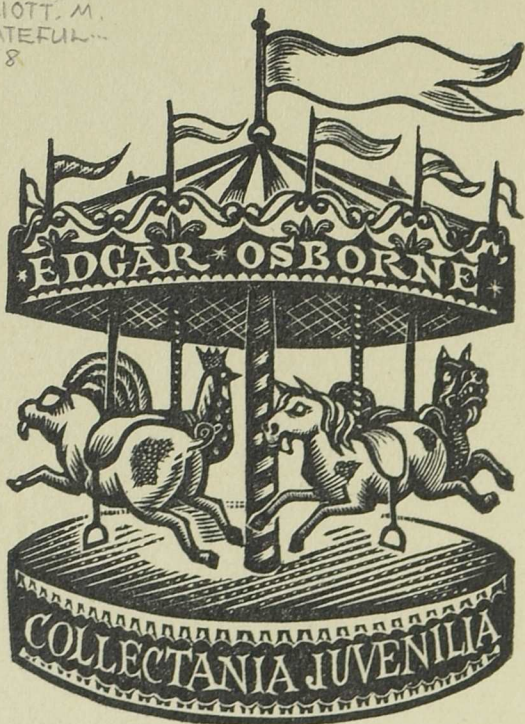


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GRATEFUL
1818



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GRATEFUL TRIBUTES;

OR,

RECOLLECTIONS OF INFANCY.

BY M. BELSON,

Author of "Industry and Idleness;" "Innocent Poetry;" "Baby's Holiday;"
"Precept and Example;" "The Mice and their Pic Nic;" &c.



LONDON:

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1818.

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PREFACE.

To the little Students who may peruse the following well-meant efforts of the pen, no apology is offered for intruding on their notice subjects already familiar to them; the claims of a Parent can never be too strongly impressed upon the minds of the Offspring; and, to the dutiful or grateful child, will ever be dear as powerful.

The tie of Kindred is the cement of Nature, and, however keenly we may feel the sorrows of the world in general, those of our Relations and Friends affect us more deeply. Children are naturally affectionate, and seldom forget early benefits; on the contrary, when matured reason admits of reflection, they delight in recalling to memory acts of kindness received, while their regard for the bestower is enhanced by recollection. They may not perhaps remember, at the same time, how many cares and anxieties they have caused these kind friends; but it is the Author's wish they should possess this remembrance, and she has therefore endea-

voured to picture some, which she imagines every parent or guardian has experienced while rearing the helpless bud of infancy.

Those whom it may have pleased God to deprive of parental and all other kindred tie, may yet have received the tender assiduities of a nurse or foster-mother: the same gratitude is due to this kind individual, who, without the obligation, has taken upon herself the arduous duties of a parent. Our little Orphan Boy in the Poem of "My Mammy," will point out how this second mother should be rewarded for her voluntary care. Nor does the Author doubt, but that every one of her youthful perusers will feel inclined to use the exertions she has suggested, to return, in some measure, the everlasting obligations they owe the sacred characters of Father and Mother. Thus thinking, it were necessary to enforce the minor claims of Brother, Sister, Uncle, Aunt, or Mammy.

London; October 7, 1811.

MY FATHER.

THY task of duty now is o'er,
Let me thy future toils endure,
Labour and care be thine no more—

My Father.

'Tis not an idle boast to move
The yielding spring of parent love,
As all my days to come shall prove,

My Father.

No, my poor wish is but to shew,
(Whate'er my power,) that well I know,
All I enjoy to thee I owe,

My Father.

How oft the starting tear I've seen,
When the world's frown would intervene,
To cloud thy fancy-painted scene,

My Father.

My fate alone was thy concern,
On me thy lucid eye would turn,
I could not then the cause discern,

My Father.

