

Charlotte Froome

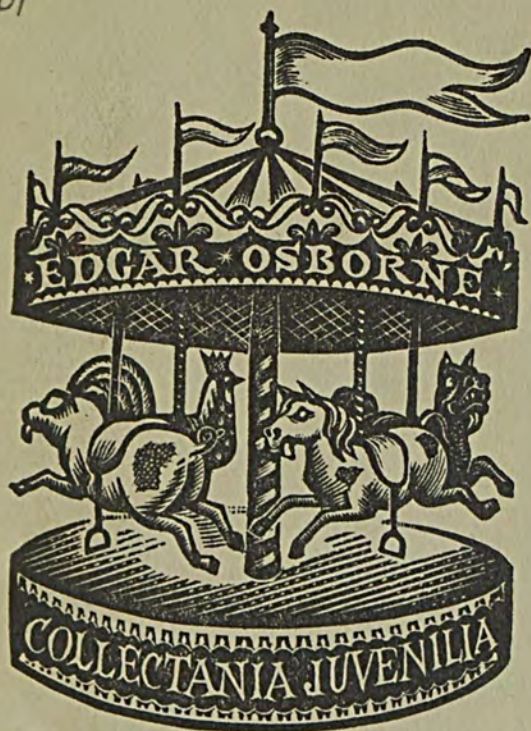
A Gift of S. W. Gray

October 25 - 1810

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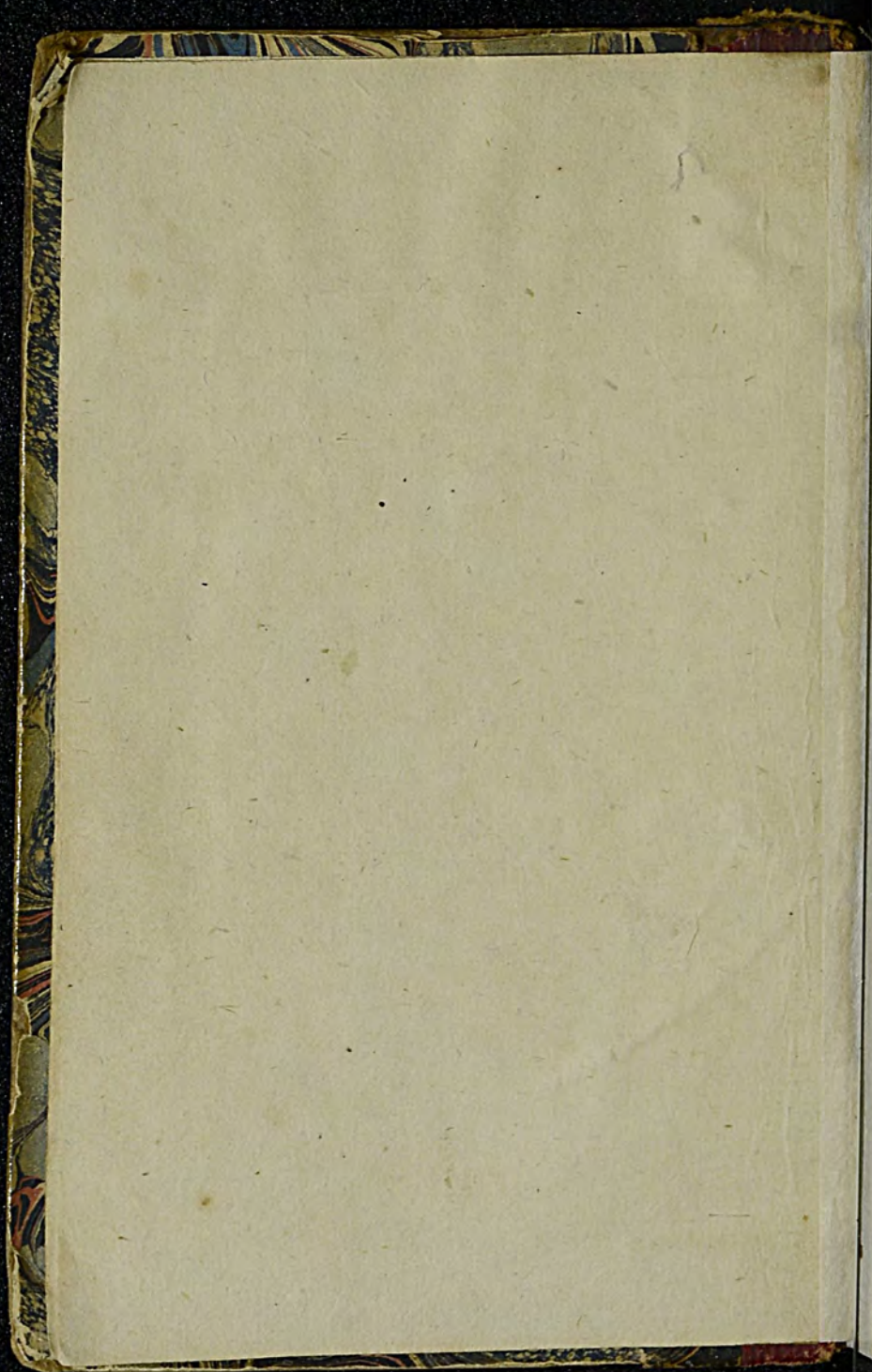
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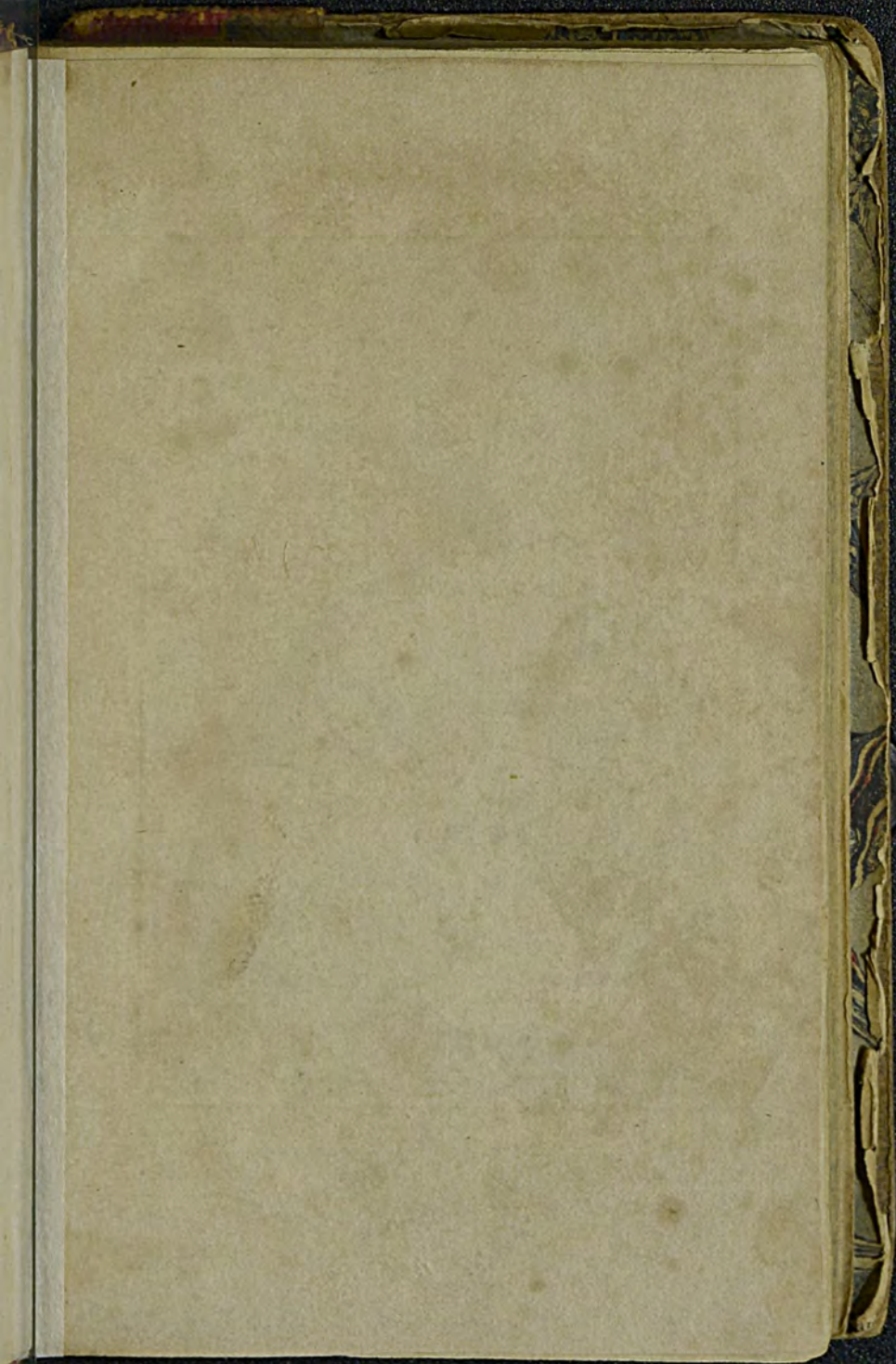
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FRONTISPIECE.



Lucinda introduced to M^{rs} Manor.

p. 28.

Published by E. Newbery, April 20, 1791.

LUCINDA;

OR,

VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT:

A MORAL TALE.

DESIGNED FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH.

By the Rev. Thomas Smith.

When Precepts sage, to gain Attention fail,
We change their Form, and weave an artless Tale,
Where hateful Vice is seen to Mis'ry chain'd;
Or Virtue triumphs, by her God sustain'd.
Persuasion's Force then clearly shines confess'd;
And guides the Moral to the youthful Breast.

London:

Printed by G. Auld, Greville Street,

FOR E. NEWBERY,

CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1801.

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LUCINDA;

LUCINDA;

OR,

VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT.

CHAP. I.

A PATHETIC SCENE,

INTRODUCTORY TO OUR PIECE.

THE iron tongue of Time had numbered out five hours of the afternoon, from the steeple of a secluded village on the banks of the Severn, when the funeral-bell tolled out, and the peasants began to assemble around the spot from which the earth was removed for the reception of a lifeless body.

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The crowd was much increased, the soft enquiry answered, and every whisper hushed, save that which murmured through the leafless trees, or waked the echo of the silent vaults, when the priest, arrayed in the sacred vestments, walked solemnly from the church to meet the sad procession.

The nodding plumes approached, the gates expanded wide to receive the new inhabitant; and beneath a velvet pall, supported by six beauteous maidens, lay the stiff body of the young Lavinia,—the dear, the only child of the most worthy lady in the parish, the pride of every heart, and the theme of incessant praise.

A week before this awful day she had visited several of the little cottages, and affectionately relieved the wants of many; but a cruel fever had suddenly stopped the crimson streams of life, and cropped, with unrelenting severity,

severity, this charming flower before its excellence was near expanded.

Thus supported and followed by her distracted mother, with other weeping relatives, the youthful corpse approached the grave, and the coffin being placed thereby, discovered to the eyes of the surrounding throng the age of the deceased, which scarcely amounted to twelve years. Great was the effect which this view produced, and so loud were the sobs of the people, that it was some time before the clergyman could perform the ceremony: at length, however, it concluded; and that lovely form, which long had been the idol of the neighbourhood, was committed to its native dust, and covered with the clods of the valley.

Surely, no digression is required to stamp upon the mind of my young and beautiful reader, an idea which I

trust this short description has raised within your breast: the necessity of a preparation for so tremendous an accident must appear to you in the most striking colours, and allure you agreeably to those paths of wisdom, which most assuredly will bring you peace at the last. Yet, should there by chance be found any youths of either sex too volatile or regardless to peruse these pages for their profit, I give them sufficient warning, and honestly discharge my own duty by this request and observation.

“ Turn not aside, nor heedless pass it by,

“ The young, the gay, the healthy, soon must
“ die;

“ Tho’ flutt’ring now in life’s high glitt’ring
“ day,

“ Thou soon must change to lifeless putrid clay;

“ Not pow’r angelic can avert thy doom,

“ Nor heav’n’s bright legions snatch thee from
“ the tomb.”

