, was in all her ways actuated by this spirit, to obedience, and to goodness; and in a state of glory she will again exist, with a mind purified and exalted. What would be the use of life, and of the wonderful powers with which we are gifted, were we to lie down in the grave, as the beasts that perish?"

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"But how will Miss Jane rise again, ma'am?" asked Miss Bruce. "It is in the Bible, that at the last day we shall be 'raised in the twinkling of an eye.' O, that I could behold Miss Jane rise now; then I should never die!"

"We read," said Mrs. Adair, "that the seed is cast into the earth, and rises up wheat, or any other grain: but we do not know how this comes to pass. The seed, that looks so insignificant in our eyes, after it has been in the earth the appointed time, gradually breaks forth in all its glory. We likewise shall be put into the earth; no longer valued, but by the remembrance of our worth; there we shall moulder and decay, and in time be forgotten by all the inhabitants upon earth. But the season of the resurrection will come: the soul will resume her influence; we shall burst the fetters of the tomb, and appear before the Judge of nations, to answer for our deeds upon earth. Be good, then, my dear young friends; and, you will then neither have cause to fear death, or future judgment. And now take your leave—your final leave of one, who was in all things worthy of imitation; and learn with equal ease, to sleep or die."

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CHAPTER XVII.

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THE Sunday after the funeral, the young ladies appeared at church, with very serious and sorrowful countenances; and afterwards, with Miss Arden and Miss Damer, Jane was often a subject of conversation: they loved to recall her to remembrance; and the proofs she had left of her regard were particularly prized by them.

But serious impressions seldom remain long upon the minds of very young people. Miss Bruce was almost the first to return to her old pursuits with gaiety of heart.

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One evening, unknown to the teacher, she had strolled to the front garden gate, apparently on the watch for mischief. Isabella, who was intent upon learning her lessons for the following day, had likewise passed the boundary of the play-ground, and had sauntered the same way.

Miss Bruce in a moment caught her hand, opened the gate, and ran with her into the lane.

"Where are you taking me to?" exclaimed Isabella; "you have frightened me so!"

"Nonsense! I only want you to go with me to the cake shop: we shan't be five minutes away."

"But I have no business at the cake shop. And don't you see that I am learning my lessons! You will make me forget all! 'Five times nine, forty-five.' O, dear, I shall forget every thing!" [143]

"What a dunce!" cried Miss Bruce; "only at forty-five! I will teach you ten times further; and to add, and to subtract, if you will come with me. I do believe Miss Wilkins is there! Come along, or we shall be finely punished!" Saying this, Miss Bruce dragged Isabella down the lane, whilst she struggled to make her escape.

"I will not go, Miss Bruce! you have no right to take me! I declare you have made me drop my questions!"

"Never mind; I will give you question and answer too. Don't you see that stile? and that nice white cottage by that large pool of water, where those children are throwing stones? We have only to turn down by those tall trees, and we shall be there in a moment." [144]

"I dare not go: I know Mrs. Adair will be so angry!"

"I am determined you shall come! you are the most stupid little thing in England!" As Miss Bruce said this, she took firm hold of her companion's frock and arm, and drew her towards the water. Isabella in vain tried to escape. By this time, they had almost reach the pool; a boy, who had been amusing two children, making circles with stones in the water, stepped from the edge of the pond, and marching boldly up to Miss Bruce, as boldly asked her, "what business she had to tease the little lady?" [145]

"Do you think, Sir, I shall answer a rude, vulgar boy like you?"

The boy looked at her with contempt, and stooping to Isabella, said, "Do, little lady, tell me what this great girl is holding your frock for?"

"She wants me to go with her for cakes, and I want to learn my lessons."

"O, you are the ladies, then, from the great school! I thought I had seen you before. I see how it is; this great girl is like Jack Ranger; she wants to get you into a scrape, that you may be marked as well as herself! But I'll defend you, never fear! It is not a crab-stick that can frighten me! Come with me, and see who dares to hinder us!" He now caught her hand, and tried to draw her from her companion. [146]

"You shall not go with her, against your mind, were she as big as Hercules! We are English, and are not to be conquered." Miss Bruce suddenly let go her companion's frock, and gave the boy a violent slap upon the face. "Go home, you little ragged creature, mend your coat, and do not talk to ladies."