Yet the fix'd sorrow I could trace,
And as I flew to thy embrace,
The tears would trickle down thy face,

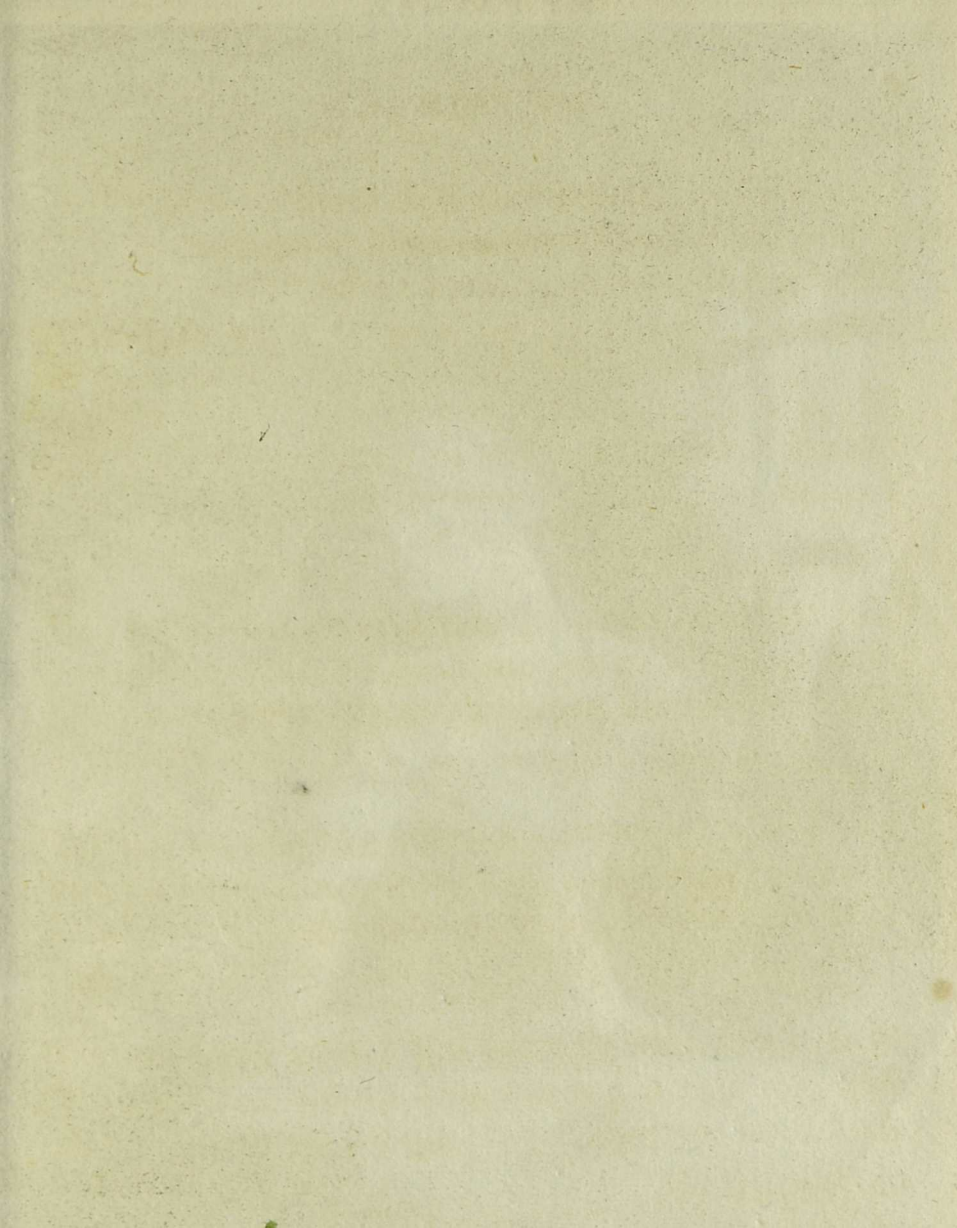
My Father.

I've kiss'd the precious drops away,
Bidding them come another day,
And in a soothing voice would say,

Poor Father.