The mourners now turned from the dread repository of the dead, and Mrs. Manor, the afflicted parent, supporting herself on the arm of a relation, attempted to discharge some part of that anguish which sat heavy on her aching heart, by giving a free vent to her tears: this (by the time she returned to her habitation) she performed in a manner which enabled her to reflect, with some degree of composure, on that stroke, which (however severe in itself) was doubtless the will of Heaven, and to which (as such) it behoves the inhabitants of the earth to bow down without repining. Yet nature struggled with religion in her bosom; and on beholding the spot where her beloved had lately amused her by playing and singing the high praises of her Creator, the tear of affliction burst afresh from her

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eyes,

eyes, and the sobs of regret broke through all opposition.

Her relatives attempted, by all the force of persuasive eloquence, to soothe and comfort her perturbed spirit; but a mother's love was too strong to resign its only darling to the devouring worms without some agonizing pangs; and the virtue more than the beauty of Lavinia, was too deeply impressed on that parent's heart to admit of any consolation but what was given from above.

To give a clear idea of this valuable character, we must inform those who honour our little history with their perusal, that she was the daughter of a virtuous and honourable gentleman; the widow of an officer famed for his valour, and beloved for his goodness (who lived an honour to the community, and bravely died in defending the cause of his country) and the un-

failing

ailing friend of those whom indigence or obscurity deprived of innumerable blessings. To such she freely listened, in all their little tales of sorrow, hushed their complaints, prescribed for their diseases, and rescued them often from the jaws of destruction. Her dear Lavinia was the only support on which she hoped to recline in the days of approaching age; and being deprived by death of a father and a husband, she centered all her earthly bliss in the loved person of her amiable daughter. This cheering hope was now extinguished by the fatal damp of death; and every delicious expectation which clung thereto, was dashed from its residence and given to the winds. She who had shewn the tenderness of a parent to hundreds, was now left childless and forlorn; that tongue which had often poured the balm of consolation into the ears
and

and heart of some abandoned sufferer, was now employed in fruitless exclamations of grief, or in heart-wounding praises of her dear departed; whilst the benevolent hand, which had succoured and supported the languid heads of the miserable on all occasions, was now sadly employed in sustaining her own burning forehead, or in wiping away those copious streams which trickled down her face.

Thus wounded by the arrow of affliction, and absorbed in the contemplation of her deep distress, sat the valuable lady, when Mr. Felix, the clergyman of the parish, was announced by the servant, and ushered into the parlour.

This gentleman (who was indisputably an honour to his profession, and as zealous in the discharge of private duties as in the solemn delivery of his doctrines) approached the chair
of

of Mrs. Manor, and tenderly requested to hear the present condition of her mind described. He listened attentively to all which *grief* produced, and congratulated her on the steadfastness of that *hope* wherewith the Christian faith had illumined her mind; “ for (said he) “ though it is utterly impossible to recover the dear object of your affection on *earth*, I trust you will assuredly meet with her in the realms of eternal bliss, and there enjoy that perfection of felicity to which the inhabitants of the world are strangers. With many other comfortable remarks, and timely quotations from the blessed volume of divine inspiration, he gradually calmed the tempest which had so violently shaken her frame, and diffused a pleasing serenity through her imagination. When this was effected, he began to assure her that her share of affliction (however trying)

trying) was but trivial if compared with that which thousands of her fellow-creatures experienced every day ; but waving the consideration of such a multitude, said he, I can inform you of a scene which passed this day before my eyes ; and which, I doubt not, you will confess was still more distressing than that which led you to the church this evening.

You, doubtless, recollect the person who resided in a small house at the extremity of the village, who scarcely was ever seen but when the bells invited her to the courts of devotion ; she then appeared with a pious but dejected countenance, attended by her daughter, the little Lucinda, who, I presume, is about seven years of age, of a pleasing form, and an open ruddy countenance.

I remember the objects you describe, said Mrs. Manor, and have
often

often wished to know the character and condition of persons who chose to live in such a voluntary obscurity.

The character (rejoined the clergyman) I believe is spotless, but the condition is what I am a stranger to. I only know that by a sudden stroke, Providence has deprived the mother of her life; and the poor child is left an absolute and unprotected orphan.

A brother of the deceased happened to be at the house when the melancholy event took place; and he certainly provided for the funeral, at which I attended after you had left the burying-ground; but in return for his trouble, he has seized upon all which the house contained, and treated the miserable child so roughly on their return from the obsequies of its mother, that I hear she has wandered from the village, and no one knows whither she is gone, though many
have

have sought for her in various directions.

Thus, you see, though Providence has bereaved you of a child, it has left you the blessing of other friends, and a competency for yourself; whereas this child is deprived of a mother, abandoned by an unfeeling uncle, and apparently left to perish, without a single friend to comfort or sustain her.

Mrs. Manor was deeply struck with this sad relation, and, after a moment's pause, addressing the good man who so evidently sympathized in the distresses of his flock, "What you have told me, Sir, has not merely awakened those charitable sensations which I naturally feel for the objects of oppression, but I think Heaven has directed you to me in a particular manner, as I have lost a daughter, and this child has lost a parent. I am
wretched

wretched for the company of the former, and she is exposed to ruin by the loss of the latter; exert yourself therefore I beseech you, to find this helpless creature, who is barbarously chased from the residence of her only friend, and rest assured that she shall find a patroness and a mother in that woman whom Fate has deprived of her only darling.

“ May Heaven reward your intention” (said Mr. Felix as he rose from his seat); “ and may every celestial blessing descend on your habitation which you design to receive this little sufferer.” He could express no more by words, but grasped her hand with an unutterable emotion, and beseeching some pitying angel to direct his steps, he hastily walked forth to snatch from destruction the wretched object of his pious zeal.

CHAP. II.

LUCINDA DISCOVERED, CONSOLED,
AND PATRONIZED.

AFTER passing the night in anxious inquietudes for the fate of Lucinda, the teacher of the parish arose to pursue that search himself which hitherto had proved unsuccessful to his dependants.

The morning was extremely cold, and the snow descended fast, as he opened the door to seek the object of his contemplations; but the chilling appearance of the country proved too feeble to overthrow his generous purpose; and drawing his hat over his face to shield him from the fury of the tempest, he walked forwards to discover, if possible, the wounded
lamb

lamb which had strayed from his little flock.

Attentively he regarded every spot whereon he supposed there was the least probability that the orphan might be found. He enquired of the villagers, interrogated the children, and examined every place which seemed to offer shelter; but without effect; till at length, having roved beyond the limits of his own parish, he begged permission to rest himself for a few minutes within a neat cottage by the road-side; to which he was heartily welcomed by a motherly woman, to whom he made known the cause of his early ramble.

“Heaven reward your goodness” (said she at the close of his relation); “I have certainly seen the child of whom you speak; nay more, I have last night secured her from the inclemency of the weather, by giving her

part of my bed." You are a good creature (hastily exclaimed the clergyman) but where is the girl? "Alas, Sir," returned the woman, "I cannot tell; she left me this morning whilst I was preparing breakfast, and I know not whither she has wandered. Whilst she continued with me, she told me in the most affecting manner of her mother's death and her uncle's cruelty; but though I endeavoured to pacify her to the best of my abilities, she wept without ceasing all the night, and towards the approach of day continued to sob, "O my poor mother! I will go to my mother." Mr. Felix's heart was melted with this artless description; and a sudden though improbable thought darting across his mind, he rewarded the kindness of his informer with half a crown, and turned again toward his own residence.

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As he re-entered the village, he resolved to search the church-yard, as it was not impossible but the poor child who had so grievously lamented the loss of her parent, might seek the gloomy spot wherein the valued ashes were deposited, and there pour out the torrent of her afflictions.

It is true the tender age of Lucinda seemed to forbid this supposition, but her words and actions (which had lately been recited) appeared replete with so much sense, and were really so superior to her years, that the worthy priest received a kindling beam of hope from the rising idea, and without hesitation began his determined examination.

He had not proceeded far before he arrived at the grave of the deceased, and there beheld the poor deserted orphan.

She was lying upon the new-raised earth with her face reclined on her arm, a deadly paleness overspread her countenance, her eyes were sunk and red with weeping, and her little hands were stiffened by the severity of the air.

An universal trembling shook her tender limbs, and a deep-drawn sigh alone served to assure the amazed beholder, that her spark of life was not yet extinguished.

It is not easy to affirm whether at the first glimpse of this pitiable object, amazement or joy predominated in the breast of the clergyman; but no sooner had he viewed the harmless form before him, sufficiently to recognize the object of his search, than clapping his hands with transport, he exclaimed, "My God be praised!" and snatched the dear babe to his agitated bosom, who heaved a piercing

ing sigh, and cast her languid eyes on the sepulchre, as he raised her from that melancholy place; then gazing wishfully on her benefactor, seemed silently to inquire why he had disturbed her.

“Hush thy complaints, my dear afflicted one (said he as he wrapped her carefully in his great coat, which he pulled off for that purpose);” Heaven, which has seen thy filial affection, will reward thee, nor shalt thou perish yet, though cruelty and oppression have designed thee for their victim: Thou yet shalt find a mother in the person of my generous friend; and thy corroding cares may yet be obliterated by the soft hand of affectionate benevolence.

Thus did he soothe the sorrows of his trembling charge, who was yet unable (from excess of cold) to make any reply. They soon however arrived

rived at the parsonage (the doors of which were ever ready to receive the unhappy or deserted); and the orphan was tenderly conveyed to the study, where Mr. Felix prepared her some warm wine, and rubbed her hands and feet at a moderate distance from the fire, till the vital heat returned; and he had the satisfaction to behold the colour return to those cheeks which so lately were cold and livid. But when she had regained sufficient strength to speak and walk, how deeply was the heart of her deliverer moved, when, disengaging herself from his arms, she fell on her knees, and twined her eager arms around his feet, while a flood of tears rushed down her lovely face, and her tongue could merely articulate, "O how I love you for your goodness." The good man wept as plentifully as herself, and, raising her from that humble position, assured

assured her of his friendship in the most solemn manner; and explained to her the intentions of Mrs. Manor, which we have already related.

The effects of her gratitude were more powerful in this native simplicity than all the pomp of words can ever describe; and her reverend friend enjoyed a greater luxury from the adventures of this lowring morning, than all the sons of gluttony and dissipation ever purchased by their lavished gold.

Breakfast was now brought to the table, and the subject of our history was perfectly revived by the kind affiduities of her discoverer, when they began to resolve on a walk to the worthy lady who was deprived of every comfort by the loss of her child, and who now only waited with impatience for the result of her friend's return. Accordingly, when
 their

their repast was ended, they proceeded to Manor-House, where the orphan was kindly received by the house-keeper, while her conductor went to acquaint the amiable widow with the success of his adventure.

That lady was much delighted to hear that Lucinda was found, though her eyes overflowed at the recital of her discovery; and ringing the bell for the little stranger, she was absolutely transported to find in her features (on a near approach) a very striking resemblance to her own Lavinia. She received her with the tenderest cordiality; and repeatedly assured her that she would henceforth regard and treat her as her daughter; that all her wants should be supplied, her education be duly attended to, and her future sustenance be provided for by the hand of Affection.

Lucinda

Lucinda viewed her with attention through the crystal drops which trembled in her eyes; and at the conclusion of her tender speech, fell prostrate at her feet, bedewing them with her tears, and blessing the kindness of her dear benefactress, while the reverend character who so carefully had pursued the wanderer's steps, pronounced a solemn *amen* to her pathetic blessings.

Mrs. Manor, however, permitted her not to remain in this suppliant posture, but tenderly raised her from the ground; and pressing her to her bosom, repeated the promises which had so sensibly awakened the gratitude of her little charge.

A calmer conversation now took place; in which it was proposed that Lucinda should receive her ordinary education at a school in the village (which was kept by a gentlewoman of
decayed

decayed fortune) and endeavour to gain the accomplishments of music, drawing, &c. by a master's attendance at home. This scheme was highly applauded by the Rector, who kindly undertook the trouble of inquiring for persons of ability and reputation for these laudable purposes; and after repeating his admiration of the lady's goodness, and wasting a prayer to Heaven for the preservation of the child; he took an affectionate leave, and returned home completely satisfied.