The boy instantly recovered himself from the blow; and looking at Miss Bruce with scorn, exclaimed, "I am not a mender of old clothes, Miss! Take that for your pains, and your boarding-school manners!" [147]

The blow he returned made blood to gush violently from Miss Bruce's nose. Isabella screamed; the children cried out, "very well, Tom! I would not be you for something."

A pretty woman, but with a stern countenance, now came forth from the cottage, and asked what the rout was about.

"Only our Tom and the lady boxing," cried the children.

"For shame of yourself, Sir! How dare you behave so to your betters?"

"I would have struck her," said the boy, sullenly, "had she been as tall as the steeple, and as great as King George But come, little Miss, with me, and let that great girl do what she likes." [148]

He now ran off with Isabella.

"Very well, Sir! but I shall tell your father of this, or my name's not Grace Johnson! But come into the cottage, Miss; and let us see what we can do with your frock, for it is in a sad state."

Miss Bruce followed the cottager, a little ashamed of her appearance; but more afraid of consequences. She was, however, one of those self-willed young ladies, who think upon a thing one moment, and act upon it the next.

When Isabella and her champion arrived at the garden-gate, behold it was locked! What was to be done was now the consideration. [149]

"We'll tell the truth at once," said the boy: "it may be blamed, but, as the copy says, it never can be shamed. But don't look so down, Miss: never mind a bit of a thrashing! Father gives me many a one; but I never flinch!"

"If I am not afraid of that, I am afraid of Mrs. Adair looking serious; and not wishing me good-night. But do look and see if you can see monitrix."

"Monitrix! what, in the name of goodness, is that? Have you a great dog at school?"

"O dear, no; I mean the lady who hears my lessons before I say them to Miss Adair."

"Is that all!" The boy stepped on one side, and looked up at the house. "No, I see nobody; there is not a creature in the windows. But I'll tell you what, you shall stop here, and I'll go to the lady of the school. You shan't get anger, if I can help it; and I have helped it many a time at our school, that the lads know, to my sorrow."

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The boy hastily ran to the front door, and rang the bell. In the mean time Isabella crept under the court railing to conceal herself. When the servant opened the door, he asked if the lady was in.

"Do you mean my mistress?"

"To be sure I do; the mistress of the school; and must see her in a moment."

Mrs. Adair was passing through the hall; and made her appearance, with a countenance not a little forbidding.

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"What do you want with me?" she asked.

"Only, madam," and here the boy hesitated; "I beg your pardon, madam; somehow, I have a little lady here: and I don't know what to do with her."

"You mean something respecting one of my scholars; what is it? for I am at a loss to understand you."

"Bless me! surely she's not run away!"

The boy sprang to the gate, and quickly returned.

"She is quite snug; I thought she had given me the slip. A great girl, ma'am, ran away with her. She did not come down to the pond of her own free good will. This is as true as truth is. She pulled, and the great girl pulled; but with all her might, madam, the little lady could not get away. So then I marched up to the big girl; and asked her what business she had with the little one? So she was angry and vexed with my ragged coat; and made my face ring again: and I gave her a good hard blow in return, and ran off with little Miss. I looked up for Miss Monitrix, but could not find her; so here she is, under the rails."

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This was all a puzzle to Mrs. Adair; but she stepped into the lane with the boy, and there she saw Isabella, seated, in great trouble, upon a stone. The affair was now explained. Isabella was taken to Elizabeth, with the assurance that no one would be angry with her; but that she must not mention the affair to any person.

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Mrs. Adair now proposed going with the boy to his father's. There was an expression of honest warmth in his countenance, which, in a moment, changed her own manner; and, as they were going down the lane, she asked how far they were from his father's house.

"'Tis but a cottage, madam. Grandmother says we were once well off in the world; but things will go wrong some how or another: but I'll make good what I wrote to-day."

"And what was it, my good boy?"

"Only to work while I am able, madam; and then when I am old, I will rest from my labour. But there is our cottage. I wish you could have seen my own mother, for she was a nice woman. Don't you see that clump of trees, and a barn with red tiles, and a little boy wheeling a barrow? That's my own brother, ma'am, and there's my father at the stile, looking about him."

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As they drew nearer the cottage, they saw the man and his son step over the stile into the field, followed by a female.

"Well, I declare," said the boy, "there is mother with her bonnet! I wonder what they are all after! And there's grandmother come to the door!"