Such feeble efforts were not vain,
My pity ever eas'd thy pain,
And thou wert all thyself again,

My Father.





Who to my first studies did attend,
Who to my childish sense would bend,
Blending the tutor with the friend,

My Father.

When reason aiding fancy's flight,
My youthful sallies would excite,
Whose eyes would sparkle with delight?

My Father's.

What easy methods didst thou find,
To graft upon my infant mind,
Whate'er could make me just or kind,

My Father.

I cannot half thy worth express,
Tho' on my heart the whole doth press,
While every hour still more I bless

My Father.

Heav'n knows my feelings are sincere,
For all the world holds great or dear,
I would not cause thine age a tear,

My Father.

MY FATHER.

That thou must die I know too well,
Yet on the theme I cannot dwell,
That grief all others will excel,

My Father.

My only comfort then will be
To fancy every good I see
Or feel, but emanates from thee,

My Father.



MY MOTHER.

What shall I do, dear Mother, say,
Thy former kindness to repay,
Kindness that wore thy bloom away,
My Mother.

What anxious hours hast thou known
When sickness caus'd my infant moan,
Nature made every pang thine own,
My Mother.

Still, still, methinks the tear I feel,
Which down thy pallid cheek did steal,
As by my cradle thou didst kneel,
My Mother.

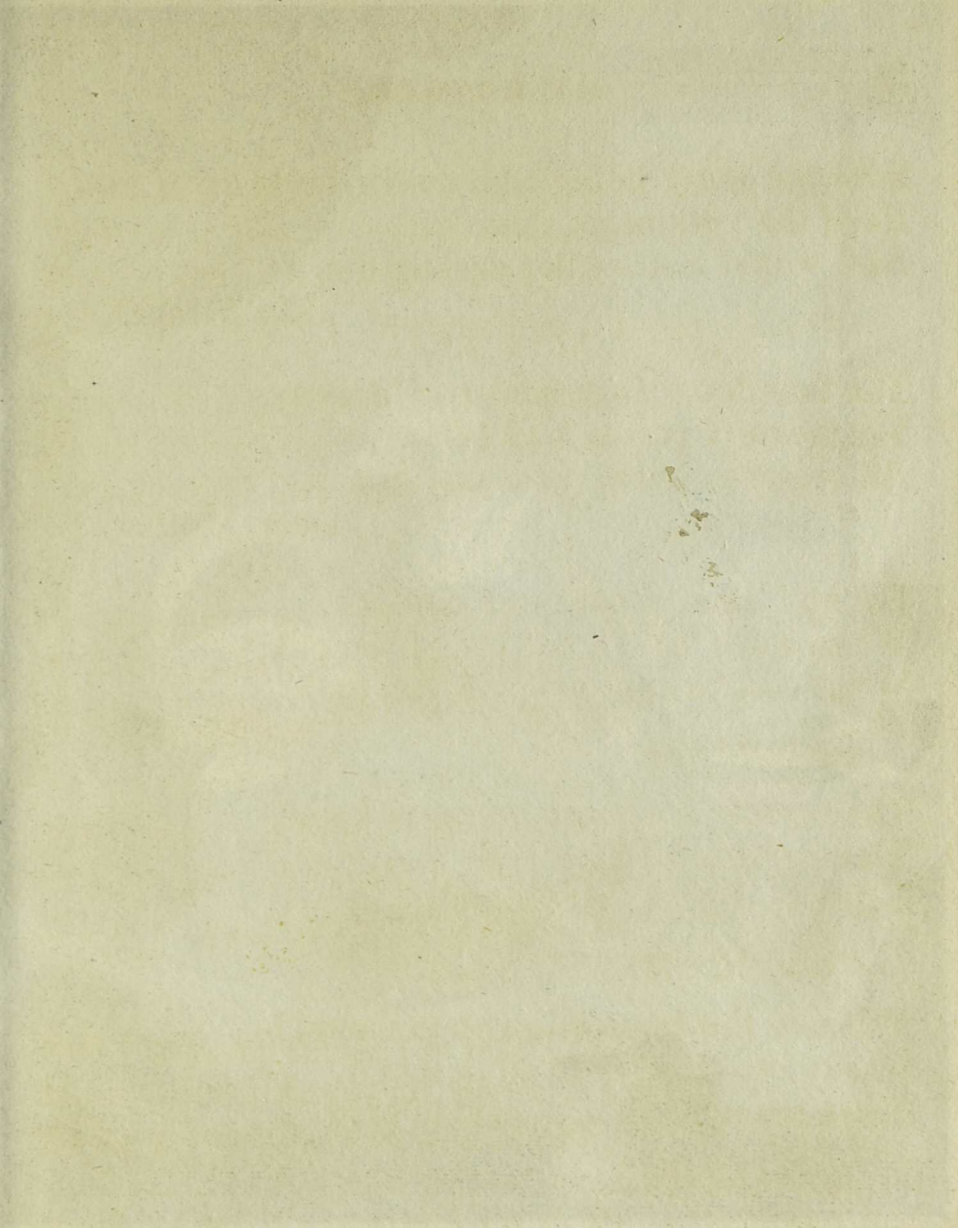
Sure the great Being who dwells on high,
Read the petition of thine eye,
And would not let thy darling die,
My Mother.