The dresses of Lavinia were now appropriated to the use of the orphan; her play-things, books, and instrument, were transferred into her hands, and even the bed whereon the darling of Manor-House formerly reclined, was now become the fixed abode for the needful repose of the young Lucinda. Thus may my reader already
ready

ready perceive, that Providence watched over the safety of its helpless creature ; and when a vicious relation forced her to roam amidst the united horrors of tempest, cold, and hunger, the mercy of Heaven defeated his barbarous intentions, and conducted her to plenty, instruction, and protection.

CHAP. III.

A DESPICABLE CHARACTER,
AND A WICKED DESIGN.

THE ensuing Monday our young heroine was placed at the appointed seminary, where she speedily obtained the applause of her Governess and the affection of her school-fellows, one only excepted ; the character and des-

D cription

cription of whom we intend to give in the present chapter. Miss Wilful was the only daughter of a lady, more distinguished by her riches and the splendor of her appearance, than by any good or beneficent actions. Her house was the abode of luxury, her dress the height of fashion, and her equipage magnificent; but the poor were never called to participate of her blessings; nor were the gates of her mansion ever expanded to shelter the wanderer from the storm, or to offer a temporary retreat to the trembling objects of unmerited wretchedness.

Her child was shamefully indulged in every desire, however ridiculous or unreasonable; and every servant was placed so absolutely beneath her command, that none durst disobey, though all despised her. Her Governess was forbidden to correct her upon any account;

count; and (as she was placed in this school merely to be near her mother) she treated every other child with the most haughty reserve and unfeeling contempt, whilst in reality herself was the only object of just abhorrence in the place.

Though a lady of birth, she was pitiful, mean, and odious; regardless of her book, careless in her work, and proud in her deportment; her Governess despised, and her companions hated her. Such a disposition and such behaviour more than overbalanced the charms which nature had given her; and though her features were handsome, her beauty was forgotten amidst so hateful an assemblage of ill qualities.

This imperious and truly disagreeable girl, beheld Lucinda with the eye of jealousy, and detested her in her heart for those amiable actions which

insensibly wrought on the mind of every person who beheld her with attention.

The story of her misfortunes, and the kindness of Mrs. Manor, had reached the ears of Miss Wilful, who scorned her on account of the former, yet envied her the patronage of so good a lady; and felt her pride considerably hurt by seeing the "*little beggar*" (as she expressed herself) arrayed in a manner suitable to the style of her protectress; and treated with the tenderest respect by the whole assembly to which she was now united. Her tasks were speedily learned, and pleasingly pronounced; her reading was clear, distinct, and musical, and her little beginnings of needle-work gave convincing proofs of a quick genius and serene observation. No wonder then if her disdainful companion, conscious of such budding

budding perfections, and mortified at the comparison thereof with her own stupidity, indulged the malevolence which was natural to her temper, and secretly wished the ruin of this harmless creature.

Lacinda however flourished in the garden of literature; and every rising sun brought (as her due) the tribute of unceasing praise. At school she was loved to excess—at home she was perfectly idolized—and at church her artless devotions obtained the admiration of the congregation. She made a surprizing progress in her music; and her drawing-master pronounced her the most attentive and ready pupil he had ever met with. Thus, lovely in herself, and the object of universal affection, she daily improved in personal and mental accomplishments, when the enraged Wilful resolved, if possible, by some means (however base)

to crush the innocent victim of her envy, and by that destruction remove the source of her disquiet.

Various were the schemes which vice suggested upon this occasion; and though she could not absolutely fix upon one, she nevertheless resolved to accomplish her diabolical intentions.

The first step to this wretched action must be founded on a falsity:—a thing so shocking in itself, and so dreadful in its consequences, that I sincerely hope my readers will tremble at the bare idea of so flagrant a crime.

As, however, this girl had paid too little attention to her Bible and her church, she reflected not on the nature of the action, but resolved to accuse Lucinda wrongfully to her Governess on the first occasion. She next considered how the orphan might
be

be injured with her invaluable Patroness; but this appeared to border so close upon an impossibility, that she almost despaired of success, yet determined to pursue her vengeance thro' every obstacle, till the school should become insupportable to Lucinda, and the door of charity be closed against her. Vile and preposterous as this design appears, it is certain this naughty child received a gleam of pleasure from it, as she vainly imagined the destruction of a virtuous girl would redound to her own honour; who, though a very dunce in knowledge, was superior to all her neighbours in point of fortune.

To display her triumph over the wrecks of innocence, and confound by her own assertions the praise so lavishly bestowed on the object of her hatred, appeared so pleasing to her base imagination, that every other
idea

idea was lost in the contemplation of that scene which she began to draw for the succeeding day; and as her plan grew more mature, her malice swelled to its full extent; nor could she forbear to sigh when she reflected that night still intervened between the design and the effects of her rage.

When conducted to her bed, her thoughts were still busied on the same disgraceful scheme; and revolving its shameful effects in her mind, she presumed to close her eyes, forgetful of that adorable Being to whom her prayers were due, and who might (if such his will) deprive her of life before the morning.

CHAP. IV.

INNOCENCE DISPLAYED, TO THE
CONFUSION OF ITS ACCUSER.

IN TEND on the prosecution of her design, Miss Wilful appeared at school much earlier than usual, and (contrary to her custom) seated herself by the side of Lucinda.

The morning-tasks were repeated, several instructive lessons read, and the young ladies attentively pursuing their various employments, when the universal serenity of the school was disturbed by the exclamation of "I have lost my pocket-book!" Every eye was instantly turned upon Miss Wilful, from whom this assertion proceeded, and who scrupled not to affirm that it was stolen; and whilst
her

her associates listened attentively to her description of the book, and the surprizing value she fixed on it, her Governess, regarding her with a look of mingled scorn and severity, commanded her to quit her seat, and give a requisite account of such strange behaviour. She accordingly obeyed, though with a degree of visible reluctance, and sullenly repeated the nature of her loss, still insisting that it was actually stolen.

“ Pray, Miss (rejoined her Governess) who do you imagine to be guilty of so pitiful an action? or which of the ladies who constitute this little assembly, will you presume to challenge as a thief? Look around attentively, and consider more than once before you affix so heinous a crime to the name of any one before you; for you must assuredly expect that a
strict

strict search shall be instantly made; and if your accusation proves false, you may rest assured I will punish you as severely as the daughter of the poorest labourer in the village; therefore you need not deceive yourself by supposing that either your birth or fortune will protect you."

"I fear not your anger," replied the graceless girl, "since my charge may be easily established:" and without hesitation she pronounced our Heroine to be the guilty person.

Lucinda's cheek was instantly crimsoned with a rising blush, but it was the glow of conscious innocence, enflamed by that laudable pride which ever proves its constant attendant. Approaching the seat of her Teacher, she court'ied, with the deepest humility, and requesting permission to speak a few words in her own defence, thus disburthened her agitated mind:

"When

“ When I reflect, Madam, on the great distance which fortune has placed between Miss Wilful and myself, I am astonished at her behaviour, and severely distressed on my own account. Blest as she is with affluence, beauty, and maternal affection, I should not easily have supposed she could so far descend from that dignity which we naturally expect in her station, as to fix a slander on the character of one who never harboured a thought injurious to her repose; and for myself, I must acknowledge that her cruelty has torn open every wound in my poor heart which the united efforts of tenderness and beneficence had nearly closed. When looking on all the children who are placed beneath your attentive eye, she has found no one so proper to accuse as me, because others have indulgent parents, or other dear relations

tions, who can and doubtless will defend their characters and persons from every injury; whereas in me she beheld a poor unfortunate being, destitute of a father's care, and a mother's warm affection; the object of a cruel uncle's hatred, and a dependant on the charity of my invaluable Patroness for my daily bread. As such, it is not expected that any friend will come forwards on my account, but rather, by a crime being laid to my charge, the worthy lady who now supports, may be led to discard me; and the displeasure of yourself, Madam, with the scorn of all your pupils, serve to crush each opening expectation, and hurl me again to that depth of wretchedness from which a kind Providence so late relieved me. This appears to me the intent of my accuser; but your search must now decide whether, miserable as I am by

E

for-

fortune, these orphan-hands are contaminated with a theft."

The pearly drops of grief fell rapidly from her eyes at the conclusion of her address, and every member of the school was already convinced of her integrity, when she presented her pockets for the needful examination.

Her Governess accordingly began to empty one of them before her pupils, when Miss Wilful rudely thrust her hand into the other, exclaiming she knew it was there.

This audacious action was however justly punished, for in the violent attempt to expose the orphan completely, she encountered the point of a needle which was fixed on Lucinda's pin-cushion, and which (entering beneath her nail) ran directly up her finger. She screamed violently with excess of pain, and snatching back her hand, now crimsoned with her

own blood, she threw herself on the nearest form, and wept and raved alternately with torture and vexation.

The book in question was not yet discovered, though our heroine underwent the strictest search; and the Governess after openly proclaiming Miss Wilful to be guilty of a falsehood, and clearly demonstrating the innocence of her favourite, proceeded to threaten with the severest punishment the person in whose possession the book should be found; yet kindly declared she would grant a free pardon, provided the culprit should acknowledge her fault, and make immediate restitution. This promise had the desired effect; and a girl (who sat on the side of Lucinda, opposite to Miss Wilful) quitting her seat, fell on her knees by the chair of her mistress, and sobbed a prayer of forgiveness, as if her heart would break.

She was consequently assured of the promised effect of goodness, on the conditions already mentioned; and in return she produced the pocket-book, to the utter astonishment of the school, and the final distraction of Miss Willful, whose eyes appeared to dart the flames of revenge, and who sat motionless, as if stupified by despair.

“For mercy’s sake,” exclaimed the Governess, “how came you by this book? or what horrid temptation has plunged you into the crime of robbery?”

“I took it not,” rejoined the weeping child, “I received it from the lady who accused Lucinda of the theft. She desired me to put it privately into the pocket which was next me, while she would entertain her so, that it might not be noticed: to this command she added the promise of half-a-crown when we should retire from school,

school, and assured me I might depend on her future favour as long as I lived. With this proposal I agreed, and should, no doubt, have effected her intention, but that she laid her accusation in the very minute wherein I was making my attempt; and by the confusion which naturally ensued, the plan was confounded, and the book left in my possession. This, Madam, is the simple truth; and as I have candidly made an entire confession of a fault, for which I am now thoroughly repentant, I trust you will not recall that pardon of which you have assured me.' "Your contrition," said her teacher, "forbids my inflicting any punishment upon you; nevertheless, I must remind you, that your own good name is forfeited in this place, by the vile business which you undertook to perform; and it will require an exem-

plary conduct indeed to obliterate the disgust which such an engagement must have fixed upon the minds of all who are present." Then addressing herself to Miss Wilful, who remained overwhelmed with malice and confusion, "You, Miss, have committed a crime so abominable in its nature, and so contemptible in its design, that I shall make no scruple of sacrificing the consideration of your fortune to the chastisement of your vice. Your punishment, I am resolved, shall be suitable to your deserts; and, if your mother should testify any displeasure on account of my proceeding, I shall assuredly explain the infamous occasion which warranted such behaviour towards you."

The accuser of Lucinda was accordingly exposed to the contempt of her associates, by standing on a bench, with

with her hands tied behind her, and her head encircled with a fool's cap, on the front of which was written the horrible character of "False Accuser;" while the object of her detestation was caressed universally, and treated with a kindness which virtue deserved, and which was readily shewn her.

Thus remained these opposite characters while school continued; and when the village-clock gave notice for the pupils to retire, the slave of mischief was hilled from the door with every mark of disgrace; and the orphan returned to her beloved friend with an unspotted heart, and a smile of triumphant innocence.

CHAP. V.

A PLEASANT ASSEMBLY, AND
FESTIVE DAY.

ON the arrival of Lucinda at Manor-House, she was agreeably surpris'd to hear that a nephew and niece of her dear benefactress were expected to arrive on the morrow from the metropolis. A glow of pleasure illumined her face at the interesting news, and her sparkling eyes displayed the satisfaction which it gave her, whilst her charming tongue expressed the warmest wishes for their safety, who were, doubtless, dear to Mrs. Manor.

That lady was fully informed of the transaction which occupi'd our last chapter, and press'd her favourite to her breast with unutterable tenderness, while she blessed Providence for

so bright a display of her unspotted integrity.

The day was past in its usual manner, and the shades of night again invited them to the couch of rest, on which, however, the orphan gained but little sleep, for fully were her thoughts employed on the approaching day, which (on account of the young visitors) was decreed a day of festivity.