He now called out: "Grandmother! here is the lady from the great school, coming to look for Miss."

"Then I fear, madam, you are coming to look for what you will not find. Whilst my daughter went down to the pond, to the children, she slipped off. My son thinks that the young lady is gone to London in one of the stage-coaches. If so, Tom, I fear thou wilt be well paid."

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"Ah, grandmother, that's nothing new! If my own mother was living, it would not be so."

"With your permission," said Mrs. Adair, as she entered the cottage, "I will take a seat till your daughter returns."

"Certainly, madam; here is a comfortable seat. But we are not the neatest people in the world," said the old woman, as she took up a child's frock from the floor. Mrs. Adair looked round, and thought she had never been in any place that had so little the appearance of comfort.

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The boy looked at her, and seemed to read her countenance.

"It was not always so, madam: I remember we were once happy folks; but it was a sad day for Dick and I, when father's wife took place of father's love."

"Thou shouldst think well of thy father's wife, and honour his choice. Stepmothers, child, have a hard task: they cannot please, do what they will."

"Grandmother," said the boy, "kindness makes kindness, all the world over. But, come what will, when uncle comes home, Dick and I will go to Plymouth, if we walk barefoot. I am sure he would break his heart, if he had not me to fight his battles; but I will never forsake him by land or by sea."

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"Go to the children, and take care of them," said the old woman.

"And come to my house at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and ask for Mrs. Adair."

The boy made a bow in a blunt manner; but, as he waved his hand in passing her, she thought there was an appearance of good breeding, that would not have disgraced a boy in a much higher sphere.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

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MRS. ADAIR waited a considerable time in the cottage, and then returned home without receiving any satisfactory account of her pupil. All that she could learn was, that a little girl in a green bonnet had been seen stepping into a stage-coach. As coaches were continually passing the end of the village, she knew it was in vain making further inquiries. She wrote, however, immediately to Mr. Bruce, and sent a messenger with the letter, that he might meet them in town.

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It has been observed, that Miss Bruce, in most cases, acted without reflection. The idea that she had done wrong did not strike her with full force, until the carriage in which she had placed herself arrived in London: the lights from the lamps, however, seemed to throw light upon her thoughts. When the coach stopped at the inn, the bustle of people gathering their luggage together, the idea that she did not know the road to her father's house, the certainty that she had acted in a very foolish manner, and fear of the reception from her father, excited many disagreeable thoughts. She was seated in a corner of the coach, at a loss how to proceed, when the coachman came to the door. "Miss," said he "won't you alight? perhaps you are waiting for somebody?"

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"I will thank you to take me home," and this was said in a very humble tone.

The man whistled at the request. "I don't know, Miss, whether I can or no. Did not your friends know that you were coming? But now I think of it, you seemed in a fright when you got into the coach: what, was you running away, Miss?"

Vexed at the question, Miss Bruce quickly answered, "I am going to see my papa. I have business with him."

"Well, your business is not mine, Miss; but somehow, I think you have been cheating your schoolmistress. But come your way, till I can see for somebody to go with you."

I only wish some of my young readers could have seen Miss Bruce, how simple she looked when she followed the coachman into the inn. She wished to be at school, and with Miss Damer again—but it was then too late.

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And here I would advise young people to beware of the first wrong step, for it generally leads to trouble and mortification, and often to disgrace.

Miss Bruce stood some time unnoticed at the entrance of a large room, partitioned into boxes. Waiters and travellers just looked at the young lady, and then passed on: people were too much engaged, with dishes, papers, packages, and glasses, to attend to the little stranger.

At length, however, one solitary gentleman, who perhaps had daughters of his own, took compassion upon the forlorn traveller.

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"Come hither, my dear, and sit by me."

Miss Bruce gladly accepted the offer, for she was a strange figure for a stage coach passenger. Her white frock was rumpled, and in a sad state from the blow she had received; the tippet was in the same style; her old green silk garden bonnet hung half off her head. One of her long sleeves she had untied from her tippet, and taken it off; the other remained. Garden gloves, cut at the fingers, completed the dress. Thus neatly attired, in an hour and ten minutes after her arrival in London she was ushered by a new footman into her father's study, where he was seated reading a pamphlet. In a moment he turned the book open upon the table, raised one of the candlesticks above his head, and with a keen satirical look exclaimed, "what runaway is this?"