The time long since hath pass'd away,
Yet memory paints it as to-day,
All seems so fresh, and well it may,
Dear Mother.

For ah! how piteous was thy look,
When hope thy parent breast forsook,
What care to ease my pain you took,
My Mother.

Thou saidst I was too young to know,
To comprehend a parent's woe,
Tell me, I pray, if it were so,
Dear Mother.

Whence this impression on my mind?
It may be, God hath so design'd,
More strongly on my heart to bind
My Mother.





And stronger sure no tie can be
Than that which binds my heart to thee,
Full well I feel thy claims on me,

My Mother.

I've often wonder'd that thy hair
Which once I knew was wond'rous fair,
Should turn to grey—is it from care?

Dear Mother.

You smile; ah then my fears are true,
Perchance I've help'd to change its hue,
I trust my share is but a few,

My Mother.

But for those few, when far away,
I meet distress with locks of grey,
My conscious heart shall whispering say

Your Mother.

Time flies on wings—the hour may come
That seals, ere mine, my parent's doom,
My arms must yield thee to the tomb,

My Mother.

MY MOTHER.

Though grief should check the pow'r to speak,
Tho' full my heart seem near to break,
In thought I'll pray that God may take
My Mother.

No length of days, no time shall ever
From my warm heart thy virtues sever,
Or I forget thee,—never, never,
My Mother.



MY BROTHER.

No longer youthful sports engage,
We both are past the playful age ;
They say we should grow wise and sage,
My Brother.

Better, I'm sure, you cannot be,
At least thy Sister's eye can't see
Aught that she wishes chang'd in thee,
My Brother.

With her thy failings die away,
Like transient drops in summer's day :
For memory will not let them stay,
My Brother.

Remembrance rather loves to dwell
On things wherein thou didst excel,
And those she doth remember well,

My Brother.

How proud I've felt, when we were young,
To hear thy praise from parent tongue;
But, when they said thou hadst done wrong,

My Brother,

Not to thyself the shame alone,
The action censured seem'd my own,
While tear for tear our eyes have shown,

My Brother.

Once too, I think, I had been ill,
And pettishly would have my will,
My friends were tired, but thou wert still

My Brother.

Your toys, your books, were all displayed,
A hundred merry tricks you played,
Agreed to every thing I said,

My Brother.



With all this care you could not please,
'Twas sleep at length afforded ease,
And then my pillow was thy knees.

My Brother.

And, when at times we disagreed,
(The fault was seldom thine indeed,)
Who was most eager to concede?

My Brother.

Yes, he has been so good, so kind,
It never can escape my mind,
Sure for my comfort thou'rt design'd,

My Brother.