At length the clouds began to disperse, and the morning broke resplendent from the ruddy east, when the family arose, and breakfast was prepared, at which Lucinda and her Patroness were sitting, when a carriage drove into the yard, and the objects of their expectation were ushered into their presence. Those caresses past, which are natural upon such an occasion, the visitors took their seats by the fire-side, and discovered to our heroine

heroine an elegant form and a beautiful face in the person of the young lady, while a lively eye and expressive countenance seemed to indicate the nature of her male companion; but if their persons were agreeable, their behaviour eclipsed every external charm; and their conversation was chaffly pure and correctly elegant.

In the descriptions which they kindly gave of the various parts of that busy city, from whence they came, they displayed at once a retentive memory and sound judgment, extolling those things which indeed were worthy of applause, and discovering the insignificance of many objects with which the juvenile mind is too apt to be delighted. On every subject they spoke with the same fluency; and with each transition gave fresh delight to their auditors; but that which appeared their darling theme,

theine, was the present state of literature as regarded youth in particular.

With astonishing facility they repeated the titles of various publications which had lately appeared in the world for the benefit of the rising generation, and undertook to recommend several of them to the notice of Mrs. Manor, by whose charity they might be introduced to those parts of the country which had never heard of them. To enforce the persuasion for this purpose, a variety of small volumes were produced from the trunk of the young travellers, which afforded a short recreation for the present, and were laid aside for the better purpose of attentive perusal.

Their aunt attended to all their observations with a smile of heartfelt delight, poured forth the highest encomiums on their learning and deportment, and (having heard by a letter
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the state of her sister's health) enquired if they had heard the story of Lucinda from their mother, whom she had acquainted therewith. They replied they had, and professed themselves anxious for the friendship of that person whom Heaven had so manifestly succoured in the hour of extremity. This tender language was answered by a warm embrace from Lucinda, whose heart already beat in unison with those beloved guests, and who hung attentive on the words of their lips as the assiduous bee clings to the expanding flower which holds unrivalled sweets within its breast. Some presents were now produced, consisting of apparel, trinkets, sweetmeats, &c. ; to which were added the latest musical publications ; expressly designed for the service of Lucinda.

While she with her benefactress were admiring these pretty articles, and presenting

senting their united thanks to the amiable pair who brought them, the door was opened by the worthy Mr. Felix and his only daughter (near the age of our orphan) introduced to this little company.

A ray of satisfaction beamed from the eyes of Mrs. Manor, who, rising with her young friends, received him with that cordiality which his intrinsic worth demanded, and which naturally proceeded from her lips, as the simple emanation of a soul which overglowed with a superior sense of virtue. His child was likewise welcomed on her return from school, and pressed into the warmest seat by the politeness of Master Frederic and his beloved sister, who were much pleased at her arrival. After a little discourse, the clergyman and his excellent friend retired to the library, and left his valued charges to the free enjoyment

joyment of themselves. Accordingly they agreed to devote their time to the most rational entertainment, by reading some interesting tale, which was immediately undertaken by the young gentleman, whose choice of a subject and just pronounciation ensured the thanks of the listening friends. His sister was then requested to favour the company with one of the new airs which she had brought from town: she modestly complied with that desire, and (craving the use of Lucinda's harp) accompanied the following words with uncommon skill and pathos:

Soft and melodious as amidst the choir,
Where high in bliss, some warbling cherub
sings;
Each bright performer strikes his golden lyre,
Or sweeps with ecstacy the sounding strings!

So with enchanting voice mild virtue stands,
 To lure the wand'rer to immortal rest;
 To cheer the faint, she spreads her lovely hands,
 And courts the child of sorrow to her breast.

There, safe from danger, youth may learn the
 way,
 Which surely leads to that unseen abode;
 Where grateful souls their vows of homage pay
 Before the footstool of their Maker, God!

Crown'd with immortal wreaths, their temples
 shine,
 Ambrosial odours rise from every breath;

By virtue guided to the realms divine;
 And more than conquerors o'er the pangs of
 death.

The execution and voice of the
 young performer was loudly applauded
 by her auditors, to whom Mrs.
 Manor and the clergyman now return-
 ed. Dinner was shortly after served
 up; and the afternoon now devoted to
 instructive conversation. Frederic
 was repeatedly questioned by Mr. Fe-

lix on various literary subjects; to which he replied with a ready wit and unaffected modesty, while his sister amused Mrs. Manor with several pertinent remarks on the amusements and reigning fashions of the town.

At the tea-table they attracted the notice of Lucinda by their polite behaviour; and the supper was enlivened by many well-timed sallies of their fertile imagination.

Their friends beheld them with that kind of pleasure to which the pen of description is ever inadequate; and at the hour of rest, they all united in humble adoration to Him who had permitted them to taste the fruits of virtue in the enjoyments of their simply festive day.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

REVENGE EXPOSED TO UNIVERSAL
RIDICULE.

IF the reader has perused our fourth chapter with attention, he most probably supposes that Miss Wilful was too deeply mortified (by the exposure of her crime and the ignominy of its attendant punishment) ever to form so preposterous a design again, or indeed ever to cherish for a moment an idea similar to those which had already overwhelmed her with disgrace and trouble.

This, however, was not the case, her temper was irritated, but not changed; and while she endured the just pains of chastisement, she secretly vowed revenge on the person of the harmless Lucinda. On her return

home she was fullen, reserved, and gloomy, unable to smother the vexation which oppressed her, though she durst by no means venture to inform her mother of the affronts she had received, for she well knew an immediate investigation must then take place; the effects whereof might prove more disagreeable than even those which she had already experienced.

Thus circumstanced, she endured the united pangs of envy and galling disappointment through the remainder of the day; and at night she was too much disturbed by the violence of her passions to taste the blessings of refreshing sleep; her slumbers were short, comfortless, and uncertain; the visions of the night presented again the scene of mortification; again she saw the triumphant glow of superior innocence on the cheek of her adversary, and heard afresh the heart-wounding

wounding hiss which followed her from the assembly. She awoke enraged and agitated with the dream, and starting from her pillow on the approach of the day, hurried on her clothes, and resolved immediately to seek a malignant pleasure in the paths of vengeance.

Her breakfast was scarcely touched, so violent were her base desires, and she counted the moments impatiently till she might leave the house, on pretence of going to school. At length the clock gave warning for nine, when, snatching up her gloves and tippet, she issued forth to seek occasion of mischief against our heroine. Lucinda at the same time was proceeding to join the pupils of her Governess, accompanied by the London friends, who insisted upon her accepting their attendance to the door. Whilst her spirits were enlivened by their conversation,

versation, and the distance was beguiled by their agreeable presence, she was met by the enemy of her peace, who sigh'd with rage and disappointment in finding her thus attended, as she was thereby utterly precluded from the possibility of that vengeance which spread its fables over her bosom, and to which every idea was absolutely devoted.

There was, however, no alternative, but that she must smother her feelings for the present, and continue her walk without any exertion of her malice. She therefore pass'd our heroine with a furious aspect, and took her seat in the school just as Lucinda, with her friends, arriv'd at the house: they now politely bade her adieu, and returned to Manor-House, after promising to call for her at twelve o'clock; till which hour her moments would be devoted to her learning.

learning. The pupils had not been long assembled when the Governess presented her favourite with a beautiful little puppy, observing that her conduct best merited such a proof of esteem; and she believed Lucinda would prove the most attentive mistress to this pretty animal.

We need not inform our readers of the pleasure which brightened the features of her scholar on the reception of so pleasing a gift, accompanied by such tender observations. She looked unutterable thanks, while her graceful courtesy would have charmed the eyes of the most splendid assembly; and taking little Pompey to her arms, she beheld the delicate formation of his limbs, the unrivalled whiteness of his curling hair, and the animation of his eyes, with a sensation approaching to rapture.

This charming object, however, was not

not sufficient to draw her attention from matters of greater importance; she therefore returned her dog to its former mistress till she should return home: her prudence was highly applauded; and Pompey was carried to his mother, who resided in the garden.

Had our readers been present at this interesting moment, they might have seen more of Miss Wilful's disposition (by the sudden and numerous changes of her countenance) than our endeavours can possibly depict to their imagination. Her face was sometimes overspread with a deadly paleness, while envy played the vulture at her heart, and occasional blushes at other times enflamed her visage with inexpressible rage and discontent: these, however, soon disappeared, and a dreadful gleam of malignant pleasure darted from her eyes when

when she obtained permission to retire to the garden.

It is an observation which is established by constant experience, that “one voluntary transgression conducts to many more;” and indeed when youth permits itself to swerve from the straight line of virtue, which is drawn out by our Creator, and illuminated by the torch of veracity, it is scarcely possible to affirm the extent of the danger, or the final consequence of such an action.

Miss Wilful had already sunk her name in the depths of infamy, and subjected herself to the contempt of every good and beneficent character, by the deviation from truth, which proved abortive, as respected Lucinda; but now she resolved to perpetrate a new crime, and as she had already defiled her tongue with a falsity, she hesitated

sitated not to stain her hands with blood.

That glance of savage joy which beamed on her features as she quitted the room, was produced by the sanguinary intention of revenging herself on Lucinda, by killing the harmless creature which was so kindly given by an indulgent teacher, and which was received with such visible transports of delight. Thus her base mind would triumph over the affliction of that lovely creature, whose virtues and accomplishments were too bright for the eye of malevolence; and thus would the heart of that Governess be wounded, who honoured our orphan with her peculiar esteem.

Intent on this abandoned project, she walked slowly to the place where the puppy lay; and after surveying the windows attentively, lest any should see her, she found means to

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coax the sportive creature to her hand ; when, grasping him with peculiar eagerness, she exclaimed, “ Thy death is certain, and my vengeance must be satisfied ! ” With these words, she went to a post which supported a small fun-dial, and taking the dog by its hinder legs, prepared to dash its little brains out, when the fierceness of her grasp occasioned it to cry out loudly under its suffering. By this cry the maternal affections of the bitch were awakened, who, by a violent effort, broke the cord which confined her to her kennel, and sprang forwards with the rage of a tygress to the astonished girl, who uttered an involuntary scream, and fled with astonishing rapidity from the enraged pursuer, who was close at her heels when she threw down the puppy, and burffing open a small gate at the end of the garden, sought refuge in an adjoining close,

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while Pompey ran frisking and yelping to his affectionate mother. In this attempt, however, the slave of malice was truly confounded; her choice of an asylum was peculiarly unlucky; for in this very close she beheld the figure of a bull, formidable in appearance, and well known for the effects of his mischievous nature: her situation was now miserable indeed— if she returned, the bitch might justly revenge her injuries by fastening upon her; or if she remained in the close, she must assuredly suffer from the horns of the mischievous animal before her.

The barking of the dogs, the cries of Miss Wilful, and an imperfect account from the maid servant (who had seen part of the transaction) brought the Governess, with the major part of the pupils, to the garden; who,
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from a small mount, beheld the lady in the close relying for preservation on the swiftness of her heels, while the bull ran after her, to her immediate consternation. The distress in which she had thus plunged herself would no doubt have claimed the pity of every beholder, had it been on any other account; but when the horrid cause was known, a burst of applause proceeded from the juvenile group, which the presence of their mistress could not restrain.

By this time Miss Wilful was completely exhausted by the violence of her screams, and her fruitless circumvolutions in the close; and, with her enemy at her heels, she fell breathless upon the grass; the bull immediately stopt his career to examine the body (as it is remarked these animals will not offer any molestation to a lifeless person) when recovering her

strength a little, she gave a loud shriek at the sight of the animal, and was instantly tossed over, amidst her young companions.

When they found she was neither wounded nor materially hurt, a universal peal of laughter succeeded their astonishment; and the wretched girl who had thus drawn their derision upon herself, was glad to sneak into the remotest corner of the school, while the little ones around her enjoyed a secret titter at the expence of her calamities; and the Governess exposed, in its most glaring colours, the barbarity of her nature, and the baseness of her spirit.

The school was now adjourned till the afternoon; Lucinda was conducted home by Frederic and his amiable sister; Pompey was taken in triumph to the abode of Mrs. Manor; and the village resounded with the shouts]

shouts which attended Miss Wilful on the miserable success of her cruel revenge.