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"Papa, it is I!" This was said in a very trembling accent.

"And pray who is I, that comes thus attired, and unasked at this unseasonable hour? Only wants three minutes of eleven," said Mr. Bruce as he fixed his eyes upon the time-piece. "With whom

did you travel?"

"With a little boy, and a great man, papa, and a little woman, with a baby and a lapdog."

As Miss Bruce was speaking, she would have given a trifle to have been at school again.

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"A goodly company indeed, young lady! By this I conclude that you have disgraced yourself! Sit here" (pointing to a chair behind the door); "it is the only place for idle, thoughtless truants. And now give a reason for your conduct: But there is no reason, with foolish, giddy girls! I will have every word correct: no varnishing, or lies."

After much hesitation, and many tears, Miss Bruce went through the whole of her story. While she was speaking, her father seemed lost in thought. No sooner had she finished, but he started from his chair, and with his eyes fixed upon the floor, walked some time from one end of the study to the other. He then stopped, and looked sternly at his daughter. "And so you have been trying your skill at boxing! An admirable accomplishment for a young lady! You have taken upon yourself to be rude to your school companion; to be ungrateful to Mrs. Adair, and ventured to ride ten miles in a stage-coach! And in what a dress! You are indeed an enterprising young lady! Now let me tell you, Miss Bruce, one simple truth: you have acted in all things contrary to that which you know is right. But pray what is the meaning of the word right?"

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"To do all things that I know I should do; I do not know any thing more, papa; indeed I do not."

"You know the right, but a perverse and wilful disposition leads you to do wrong."

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Mr. Bruce rang the bell, and ordered the housekeeper into his presence. When she entered the room, he commanded her to close the door. "Take my daughter," said he, "to the chamber that was occupied last night. You are not to speak to her, nor allow any servant in the house to do so. Give her a little bread and milk: go, child."

"Papa,"—here Miss Bruce sobbed; and would have added, "O, do forgive me!" but her father sternly bade her leave him.

Mr. Bruce looked at his daughter when she was asleep. He heard her murmuring and intreating; and listened to words that affected him deeply. He sat down by her bed-side until she was tranquil: and whether he shed tears of tenderness over her is best known to himself; but the following morning, though his feelings were softened, his countenance was equally stern. His carriage was at the door; and at ten o'clock he and his daughter arrived at Mrs. Adair's. Neither at breakfast nor during the ride had he uttered one word. "Madam," said he, the moment he beheld the mistress of his child, "I have brought a runaway. I will not make an apology for her conduct: it is not in my way; it rests entirely with yourself whether she will be accepted or rejected. Providence, in the justness of his ways, has deprived her of an excellent mother. How far servants are capable of giving right ideas of female decorum, you are yourself to judge. When I fixed Margaret with you, it was not to education alone that I looked; my views and hopes extended to principles, temper, and conduct. The mere mechanical parts of education may at all times be purchased for money; automatons may be made to perform wonders. But we all know that something more is wanting to give solidity and consequence to character. If you refuse my daughter, she will lose her best friend."

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"Not another word, Sir, on the subject; I still expect to make something of this little girl. She is rash, careless, and perhaps a little mischievous: but I am not without hope; and past grievances we will now forget. Go," said Mrs. Adair, turning to her pupil, "bring a frock to me; remember I pardon you now, but I shall never do so again; and take care that you do not tell any person that you ran away, and were so foolish.—It is well she is my god-daughter, and my namesake," said Mrs. Adair, as her pupil crossed the hall: then, addressing Mr. Bruce, she added, "Depend upon my word, Sir; I will be the friend of your daughter in remembrance of her mother; this is the strongest claim upon my attention; far more so than that of a name."

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"I bless you again and again for your kindness," said Mr. Bruce with warmth. "I have now no fears for Margaret; she must remain with you, until you can say, 'your daughter is now all I can desire.'"

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"This is exacting too much; 'all that you can desire,' is beyond my power to make her; but I will try to make her a comfort to you. I have good ground to work upon, and I hope you will have reason to think, that I have not neglected the soil."

As Mr. Bruce was returning to his carriage, his daughter, who was descending the stairs with a clean frock, flew to him, exclaiming, "do say you forgive me! I will never vex you again; O, dear papa, say you will but forgive me."

"Well, child, I do forgive you."