The word is music to my ear,
I never feel a doubt or fear,
Or dream of harm, if thou art near,

My Brother.

And when our youth to age must yield,
To me be all thy griefs revealed,
Because when young thou wert my shield,

Dear Brother.

I'll nurse thy aged pains away,
By thy sick pillow ever stay,
Thy languid smile shall be my pay,

My Brother.

Were all the world to frown on me,
But trifling would th' impression be,
Thy sister's heart should cling to thee,

My Brother.



MY SISTER.

True, we are now too old to play,
Our infant sports have had their day,
Reason emits a brighter ray,

My Sister.

Affection still as warm may glow,
With us it ever must be so,
Our hearts, our minds, are one you know,

My Sister.

Those little traits of childish love,
To which your fancy likes to rove,
Were but the seeds of what I'll prove.

My Sister.

Well I remember my surprize,
 When, listening to thy feeble cries,
 As nurse presented to my eyes—

A Sister.

Your soft round cheeks and half-clos'd eye,
 Your lips that might with cherry vie,
 I kiss'd, until I made thee cry,

My Sister.

I call'd thee then of pets the best,
 With all that fancy could suggest,
 To set thy little heart at rest,

My Sister.

I thought you notic'd what I said,
 It seem'd a compact we had made,
 I was to be thy future aid,

My Sister.

Sometimes my temper would get warm,
 Yet I could always quell the storm,
 By thinking of thy helpless form,

My Sister.



When punished for some fault I'd done,
How o'er thy brother wouldst thou moan,
While round his neck thy arms were thrown,
My Sister.

Then, all in tears, mamma you'd seek,
With throbbing breast and swelling cheek,
Pardon was all thy tongue could speak,
My Sister.

If gain'd thy suit, with steps like air,
Swift to my prison you'd repair,
Not tears, but smiles, thy cheeks would wear,
My Sister.

Were I to toil from day to day,
Bear winter's frost and summer's ray,
I could not half such love repay,
My Sister.

To me thou art a precious gem,
More worth than monarch's diadem,
A beauteous flower—and *I* thy stem,
My Sister.

To me thy little griefs consign,
Henceforth thy ev'ry care be mine,
My life shall be a prop to thine,

My Sister.

And, though we own the power of time,
So free we'll live from guilt or crime,
Our age shall seem a second prime,

My Sister.



MY UNCLE.

Far back as memory extends,
To me thou hast been the best of friends,
How shall I ever make amends ?

My Uncle.

Fatherless—from my infancy,
What trouble have I caused thee ?
Yet from such care thou didst not flee,

My Uncle.

'Twas thou first stemm'd the widow's tear,
Thy friendship sooth'd her rising fear,
Her child had still a kind friend near,

In Uncle.

Pressing thy tearful cheek to mine,
Thou had'st my mother ne'er repine,
For now her helpless babe was thine—

Kind Uncle.

Nor was the promise idly made,
As my poor mother often said,
When fervently we both have pray'd

For Uncle.

Oft when we heard the loud winds blow,
The rattling hail, or drifting snow,
We wish'd the storm might not be so

With Uncle.

When first I view'd the ocean wide,
I clang unto my mother's side,
While pale with fear I falt'ring sigh'd

Poor Uncle.

My mother said that God would be
Thy friend, tho' on the raging sea,
For all thy love to her and me,

My Uncle.



And she said right, for soon you came,
Honour was added to thy name,
Yet still to us thou wert the same,

My Uncle.

And when from school I left my home,
Who was it would so often come
To bring me fruit, or fife and drum?

My Uncle.

How pleas'd I've felt at Christmas time,
To hear thy song and merry rhyme,
Or stories of far distant climes,

My Uncle.

Thy perils too I lov'd to hear,
Climbing thy knee to be more near,
Whilst thou delighted would appear,

My Uncle.

Ah! can I e'er forget that day
They hurried me from school away,
And brought me where you wounded lay?

My Uncle.