CHAP. VII.

MORNING DISASTERS, WITH THE
POWER OF TRUTH.

AFTER a night of undisturbed repose, Lucinda and her female friend were invited to take a walk preparatory to their breakfast; and as the air was remarkably clear and wholesome, the proposal was cheerfully accepted. It was one of those invigorating mornings in the month of March, when the light frost glitters gaily on the thorn, and impearls the tender blade of the meadows, while the Sun, ascending in his course, drives the

thick cloud from the mountains, and sheds his prolific beams on the reviving vallies.

The red-breast whistled his soft notes in harmonious numbers as the united friends threw back the garden-gate, and the early flowers which bloomed to crown the spring with their beauties, expanded their painted leaves as they approached, and perfumed the gales with their delicious fragrance.

The young companions were attentively considering the works of a beneficent Providence, when Phillis Thatcher appeared on her little horse on the road to market, with her butter and eggs. This girl was the offspring of an industrious couple, who, by their frugality and attention to their business, had saved a sufficient sum to stock a little farm, on which they now happily resided, remote from the cor-
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roding cares which often sting the breasts of those who move in a higher circle.

Their daughter, we may naturally suppose, was the object of their tenderest attachment; and (the docility of her spirit being equal with the vigour of her health) she was an unfailing assistant on most occasions. Philis, however, had her foibles as well as other persons of her own age; and the display of these sometimes brought her into considerable difficulties, as we shall find evinced in the present chapter.

She was at this time proceeding slowly along a narrow lane with the wholesome produce of her father's stock; and, musing on the profits wherewith she should return in the evening, when her meditations were of a sudden disturbed by the appearance of an unlucky boy who had wantonly ascended

ascended the back of an ass, that was guided by means of an handkerchief, instead of a bridle. Thus mounted and ripe for mischief, the young rogue spurred the animal suddenly to the side of the farmer's daughter, and asked with a grin of self-complacency, if she would ride a race to the next mile-stone? Nothing could be more unfortunate than such a question in the present circumstances. One of the few foibles possessed by the maiden, was an unconquerable pride as respected her own horsemanship, the slightest hint on this business would kindle the flame of anger, and her spirit when thoroughly roused, could taste no more of peace till her defamers were silenced by ocular demonstration of her abilities.

What then must she have felt at a challenge so degrading and contemptible, as to display her talents against

an insignificant boy much younger than herself! and, what heightened her resentment, she was to ride against an ass! However, her determination was soon fixed, and she resolved to leave the saucy fellow far enough behind her, when it recurred to her imagination that her eggs might be endangered by this exertion of her skill. On this reflection she restrained her impatience a few moments, till her adversary loudly exclaimed, "Phyllis is afraid to venture the race." This was too much to be endured; and Phyllis by a motion of her whip gave new life to her steed, which sprang forward on a round trot, while her enemy followed with an irregular gallop, till the ass, grown weary of his rider, amused himself by cropping the herbage off the bank, while the luckless youth lay quietly in a ditch, to which he was conveyed by

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a single exertion of his companion, Lucinda with her friends could no longer conceal their visible emotions, but laughed immoderately at the just reward of his impertinent folly, when Phillis turned her head and loudly joined in the burst of merriment; but amidst her sportive triumph, a misfortune came which effectually damped her joys, and steeped her glowing cheeks in tears; for just as she turned exultingly round, her horse unhappily stumbled, and threw his burden completely over his head.

The noisy laugh was instantly hushed; Lucinda beheld the fall with grief, and Phillis viewed the wreck with despair, for all her eggs lay broken on the ground; and of her butter all the lumps were sadly dirtied, and several of them devoured by a hungry sow, who, with her train of pigs,

pigs, was roaming on the adjoining bank.

Thus encompassed with trouble stood the melancholy virgin, wringing her hands and bemoaning her cruel fortune, when our heroine arrived at the spot whereon the brittle ware was profusely scattered. Her tender heart was deeply wounded by the scene before her; and she felt in her pocket for something to compensate her loss. Frederic and Maria generously seconded her design; and a sum was raised amongst them sufficient to pay for the broken eggs. The spoiled and devoured butter still remained as a source of deep disquiet, till Phillis suddenly dried up her tears, and resolved immediately to return home, to fall on her knees and confess the whole matter with a strict regard to truth, whatever might be the consequence.

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Her pitying friends applauded her resolution, and kindly resolved to accompany her to the farm, which lay but at a little distance. Accordingly they bent their steps towards that humble edifice, and presented themselves with Phillis before the industrious couple, who were both employed in their usual avocations. They naturally expressed a degree of surprize at so unexpected an interview as the sudden return of their daughter had occasioned, and proceeded to demand the cause why she had not attended the market as usual.

A flood of tears, which gushed from the eyes of the ingenuous maiden, supplied the place of a verbal reply; and her parents rightly conjectured that some disaster had befallen her, when, recovering her perturbed spirits, she confessed the whole affair in the attitude

tude of supplication, and with the matchless energy of true repentance.

On the relation of his loss, passion for a moment possessed the farmer's soul; and snatching up a stick which lay on the ground, he raised it in the air with a threatening gesture; but the force of truth subdued the rising storm, and that hand which brandished the instrument of correction *one* minute, was in the *next* disarmed of all its terrors, and fondly reclining on the neck of the narrator. The worthy matron assured her daughter of her full forgiveness, on account of that virtue which beamed resplendent through her artless confession. Lucinda with her associates presented their warmest thanks for the favour shewn to the luckless adventurer, and were strongly pressed to accept again the money which they had contributed to alleviate her misfortune.

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This however they peremptorily refused; and extolling Phillis for so clear a manifestation of her integrity, they bade the cottagers adieu, and returned to warm the heart of their benefactress, by a recital of those disasters which were overcome by *truth*, the subject of her applause, and the strict attendant on all her conversation.

CHAP. VIII.

UNEXPECTED MISFORTUNES, AND
PRIDE DEGRADED.

WHILST our heroine enjoyed the united pleasures which flow spontaneously from personal rectitude and valuable companions, at the seat of her benign Patroness, the fate of her enemy began to assume a very different aspect to that which had hitherto glittered around her haughty and imperious family; the smiles of Fortune

no longer attended the exertions of her own pride, nor shed its warm influence on the breast of her mother: no more the thundering knocker proclaimed the fashionable visitor, or the splendid chariot rattled through the avenue, while the hall was crowded with the slaves of folly and dissipation.

The scene was sadly changed,—murmurs usurped the place of joy,—black sorrow clothed each agitated face, and grim despair sat pointing to the ruin.

Torn from her towering sphere, the parent of Miss Wilful raged as a lunatic through the pompous apartments till she met with her child, when checking her furious progress, she threw herself on a sofa, and implanted in her daughter's bosom ten thousand nameless pangs as she thus addressed her:—"Attend with silence to your distracted mother's grief, and bend if

possible your mind to match your fortunes." Astonished at so unexpected a demand, the young lady gazed intently on her features, and naturally requested the cause of the present scene.—“Forbear (said Mrs. Wilful, with a stern voice) to interrupt me, the cause is dreadfully sufficient to destroy my present and everlasting peace. Yes, my child, too surely are we *ruined*,—lost and *ruined* beyond redemption! The banker in whose hands my property was deposited, has failed in business and absconded from the kingdom, while my numerous creditors (who have heard the wretched tale) insolently demand that money which both my house and furniture will barely raise. Thus, then, are we hurled from the mountain of delight to the depths of galling poverty, disgrace, and woe, while the sons of fashion will shun our altered fortunes,

and

and the common herd will triumph in our downfall. At this moment a footman entered the room, with the melancholy information that an execution had entered the house; and the whole of their goods must be delivered up.

A convulsive shudder announced the feelings of the degraded lady, who paused a moment in a stupid silence, then striking her head with uncontrollable anguish, she uttered a wild exclamation, and fled from the apartment.

Her wretched daughter was now completely miserable, deprived of that support which had hitherto upheld her thoughtless ambition; and a stranger to those virtues which calm the mind of the Christian sufferer, she beheld her fate with fullen horror, and fled the room with the same precipitation as her mother.

Misfortune, however, cannot be so easily evaded; and Mrs. Wilful found her fears so quickly realized, that in a few days she was stript of her furniture, and driven from her habitation to seek provision or a shelter in the world at large.

This was a trial too severe for the lady who had so often derided the wants of the humble supplicant, and whose gate had so often excluded the shivering wanderer from her presence. Encircled with the chaplet of prosperity, and enlivened by the adulation of parasites, she *then* reclined on the couch of Indolence and revelled in the beams of Fortune, alike unconscious and regardless of the miseries endured by the victims of unavailing sorrow; but *now* she felt the poignance of distress, and mourned too late for her former indiscretion.

A short time she struggled with the
heart-

heart-rending anguish which overwhelmed her, but nature was too feeble for the contest; and her person sunk (on the forfeiture of her fortune) to the silent grave, wherein she was quietly interred through the charity of an old domestic.

The whole of her furniture was now put up to public auction, and disposed of to the highest bidder, while the unhappy enemy of the virtuous Lucinda was equally abandoned and exposed to destruction.

Our readers may naturally picture to themselves the agony of her soul who was thus humbled in the midst of her career, and justly rewarded for her wanton cruelty towards Lucinda. She who so lately commanded the servile throng of attendants, was now obliged to a *servant* even for her mother's obsequies. That eye which had so lately sparkled with the hateful flame

flame of malice, was now swoln with tears, though not the tears of genuine repentance ;—shame and distress alone impelled the briny drops which bedewed her face ; and a sense of universal hatred, uncorrected by proposed amendment, heaved her proud breast with many a piercing sigh, and stamped on her features the image of despondency.

Thus miserable in her condition, and still contemptible in her deportment, she wandered from door to door amongst the parents of her late school-fellows ; but her character was too well known to suit her present purpose ; the door was either shut in her face, or some keen invective poured forth against her by those to whom she made her complaint ; or if by chance some generous peasant (unwilling to see her perish for absolute want) vouchsafed her a morsel with
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his family, her ears were assuredly wounded with the recital of that behaviour which had alienated every affection, and gradually hardened every heart against her — particularly her conduct towards Lucinda afforded an ample field for retaliation; and she was now obliged to endure those reproaches from others, which she had so often expressed against our heroine.

Stung to the quick by such continued treatment, she would often roam to the solitary grove, or the neighbouring meadow; but hunger, rapacious hunger, bowed her stubborn spirit, and forced her back to the abode of the villagers, and taught her quivering lips the accents of entreaty, though her soul sickened at the deep humiliation, and her limbs involuntarily shook with distraction.

On Sunday, that day of rest and holy praise, she fled the village on the approach

approach of the light, lest any person should behold her who had not yet heard of her downfall, and who formerly beheld her in the vortex of her splendid folly.

Thus she continued for several weeks till even the few who sustained began to hate her, and (finding the baseness of her nature ungovernable) they universally refused to contribute towards her support any longer, and left it to her own choice, either to submit to service or perish in her obstinacy.

The evening succeeding this last misfortune, she wandered up the village till she arrived at the door of her school, which she no sooner beheld than (exhausted with hunger and overcome by the clamours of a guilty conscience) she fell senseless on the step before the house, and remained without any signs of life till her Governess

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(on opening the door) beheld and relieved her deep distress.

The appearance of this unhappy girl was shocking to the eye of humanity, while it conveyed the most important lesson to the opening mind on the opposite effects of virtue and malignity. Her dress was dirty, torn, and disordered; her hair uncombed and ragged, her features emaciated, her eyes sunk, and her body reduced to a mere skeleton.—Her amiable Preceptress sighed deeply at the melancholy change; and (after reviving her by a cordial for the purpose) she assured her of her protection till she might hear of a service, to which she must now indisputably turn her thoughts, and which was the only remaining asylum from destruction.