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"O, how good and kind you are! I will never forget it. But, dear papa, won't you say something more?"

"God bless you, child! and may he always bless you."

Mr. Bruce hastened to the carriage, drew up the window, and the boy drove off. Tears streamed from Miss Bruce's eyes; "O, that papa would but have given me one kiss, I should have been so happy!"

"If you are good," said Mrs. Adair, "when next he sees you he will give you two."

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CHAPTER XIX.

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THE time had arrived for Miss Damer to go into a private family as a governess: all the young ladies were anxious to give her a proof of remembrance, and these tokens of esteem had chiefly been the work of leisure hours.

As Miss Damer was collecting her painted boxes, velvet bags, and all her little presents together, she thought, "who can say that there is no kindness or friendship in the world? I have been in sorrow, perhaps for a good purpose; at least, it has shewn me the disinterested regard of others."

While similar reflections were passing in her mind, Miss Arden hastily entered the chamber, and stepping towards her, abruptly put into her hand a small parcel. "I have not a moment to speak to you," she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes, "I cannot for the world take a formal farewell; so when you leave us do not notice me: God bless you, Damer!" and she hurried out of the room.

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Miss Damer looked at the parcel with a countenance of sorrow, and as she opened it a note dropped upon the floor; she took it up, and read the paper she held in her hand.

"Accept these notes, my dear Damer, they are all that I have been able to save from my scanty allowance; remit them to your father, whose troubles I know have grieved you, and when I can I will send you more. In fourteen months I shall be my own mistress. How joyfully do I anticipate the time! Then, my dear Damer, I shall have a home to offer you, and a purse to relieve every care, as far as wealth can go. Farewell, my kind friend; you and Mrs. Adair have all my affections in this world.

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"ANN ARDEN."

As young people are always anxious to learn the destination of the characters in the book they have been perusing,—in closing this little work, I will give you a short sketch of those I have attempted to delineate. And here let me observe, that the incidents are chiefly drawn from facts.

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The name of one of the principal characters was given, by the desire of a young friend, two days before her death.

Miss Russel has lost her parents, and is wandering upon the Continent, as companion or friend to a lady well known in the fashionable world.

Miss Vincent is removed from her family by her marriage to a gentleman of consequence in Ireland. She is still the same character, haughty and insolent.

Her sister Isabella, is improving in all the graces of mind and person; she is the general favourite of the school.

Miss Bruce is becoming all that her father can desire.

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When Miss Damer went into the situation as a governess, it was with the hope of remaining some time, perhaps years. We can easily fix our plans, but we are strangers to the future; it is not for us to say by what means they are to be frustrated. When Miss Damer had been two months a governess, she was told by the gentleman's sister in whose family she was placed, that several friends were to dine with them, and she begged that she would join their party. On that day she attracted the notice of a gentleman who was one of the guests. When she entered the drawing-room, and he heard her name announced, he turned quickly to look at her; he beheld the same dark pensive eyes, the same noble features, and modest, dignified manner, which seventeen years before had struck him in another. But it was not her personal appearance altogether that interested him: it was the character that had been given of her by Mrs. Adair; and the remembrance of his feelings, when his daughter in her troubled sleep exclaimed, "O, my dear Miss Damer, do come to me! Papa then won't punish me, you are so like mamma!"

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But I will not prolong this subject; I have only to add, that Miss Damer is the happy wife of Mr. Bruce; and that few persons are more attached to each other than the mother and the daughter

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Mr. Bruce, though several years older than his wife, was exactly the person calculated to make her happy, being a man of excellent character and good sense; giving part of his time to the world, but considering home the chief place for happiness.

When Miss Arden came into possession of her fortune, she remained as a parlour boarder with Mrs. Adair, but the principal part of her time was spent with Mrs. Bruce. A lingering disease, however, came on, and she could not be happy separated from her friend: she therefore removed to her house. After experiencing the most affectionate attention from Mr. and Mrs. Bruce, she at length resigned her life, with hopes full of immortality. Mrs. Adair and her friend were with her in her last moments. She expressed her gratitude to them with all the energy of health; and then, clasping a hand of each, died serenely, hoping to meet them hereafter. To the father of her friend she left a very handsome annuity for life. "I know," she had stated in her will, "that I cannot oblige my friend in any other shape but by contributing to her father's comfort, and oh, may he see the error of his ways, before it is too late."