How keen the pang my heart receiv'd,
It seem'd I ne'er before had griev'd,
But I was not to be bereav'd

Of Uncle.

O! may he live—yes, live to see
The branch he rear'd support the tree,
And such, I trust, is Heaven's decree,

My Uncle.



MY AUNTY.

When of the past I take a view,
My heart acknowledges to you,
Great are the obligations due,

My Aunty.

A mother's love, and her's alone,
Could equal what to me you've shown ;
It seem'd as if I were your own,

My Aunty.

When first I learn'd to lisp thy name,
(My mother oft hath told the same,)
How many tedious miles you came,

Dear Aunty,

To hear the pleasing grateful word,
 Nay, not an hour was deferr'd,
 Although you own'd it was absurd,
 My Aunty.

You made me say it o'er and o'er,
 As tho' you had not heard before,
 Fondling me every time still more,
 My Aunty.

What toys, what play-things, did you buy,
 And, if by chance you heard me cry,
 The ready tear was in thine eye,
 Fond Aunty.

Mamma would sometimes chiding say,
 That *some one* took the surest way
 To spoil her child—who was it pray?
 Why Aunty.

Who was it when I'd wake and weep,
 Would softly to my bed-side creep,
 And sing her little pet to sleep—
 'Twas Aunty.



She too it was whose riper sense
Taught me how best I might dispense
Amongst the poor my hoard of pence,
Kind Aunty.

My prayers, and catechism too,
From her instructions first I knew,
And by her side I learnt to sew,
Kind Aunty.

How did my heart with pleasure beat,
When a wax-doll in dress so neat,
Was laid one morning at my feet,
By Aunty!

The generous donor soon I guess'd,
I question'd, and, when thou confest,
With unfeigned gratitude caress'd
My Aunty,

Thy gifts not always were confin'd
To pleasures of a trifling kind,
But information for the mind,
Dear Aunty.

I've treasur'd all the valued store,
And whether I be rich or poor,
I'll love the source when thou'rt no more,
My Aunty.

I'll think of all you did or said,
In virtue's path to give me aid,
Nor shall the dear remembrance fade,
My Aunty.



MY MAMMY.

Rear'd not beneath a parent's eye,
A stranger to each kindred tie,
On whom but thee can I rely,

My Mammy?

Cast on the world from infancy,
Alas! I had no claim on thee
Save that of Heaven and charity,

My Mammy.

Gifted with more than usual share,
Thy tender bosom could not bear
A babe should die for want of care,

Kind Mammy.

Still told the tale by village dame,
And still I love to hear the same,
How to my parents' grave you came,

My Mammy.

The new-laid sod was not yet dry,
(Perchance 'twas moisten'd by thine eye!)
All saw thee weep, all heard thee sigh,

Dear Mammy.

But not by them was heard alone
Your vow to love me as your own,
It wafte'd quick to God's high throne,

My Mammy.

Not half sufficient be it deem'd,
But, e'er since intellect hath beam'd,
My heart with gratitude has teem'd,

To Mammy.

Oft as I've pass'd the poor-house gate,
I've turn'd to where you knitting sate,
And blest the heart that chang'd my fate,

My Mammy.

With joy I've hail'd the setting sun,
Because I knew thy work was done,
Eager to meet thee would I run,

My Mammy.

Mounted on the broken stile,
Whistling, the moments to beguile,
I've long'd to share thy arduous toil,

My Mammy.

No future scenes can e'er destroy
Remembrance of my childish joy,
When thou didst meet thy Orphan Boy,

My Mammy.

And when we lost the old red cow,
(I almost think I see us now,)
Climbing the hills we knew not how,

My Mammy.

Vain was our search, how didst thou fret!
Not for thyself was such regret,
She was the means to rear thy pet,

My Mammy.

No matter—see, I'm growing fast,
We will not dwell upon the past,
A happier lot for us is cast,

My Mammy.

Fear not to meet thy life's decay,
My strength increases every day,
And God will help me to repay

My Mammy.