On the morrow (while Miss Wilful endeavoured to obtain some needful repose) the assembled pupils were
 thus

thus addressed:—"You are all acquainted, my dear children, with the nature of those crimes which lately disgraced a member of our little community; and you have likewise seen that punishment which Heaven has inflicted upon her; I hope therefore all resentment is extinguished amongst you, and I sincerely wish that her calamities may be a sufficient warning to you all, that by a strict attention to the laws of your God and the advice of your friends, you may shun those terrible evils which have proved her ruin.—Resentment, malice, pride, and falsehood occupied her heart in prosperity; and nakedness, want, and infamy now pursue her as the immediate attendants of those detestable vices. Let me therefore beg, yea, let me earnestly intreat of you, my beloved pupils, to examine well your own hearts, and see (before you remark on the sufferings

sufferings of this girl) whether you have not in some instance deserved the same. If you are conscious of guilt, confess the crime, and implore forgiveness of your Maker; or if your heart acquits you, look up to him for fresh supplies of virtue and integrity, day by day, and constantly remember that if you forget your Creator in the days of your youth, he may forget you when you cry for his assistance, and may then pour the torrent of his just anger upon your rebellious heads."

This little address wrought wonderfully upon the attentive auditors, who expressed their emotions by various signs of pity, sorrow, or contrition; and when the school adjourned, every tongue was employed in the praise of their beloved Mistress, or in serious remarks on the degradation of that pride which was universally abhorred and dreaded.

CHAP. IX.

FORGIVENESS EXEMPLIFIED IN A
KIND INTERCESSION.

AMONGST the various characters who attended to the discourse which concluded our last chapter, there was not one who felt so keenly on account of the sufferer, as the kind Lucinda. Her tender heart was torn with grief, and her beauteous eyes were drowned in tears, while she reflected on the nature of those misfortunes which she was once exposed to herself when driven from her home, and forsaken by her only relative, she was in the strictest sense of the expression, an outcast.

There are indeed too many persons who would have triumphed in
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the ruin of such an enemy as Miss Wilful, and would most probably have embittered her sorrows by reproachful language; but the heroine of our story was of a very opposite disposition. Gentleness, love, compassion, and affability, were her striking characteristics, and the sweetness of her disposition was constantly displayed upon every occasion; no wonder then, if her bosom throbbed with pity when she beheld her inveterate foe despoiled of her property, and reduced to beggary. The mere idea was sufficient to awaken the soft emotions of Lucinda's soul; and the circumstance (as a matter of fact) called forth the powers of her imagination on behalf of the tormented Wilful. She therefore hastened home, with a full determination to intercede with her beloved Patroness for a fresh display of her munificence;

and meekly invoked the assistance of Heaven to establish her laudable design-

On entering the parlour, she found Frederic, Maria, and Miss Felix waiting her return, who received her with a smile of affection; but perceiving a more than ordinary gravity upon her features, they tenderly inquired the cause of her distress. My dear friends, said the amiable girl, I am deeply wounded by the distressing condition of that person who lately rendered her name ridiculous by the malice and cruelty of her intentions towards me, but whom I immediately forgave, unwilling to follow her bad example. This unfortunate child is now destitute of a parent's love, a house to shelter her from the inclemency of the weather, or a morsel of bread which she can call her own. Her conduct (said Miss Felix) has
merited

merited the extent of her afflictions; and there are few persons who, like my dear Lucinda, would shed a tear over her calamity. “ Alas (rejoined our heroine) I have surely sufficient cause to mourn for the children of sorrow, who tasted so early of its bitter cup; and had it not been for the matchless kindness, and warm perseverance of your invaluable father, I should (most likely) have yielded up my parting breath at the new-closed grave of my beloved mother! O surely that morning must ever remain impressed on my heart when the good, the reverend man snatched me from the jaws of destruction, and placed me safely beneath this honoured roof! Should I ever *forget* that memorable event, the blackest ingratitude must stain my character, and virtue must forsake the regions of my bosom. “ That event (said the listening Frederic)

Frederic) is among those improbabilities which are too absurd for our reflection. The spirit of our friend is too susceptible of a generous flame, and far too delicate to hazard the supposition. If then (resumed Lucinda) your judgment is so favourable, you will not wonder at that uneasiness which I feel on account of my fallen adversary ; and indeed I must implore your assistance to plead a cause before your aunt, which I fear my own intreaties may not gain.

They unanimously assured her of their readiness to support any plea which she might chuse to bring forward, being well assured, that whatever proceeded from her lips would be the dictate of goodness, and the simple effect of a worthy intention.

To this most friendly compliment Lucinda returned her acknowledgments ; when Maria exclaimed, “ O my
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my dearest Lucinda, you know not yet what a scene of delight is preparing for us! my generous aunt has resolved to treat us with a little concert among ourselves, to which all the young ladies and gentlemen in this and the adjoining village will be invited, provided their goodness is equal to their appearance." Lucinda smiled at the simplicity of this speech, (which however proved the goodness of Maria's heart) and mildly answered, "The affection of my worthy benefactress is constantly exhibited in her noble actions; and the plan to which you advert, is worthy of her nature, who delights in beholding the felicity of her favoured children; but I fear (added she with a charming smile) you will not find your expectations fulfilled, if you suppose our entertainment will be attended by all the persons of whom you now speak.

However,

However, I trust we shall find a sufficient number (who are truly virtuous) to help our performance, and exhilarate our spirits on the appointed day.

The conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Manor, to whom Lucinda unbosomed her apprehensions concerning the ruin which evidently hung over the head of her traducer. She tenderly explained the distressing scenes which have already been shewn to the reader; expatiated on the sad reverse which had dragged that thoughtless girl so near to her tomb; and concluded by a pathetic entreaty, that Mrs. Manor might receive the victim of misfortune beneath her hospitable roof.

The worthy lady listened with real astonishment to the strange entreaty, and, after a moment's pause, replied
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in the following words: "That you freely pardon the avowed disturber of your peace and adversary of your reputation, does not surprize me, because I am grown familiar with your amiable disposition; nor do I much wonder at that sorrow which you express on account of her shameful downfall, since the gratitude of your generous soul is naturally kindled by the appearance of that misery from which the interposition of Heaven relieved you; but that you should request me to take beneath my own care the abandoned wretch who has wounded me in the tenderest manner, by deliberately attempting to blacken the character of my favourite, is such an exertion of superior goodness, as seems to stagger belief, while it reflects the brightest refulgence on your benign nature. However, since it is your request, I will permit this wretched

wretched girl to enter my abode, provided her pride is sufficiently humbled to associate with my domestics, and to perform every trivial service which may be required of her.

Lucinda would have now thrown herself at the feet of her amiable friend had she not been prevented; however, she caught her hand with a degree of enthusiasm, and bedewing it with the drops of gratitude, expressed her sense of this precious favour, in terms sufficiently strong to excite a tender emotion in the breast of each beholder.

Dinner was now announced by the servant, and the subject was dismissed till the afternoon, when Lucinda, accompanied by her graceful companions, went to assure the degraded lady of a comfortable reception at Manor-House, on the terms already mentioned.

Mortified as she was by the mere
idea

idea of servitude, she was nevertheless thankful (at least apparently) for the offered favour; and instantly prepared to follow her generous advocate, while the governess of the school called down unnumbered blessings on the head of that child who was so evidently a peace-maker, and the unaffected friend of an abandoned sufferer. Crowned with applause, and cheerful in her spirit, the virtuous Lucinda returned home triumphantly happy, whilst the vicious Miss Wilful followed at a distance, overwhelmed by disgrace and the prey of confusion.

CHAP. X.

A JUVENILE CONCERT.

SWIFT rolling time soon filled up the fortnight which stood between the important promise alluded to by Maria, and its happy accomplishment. The beauteous morning smiled on the gay intention, and was universally hailed by our juvenile friends, both as the scene of their own festivity and the celebration of Mrs. Manor's birth; for such was the day appointed for harmless diversion.

The morning was devoted to the performance of devotion, the congratulations usual on such occasions, and the requisite concern of breakfast; from which the ladies retired to their toilet; and Frederic to seek the appointed

appointed visitors. In a couple of hours he returned with six young gentlemen, whose characters adorned the country, and who, among their numerous accomplishments, were peculiarly skilful in the science of music, and consequently the most proper subjects of invitation on the present plan; and shortly after their arrival, the company was enlivened by the appearance of four ladies, whose beauty (though remarkable) was their slightest recommendation.

At the head of this charming assembly presided Mrs. Manor, accompanied by the worthy clergyman, who came to present his warmest respects on the natal morning, and whose company was too desirable to be relinquished while universal pleasure reigned on every face, and every heart was dilated with excessive satisfaction.

The dinner was worthy the hospitality of its founder ; and the desert which crowned it was truly elegant. The sallies of good humour were enlivened, though not disturbed by the generous juice of the grape ; and innocent conviviality reigned through the cheerful mansion.

The gardens now afforded a pleasing amusement (it being the month of May) where the blushing trees stood rich with blossoms, and the verdant foliage smiled in the gayest robes of spring, whilst the delighted birds hailed the reviving sun-beams with the notes of richest melody. The tea-table next demanded their attendance, and shortly after, the closing day invited them to the destined concert.

For this purpose the drawing-room was elegantly prepared. At the upper end appeared a light orchestra, ornamented

mented with musical devices, and furnished with suitable desks for the performers : a crimson curtain fringed with gold was drawn up in festoons on each side, and ran along the ceiling, whilst a brilliant lustre suspended in the front, and, illumined by twelve wax-tapers, threw its artificial rays on the interesting scene.

The instruments were capital, though not numerous ; and the vocal powers of the company well known, and often applauded.

Miss Maria presided at the organized piano, Lucinda swept the sweetly sounding harp, while the six young gentlemen who were introduced by Frederic, divided into pairs, and played their favourite instruments. The first breathed the soft harmony of first and second flute ; the second played the violins ; and the last couple attuned their oboes to the sym-

phonic sounds with judgment and precision. Thus were the young musicians arranged, with Frederic, Miss Felix, and the four ladies as principal fingers, when the concert began with a celebrated overture, succeeded by a variety of pleasing songs, and enlivened by the most charming interludes.

On the arrival of some fresh company, and the close of their first performance, Frederic informed the audience that he had ventured to compose an ode on the celebration of that day which gave birth to Mrs. Jane Manor, his beloved aunt, for which he intreated a candid hearing, as the first effort of his poetical genius.

The piece was ardently requested ; and the gay musicians poured forth the sweetest notes with a striking animation, as the following verses were repeated by a single voice, or occasionally

tionally swelled to an harmonic chorus :

Aurora breaking thro' yon dusky cloud,
Serenely ushers in the smiling morn ;
With ev'ry beauty, ev'ry grace endow'd,
As when the fair, the charming Jane was born,

Ye tuneful songsters of the grove,
Extend your rich melodious songs ;
Ye flow'rs, your fragrant breath improve ;
To her the sweet perfume belongs.

Hither, ye swains, your garlands bring ;
Ye nymphs, prepare the soften'd lay ;
Her praise with voice enraptur'd sing,
And join to bless her natal day.

Kind Heav'n indulgent with superior pow'r,
Stamp'd ev'ry beauty on her infant face ;
Smiling, presid'd o'er the fruitful hour ;
Breath'd on her form, and polish'd ev'ry grace.

Thus the bright the artless creature,
For superior love design'd,
Shone in ev'ry op'ning feature,
Fair in person, blest in mind.

Each beholder's admiration:
Ev'ry bosom breath'd a pray'r ;
While the mother's consolation
Calmly slept, devoid of care.

At length, matur'd by various circling years,
Sublimèr glories meet our dazzl'd eyes ;
In ev'ry look a stronger charm appears,
Enchains affection, and creates surprize.

Long may her valu'd life remain,
As rising years increase,
To swell the poet's grateful strain,
Or fill his soul with peace.

May angels hover round her bed,
While each succeeding spring
Shall scatter blessings on her head,
And fresh enjoyments bring.

Ye jocund swains, attune the dulcet flute
To songs expressive of your heartfelt mirth ;
To sprightly sounds the antic measures suit,
Extol her virtues, and proclaim her birth.

Roll swiftly on, ye murm'ring streams,
O'er golden sands pursue your way ;
Bright Phœbus still diffuse thy beams,
To gild the dear, the joyous day.

Hail to the bright auspicious morn,
Whose rays with ecstasie we see ;
Oft may the festive cause return !
And truly happy may it be !