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Most of her school companions she had remembered; but particularly a young lady, whose parents had been unfortunate. After leaving tokens of regard to every one to whom she had considered herself the least indebted, she left the remainder of her fortune, to be equally divided between Mrs. Adair, her daughter, and Miss Bruce. And here let me remind young ladies of fortune, that they are too apt to neglect the instructress under whose care they have spent the early part of life. Surely, when young people have been years under one roof, gaining knowledge, and daily indebted for care and kindness, they should not discard from their thoughts one of their best friends; but how often is this the case! The moment a young lady steps into a carriage, and drives off for the last time from the dwelling of her instructress, she seems to forget that there had ever been such a person in existence. Perhaps, when her nuptial favours are preparing, and her hopes are bright, she may exclaim in a careless tone, "O, we must not forget—" here she mentions the lady to whom, next to her parents she is most indebted; and here finishes her remembrance of school, and the friend of her youth: in bridal favours, or flimsy letters, all her gratitude is shewn.

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In giving a sketch of the young ladies, I must not forget Elizabeth, who is now the happy wife of Colonel Vincent's brother. It had been her lot to be doubtful of his regard several years. Her spirits had been elated or depressed, as she had judged Mr. Vincent's feelings interested towards herself. Had not that language which poets describe betrayed his sentiments, she might justly have concluded that, of all persons living, she would be the one to whom his affections would never seriously incline; but no sooner did fortune second his wishes, and a living was presented unto him, but his heart and hand were offered to the object of his earliest regard under the happiest auspices; therefore Elizabeth exchanged the useful employment of a teacher, for the meritorious duties of a wife.

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When Mrs. Adair received the fortune due to her from her pupil's will, her friends concluded that she would resign the school. To the intreaties of her daughter on the subject she gave this reply:

"Why should I give up an employment which is a relief to my mind? In my earliest and brightest days, I never particularly relished the gaieties of the world; with my friends, my chief happiness centred; the associates of my youth are, to my fancy, as friends departed. The later objects of my care are likewise withdrawn from me; but though I have lost one dear to my heart by death, and another by marriage, still I have affections warm and tender towards youth.

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"There must be something to attach us to life, something to occupy time, and interest our regard. As worldly beings, with worldly thoughts, we must have resources independent of those in a religious point of view. I trust I have chosen the wiser part, in preferring an active to an idle life. At home, in the midst of my children (for so they are in my esteem), I shall always have something to excite interest; and if watchful care, tenderness, and exertion, can reclaim the stubborn, or add to the happiness of my pupils, I shall think that I have not lived in vain. When my course is finished upon earth, may you, my dear Elizabeth, be enabled to say with truth to your daughters, 'Never was an instructress more happy with her pupils, or pupils happier with an instructress.'"

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Transcriber's Note:

Archaic spelling of *pourtrayed*, *viranda*, *Magna Charta*, *stupified*, *shewn* and *Auld* have been retained as they appear in the original publication. Changes to the original have been made as follows:

Page 5 [froward](#) inclinations *changed to* forward inclinations
Page 18 a [look](#); but I assure *changed to* a look; but I assure
Page 20 [I have](#) so few *changed to* "I have so few
Page 34 for our [diverson](#) *changed to* for our diversion
Page 44 prefer 'the Spy [detected.](#)' *changed to* prefer 'the Spy detected.'
Page 54 room; [I see](#) few countenances *changed to* "I see few countenances
Page 63 [and](#) I hope I am *changed to* "and I hope I am
Page 71 [inquired](#) if Miss Damer *changed to* inquired if Miss Damer
Page 87 in particular [cases.](#)" *changed to* in particular cases.
Page 93 [I must](#) think of my *changed to* "I must think of my
Page 101 into the [play-ground.](#)' *changed to* into the play-ground."
Page 102 [her](#): "Now, my dear—"e" in her inverted
Page 109 who had [been been](#) ordered by *changed to* who had been ordered by
Page 105 her [pupils.](#); but at *changed to* her pupils; but at
Page 139 Miss Bruce. [It](#) is in *changed to* Miss Bruce. "It is in
Page 166 into his [preesnce](#) *changed to* into his presence
Page 176 [stangers](#) to the future *changed to* strangers to the future
Page 176 [sayby](#) what means they *changed to* say by what means they

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