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The company unanimously applauded Master Frederic, whose gratitude had chosen so worthy an object for the exertion of his expanding genius; but Mrs. Manor with an affectionate smile, rebuked him for those praises, and that description of her beauty which the ode contained; the former of which she affirmed she did not merit; and the latter was inconsistent, as being addressed to an *old* woman; but here she was interrupted by Mr. Felix, who warmly defended his young friend; and observed, that a lady who was only arrived at her thirty-fourth year, could not be deemed old; at the same time remarking, the description of her charms were by no means exaggerated, though, he acknowledged, they were completely eclipsed by her virtues. The clergyman was thanked for the compliment, the veracity of which, however,

ever, he asserted; and the company withdrew to partake of a splendid collation, which closed the evening to the honour of the patroness, and the matchless delight of the young performers.

CHAP. XI.

MALICE DEFEATED IN ITS LAST ATTEMPT.

EIGHT months had elapsed since the festive celebration related in our last, when the temper of Miss Willful broke through the bounds of restraint, and stood confessed in all its native deformity.

Master Frederic with his beautiful sister were returned to the metropolis, and Mrs. Manor was indebted to the charming exertions of
Lucinda

Lucinda for that continued cheerfulness which gilded every passing day, when their peace was disturbed by a malicious attempt from the object of their pity and charitable preservation.

The patroness of our heroine having left by accident a miniature likeness of her husband upon her toilet, it was presently found by the base girl, whose unconquerable wickedness still suggested the idea of revenge against Lucinda; and the present opportunity appeared too important to admit of neglect; she therefore took the locket from the table, and immediately conveyed it to her own apartment, while every thought was racked to appropriate it to such a purpose as might effectually stain Lucinda's spotless character, and infallibly deprive her of any future protection from her generous friend. She well knew the high estimation wherein the picture

was

was held by its owner; and the brilliants with which it was surrounded convinced her how important the loss must prove; she therefore resolved to seize the present moment, and place it in the trunk of our orphan, which she had repeatedly observed was left unlocked by the unsuspecting Lucinda. In this, however, her plan was fruitless; the lock was secured, and her attempt repelled. She tried her own key, and several others of which she had the possession, but tried in vain; she then attempted to force the lid; but recollecting that such a procedure would most probably involve herself in danger without affecting the person of her enemy, she desisted, and instantly repaired to a blacksmith who resided in the village, informing him she had lost the key of her box, and requesting him to lend her a few to try if she could fit it. The honest
man

man replied that he did not chuse to lend his keys on the foundation of such a story; but if she chose, he was willing to go with her, and either accommodate her with a key, or take off the lock till he could make one.

Her distress was now severe, and her purpose rendered desperate; the valuable trinket was now in her own possession, which might instantly be missed; and in the course of a strict research might perhaps be found upon her. To restore it to its place was impossible, as the dressing-room was now locked against her; and it was equally impracticable to deposit it in the trunk of her enemy without the assistance of the blacksmith, who might himself be detected in his employment; and then the truth must be revealed with tenfold aggravation.

Thus fearfully irresolute, and trembling with excessive guilt, she stood
silently

silently reflecting on the man's proposals, when she saw her mistress pass the shop with Lucinda; and instantly recollected they were engaged to dinner at a neighbouring seat.

Her expressive joy now banished every other consideration; and she desired the smith to follow her directly; the workman accordingly looked out some keys, and with some requisite tools attended the disturber of youthful felicity.

In the mean time the portrait was missed by Mrs. Manor, who begged her favourite would run and fetch it from her dressing-table:—her command was instantly obeyed; but Lucinda, pale and agitated, brought word that it could not be found; when her patroness, desiring her to proceed and make an apology for her delay, returned in person to seek the locket.

Book of Miss
yroll

Miss Wilful, who, at that lady's approach, had precipitately entered the parlour, now accosted her with a ferocious countenance, and begged her attention to a subject of the greatest importance, while Mrs. Manor surveyed her with surprize, and desired her to enter upon a direct and brief explanation: her servant court'ied and proceeded:—After having suffered for a falsity, which I once levelled at the person of your amiable charge, my lips should be now for ever closed against the discovery of an ungrateful truth, was I not well assured of the justice and benevolence of the lady whom I now address.

I desire (rejoined Mrs. Manor) you will either explain yourself immediately, or defer your tale to a better opportunity, for I am now engaged, and am merely returned to fetch my locket.

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On this subject (said the malicious wretch) I have to speak; and sorry I am to say your goodness is so ill rewarded; but you may rest assured *that* valuable is in the possession of Lucinda.

Ungrateful wretch! (exclaimed the worthy lady) how can you dare to affix so black an action to the character of a child who has already triumphed over your wicked designs, publicly forgiven your audacious conduct, and finally snatched you from the jaws of death by her astonishing exertions on your behalf?—I have already confessed my faults, said Wilful; and would have buried the knowledge of this transaction in eternal secrecy, but that I know the nature of your loss, and have it in my power to establish these assertions.—This vicious character was now plunged into a fresh disaster; she imagined that her lady on this vile relation would have gone

gone directly to Lucinda, and taxed her with the knowledge of the concealed property; but Mrs. Manor was too wise and too generous to listen to the hateful forgery with any other emotions than those of horror and disgust.—After a moment's pause, the footman was sent to fetch home the accused person; and the accuser was detained in the parlour till her arrival.—On her entering the room, Mrs. Manor informed her of the occasion which had summoned her from her company, and tenderly assured her that she was already confirmed of the base deception:—however, my love, said she, we will go to your apartment and assert your innocence by a thorough search; after which the true culprit will doubtless be found, and shall receive a suitable reward. Lucinda pressed her hand with emotion, and (wiping from her face an intrusive

tear) eagerly ascended the stairs with her patroness and Miss Wilful. Lucinda felt in her pocket for the key, but perceived it was already in the lock, and therefore threw back the lid and requested her beloved friend to examine the contents of that trunk already mentioned.

The features of her enemy now shone with a fierce delight as the various articles were produced; but when (at the bottom of several papers) the locket was discovered in a small pocket-book, the scene was superior to the powers of description; — the revengeful Wilful gave a triumphant shout, while the confounded lady gazed on her favourite in silent agony; and Lucinda, distracted with the unexpected shock, fell senseless to the ground. At length she revived to the misery which seemed to await her, and found a melancholy relief in a
flood

flood of tears which came to her assistance, when clasping the feet of her benefactress, and fixing her lovely eyes on those of the afflicted lady, she feebly sighed, "can you believe it? The soft appeal was powerful in effect, and her Patroness was just about to exclaim, "Would to Heaven I could possibly doubt it!" when our Heroine observed the book from which the miniature was taken, and instantly recollected it for the same which her enemy had once before designed for the instrument of her malevolence. She now quitted her prostrate situation, and rising with unaffected grace, reminded her Patroness of that event, and requested that her Governess might see the pocket-book, thereby to pass judgment. Mrs. Manor was happy to find in this remark a probability of Lucinda's innocence, when the smith returned, in quest of a chisel which

he had left behind him. This naturally produced such questions as led to a complete discovery, and the man (having told the affair of the key) informed them that his employer gave him a pocket-book to place beneath her papers, and immediately left him in apparent haste; that he accordingly performed her desire, and having fitted a key, returned home to his business; but came back for the tool which he had forgotten.

The man was rewarded with a mug of ale for his useful narration, while Miss Wilful was severely reprimanded by her mistress for the hardness of her heart and the malignity of her temper; and now Miss, said the justly incensed lady, you must expect to share the fate of the vicious and impenitent. As a liar and intentional murderer, you have suffered in a slight degree; but as a thief (for such you undoubtedly

undoubtedly are) you must abide the consequence of the laws: I therefore desire that a constable may be fetched, and you may now reflect amidst the horrors of a prison on the effects of that vice which you have so carefully cherished, and view at a despairing distance that virtue which you have vainly attempted to injure. This sentence, however, was too rigorous for the ears of the benevolent Lucinda: she caught the hand of her valued friend,—she threw herself again before her, and declared she never could taste of peace till a milder punishment was inflicted. Mrs. Manor burst into tears at the moving sight, and, lifting her darling from the ground, assured her, that for *her* sake she would not commence a prosecution against her enemy; then turning to the dismayed criminal, “Once more, abandoned girl (said she) you receive

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an invaluable favour from the subject of your perpetual malice. Your last attempt is now defeated, to your final confusion, and will but add a fresh blossom to the wreath of triumphant virtue, while your detested name will in every company be held up to deter the rising generation from such diabolical actions. Go then, wretched as you are, through your own perverseness, and beware of appearing in this place as long as you exist; for rest assured, whenever you return to this village, you shall be surely brought to trial for the offence which you have this day committed.

This warning was sufficient for the self-convicted miscreant, who fled the place with fruitless maledictions; and after roving about as a common beggar, we understand that she died in extreme distress, lamenting, when too late, that pride which Heaven had so deeply

deeply humbled, and that malicious mind which brought her at last to so wretched an end.

Lucinda in the mean time was cherished by the kindness of that Protectress, who viewed each opening charm with rapture as her child increased in years, and often blessed that interposing Providence which had given the little Lucinda to her arms at a period so essential to her peace of mind.

CHAP. XII.

HOSPITALITY TO A STRANGER.

OUR readers are now to be informed that several years passed on in sweet and regular harmony since we presented our heroine to their notice; she was then a lovely child; but now we are

are to regard her as approaching towards the estate of woman, and consequently a more important subject of consideration. In our former chapter we contented ourselves by expatiating on the charms of her mind; but now deem it a duty incumbent on us to shew our juvenile friends the picture of that person for whom they doubtless feel a peculiar interest.

At the period therefore to which our history is now arrived, we present her to the view as an engaging and invaluable girl, just entered her seventeenth year, with a beautiful face, an enchanting form, and a noble heart; her person was tall for her age, and strikingly proportionate; her countenance was open, mild, and generous; her eyes illumined with the rays of innate goodness, while health sat blushing on her cheek, and grace attended all her motions.

Such

Such in her person, and far superior in her virtues, was the once deserted but now beloved Lucinda, when an event took place which, from its immediate connection with our subject, we can by no means attempt to delay.

Mrs. Manor was standing at one of the drawing-room windows (accompanied by the idol of her affections) contemplating the rich scenery which crowned the adjacent landscape, when the sky was suddenly overcast with darkness, and the black clouds began to descend in sheets of rain, while the hoarse thunder rattled amidst the elements, and gave new horrors to the furious tempest.

At this juncture a young traveller was thrown from his horse near the gate of Manor-House, and by the orders of its hospitable mistress, assisted by a servant, and kindly invited
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to accept of shelter. The youth (who had received a slight bruise from his fall) returned his thanks for the proposed accommodation, and was introduced to the presence of the ladies, whose kindness he applauded in the pure language of unaffected gratitude and artless sincerity.

He informed them his accident was occasioned by a flash of lightning, which darting across the eyes of his spirited steed, caused the animal to start in so violent a manner as instantly precipitated him from his seat, and for a moment deprived him of animation. "However (added he, bowing respectfully) I have no cause to complain of an event which has introduced me to persons so truly amiable, and for whom I already feel the deepest veneration."

His compliment was politely answered, and a more general conversation

tion introduced, while our heroine and her Patroness studied with uncommon attention the appearance and behaviour of their youthful guest. He was apparently nineteen years of age, rather taller than Lucinda, with dark eyes, flowing locks, and a pleasing set of features, illumined by good humour, and strongly expressive of every just and worthy sentiment; his address was noble, free, and captivating; his language chaste, his ideas vivacious, and his deportment suitable to his conspicuous qualities.

Such a character might naturally excite a degree of admiration, blended with respect, in the breasts of his fair entertainers; but the mind of Mrs. Manor received a more peculiar sensation from that strong resemblance which evidently subsisted between the accidental visitor and her beloved girl, and which (the more she gazed)

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was still more firmly rooted in her imagination.

Nor was this generous lady the only person so deeply employed in attentive examination. Lucinda fondly thought she traced her mother's features on the stranger's face; and he (though too polite to survey her with fixed attention) seemed to find a nameless something amidst her charms which called from his breast that sigh of affectionate regret which is usually devoted to a departed friend.

The evening still continued wet, though the fury of the storm had subsided; and our adventurer was invited to stay till the morning, by which time his fatigue might be overcome, and the weather prove more auspicious to his purpose. For some time he opposed their little plan, as being unwilling to incommode the family on his account; but his objections were soon

overruled

overruled by the intreaties of his amiable hostess; and he at length disposed himself to spend the evening with the present company. The time was agreeably passed in amusing and instructive discourse till the cloth was spread for supper, when the Patroness of our heroine (happening to call Lucinda by her name) observed their guest to start, and fix his eyes on her favourite with the most inquisitive earnestness. The first emotions of her soul now returned with increased power; and she sat in expectation of some wonderful explanation, when the stranger (after a short reflection) enquired if the name of the lady before him was Lucinda Rosedale? On being answered in the affirmative, he discovered the marks of internal agitation, but governed himself sufficiently to enquire concerning her family and present connections.

To the last request Mrs. Manor replied, by giving (during their meal) a brief account of that narrative which occupies the preceding chapters of our little volume; describing the death of Lucinda's mother, the cruelty of her uncle, her own surprizing affection towards her beloved parent, and her discovery on the tomb by the good Mr. Felix. She then related the adventures which bore such strong conviction of Lucinda's innate goodness, and concluded by adoring that Sovereign Power which had constantly interfered on her child's behalf. The stranger listened with amazement to the artless story, while he raised his tearful eyes to Heaven, expressive of unspeakable gratitude, and that devotion which proceeds from the heart.

A few moments rolled on in silence till the sigh was suppressed, and the trembling drops of native fondness restrained,

restrained, when, springing from his chair and pressing Lucinda's hand with uncommon ardour, he looked tenderly in her face, and asked if she had no idea of her relations? "Alas! Sir, rejoined the orphan, I know of none but the unfeeling man who drove me out to misery and despair! I have indeed heard of a brother, who was taken from my parent when quite an infant; but I understand he with my hapless father perished in the cruel waves; and my mother was too deeply wounded by that sad recital to permit her to explain to my childish apprehension the dreadful circumstance any farther.

Thanks to all bounteous Heaven, resumed the youth, that tale was false, and your ideas groundless; that child, exposed so young to the fury of the seas, still lives to bless a sister's virtue, and to console her for the loss of her

valued parents. Yes, Lucinda, I am your brother; and if you doubt my bare assertion, behold this dear resemblance (once fastened round my infant neck) and own it for a parent's likeness.

The trembling Lucinda viewed the dear image of her mother with a degree of filial enthusiasm, pressed it and her brother alternately to her panting bosom, and poured out the warmest effusions of a benevolent heart, while her enraptured relative returned the fraternal embrace with ecstasy; and our Patroness wept over the lovely pair.

When these emotions were a little subsided, Lucinda begged to hear those particulars from her brother which hitherto had been concealed from her knowledge: he tenderly replied, the tale was too long for a present recital; but if she would compose her spirits

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by the morning, he would then enter upon the requested narration. With this promise Lucinda was satisfied, and the party shortly afterwards retired to their respective chambers.

CHAP. XIII.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES
RESPECTING LUCINDA.

BREAKFAST was prepared at an early hour the next morning; and the new acquaintance met with open arms and warm caresses by the inhabitants of the mansion, when he was reminded concerning his promise to Lucinda, and earnestly conjured to commence his history.

The request was too important to admit

admit of refusal; and the youth began in the following terms:—

My dear Mother, I have the honour to bear, and whose parental knees have often borne the young Lucinda and myself, who smiled in his face, though unconscious of his value) was formerly a noted and successful merchant; his wealth was considerable, his temper generous, and his character truly enviable; admired by his friends and supremely happy with his little family, his days were crowned with content, and his wishes suffered no disturbance; his affections were equally divided betwixt our dear mother and his helpless little ones; and his heart expanded with a grateful sense of his Creator's blessings, while he viewed with rapture the objects which surrounded him.

This, however, proved of but short duration;

duration: an unfortunate storm destroyed his vessels, and plunged his most valuable merchandize to the bottom of the sea; while he sustained another heavy loss at home, by the failure of a man whom he had trusted to a considerable amount.

Thus scourged by a severe Providence, and unable to bear the sight of his children, who were now reduced with himself to misery, he resolved to venture his own person on that cruel element which had swallowed up his treasures, and thereby attempt once more to gain a subsistence for his hapless family.

With this determination he took an affecting leave of our mother (whose fears on his account proved too prophetic) and taking me with him, he set sail for America; at which we arrived in safety, and were tolerably successful: he then heard, by a
letter

letter from England, that his amiable consort, with her little daughter, had retired to this village, wherein she hoped to soothe the hours of a tedious absence, and bend her spirit to the just will of her Creator. This, however, was the last letter my father received; for about this time he engaged with a merchant in a voyage to the East Indies. Our passage was unfavourable, and our design unlucky; for just before we should have arrived at our expected haven, the ship was thrown by a violent hurricane on a rock and literally dashed to pieces, while every creature perished, myself and dejected parent excepted.

By a wonderful exertion he clasped a fragment of the stone with sufficient strength to save himself and me till the storm abated, when he painfully climbed the precipice, supporting on his shoulders the object of his love.

Exhausted

Exhausted, faint, and melancholy, he seated himself in a mournful posture, while the big tears rolled down his pallid cheek, and his left hand supported my head on his bosom.

I was then just six years old, the pride of his heart, the desire of his eyes, and his inseparable companion. In all his troubles, my artless prattle pleased him, my lisping persuasions soothed his soul to resignation; and in my features he beheld the dear resemblance of his lovely wife, whose picture he would often take from my bosom, compare the face with mine, and press it with fervour to his throbbing heart.

In this forlorn situation we remained several hours, till at length my parent espied an approaching vessel, which (on his making signals of distress) presently after took us on board, and thus rescued us from that
fate

fate which otherwise must have proved inevitable.

We now proceeded to our destined port; but the accumulated sufferings which had long pressed heavy on my father's mind, now effectually subdued the natural vigour of his spirit; and the intense heat of the climate proving too much for his shattered constitution, he lingered about a twelvemonth in a feeble and melancholy condition, and then expired, leaving his child an unprotected stranger to the world, and ignorant of the condition of his mother and sister.

Heaven, however, did not then forsake me, but raised me up a worthy and benevolent friend in the person with whom my poor father had resided. He was a man of extensive property, with a heart to employ it in the most laudable purposes. He knew and pitied my calamities.

My

My parent had made him the confident of his heart, and deposited in his hands what trifling sum was left from his ruined fortune.

This gentleman bestowed an honourable sepulture on his departed friend; and kindly undertook the care of my education, in which I soon made a sufficient progress to gain his generous applause.

He soon entrusted me with matters of some importance; and finding his opinion of my honesty well founded, he sent me on several short voyages, in each of which my endeavours were attended with prosperity, and my return congratulated by the author of my felicity.

At length, after a variety of adventures, unworthy our present attention, he disclosed to me the relation which I have already given you, at the same time delivering two hun-

dred guineas into my hands as the trifle left in his care by my invaluable father.

I at first refused to accept the gold, and urged him by every argument in my power to keep it as a trivial mark of my gratitude for his unmerited favours; but his noble heart despised the offer, and (obliging me to receive the money) he thus addressed me:—
 “ The protection which you have received from me is no more than a discharge of my duty towards the unfortunate; therefore my ears must be ever closed to any praise on that account: your behaviour has amply repaid me for all my trouble, and I enjoy the most heartfelt delight while contemplating the abilities which have begun to expand beneath my roof. I have now to remind you, that while Providence has provided for you, we know not the situation of
 your

your friends in England;—go then, my affectionate boy (seeing a tear roll down my cheek) go and inquire into their circumstances,—I can now conveniently send you by one of my own ships; and the money I have now given you will supply your wants till I can hear from you on your arrival.

If you should find yourself deprived by death of a mother or a sister, or possibly of both, return to me directly, and find within these walls the reception due to a beloved son; but if you find your relatives in their native land, send me an exact relation of their state, and my remittances (if necessary) shall make them happy.

You may judge my sensations on listening to this address: my heart seemed flying to my lips to bless my worthy benefactor, who received the

effusions of my gratitude with a smile, and pressed my hand as he broke abruptly from me.

The following day I embarked for the haven of my wishes; and a few days ago I entered upon the British shore.

In the course of my journey to this place, I met with an old acquaintance of my mother's, whom I discovered by an accidental conversation: he damped the ardour of my pursuit by relating the death of his friend: and as to her little daughter, he said, no account could be justly given; tho' he thought she was seen at the funeral of her parent.

I immediately hastened to this village, intending first to visit my mother's peaceful grave, and then (if unsuccessful in my enquiries for my sister) I meant to return to my pa-

tron

tron from a country incapable of affording me any comfort.

You know the lucky accident which led me beneath this hospitable roof; and while I bless the great Disposer of all events for the preservation of my Lucinda's life, I must pay my grateful acknowledgments to this worthy lady who has watched over her safety, and adorned her with the most elegant accomplishments.

Thus concluded the ingenuous Augustus, when his sister repaid him with the kiss of spotless affection, and the warm embrace of holy friendship. Mrs. Manor was much affected by a discovery so important to the complete knowledge of her rescued Lucinda; and justly admired the goodness of that God who had provided a patron for the son in India, whilst the daughter found a refuge in the arms of benevolence at home.

But come, my children (said the amiable woman) our spirits are depressed by a sad recital, let us accept the pleasures which creation offers to our view; the morning is delightful, the air salubrious, let us wander forth amidst the enamelled fields, meet the mild zephyr as it courts the bending trees, and listen to the harmonious music of the forest.

CHAP. XIV.

AFFECTING ADVENTURES IN A SHORT
RAMBLE.

IN compliance with the kind request of their friend, Augustus and Lucinda accompanied her in her morning ramble; but had not proceeded far when the sounds of distress vibrated

brated on their ears, and drew them insensibly to the place from whence the piteous accents proceeded.

Here they beheld on the bosom of the earth, a young and comely maiden, whose eyes were drenched in tears, and whose dishevelled locks flowed round her agitated features, while her piercing moans and interrupted sobs, implored compassion from the celestial powers.

There needed not a second view to interest the hearts of the benevolent companions, who stooped in the attitude of soft inquiry to the young complainer, and kindly asked the nature of her sorrows.

The poor girl was preparing an answer, when our heroine suddenly recollected the features of that Phillis whose unshaken veracity has already been honourably recorded, and whose
virtue

virtue rendered her dear to the congenial mind of Lucinda.

Amazed beyond expression at the discovery, she briefly informed her friends that she knew the victim of distress, and then demanded with a fond precipitation that explanation which was now silently expected.

Raising her head from its cold pillow, and supporting it with her hand, she gazed wishfully on her auditors, and (striking off the tear which dimmed her sight) thus began:—

“ The former situation of my parents is well known to Miss Rosedale, who honoured our cottage with her presence, upon an occasion which gratitude has deeply engraved on my remembrance; but now the case is sadly altered! my father has not been able to pry his landlord for the last half year, through various misfortunes; and the unfeeling man, in consequence

consequence thereof, has cruelly seized upon our little property, and driven my poor parents to the utmost extremity. O how fondly, how tenderly have they nurtured and provided for me! yet now I see them exposed to insult, shame, and want, without having it in my power to console or help them! this, this is the cause which wrings my soul with agony, and calls forth this flood of woe! Poor unhappy creature that I am, whether can I go, or what can I attempt, to alleviate my father's sufferings, or to calm my mother's tortured breast!" — If this (said Mrs. Manor) is your whole cause of grief, I must tell you, Phillis, that (as matters may turn out) your filial piety is more to be admired than your misfortune lamented. However, you must rise and conduct us to your cottage. Alas, rejoined the weeping maid, I have no home to take you to!

a fierce

a fierce unfeeling creature has taken possession of the place; and perhaps by this time my poor friends are rudely thrust out from their little paradise.

Conduct us however (replied the lady) to your late abode, and trust in Heaven for a display of its goodness.

Lucinda supported the object of her esteem; and they silently proceeded to the rural spot.

On entering the house, they found the scene exactly suited to the late description. In the large chair (which formerly was used by the farmer's industrious wife) sat the unfeeling wretch, placed there by arbitrary power, while the poor old couple stood near the door with downcast eyes and swelling hearts, about to take a sad farewell of their beloved dwelling.

Phyllis (unable to endure their

mute

mute distress) flew hastily to them, and folding their beloved necks with both her arms, she exclaimed, "In pity, O in pity to your child, look up and let me hear your voice: you weep, and well you may, O lay your dear, your valued heads on this aching bosom; and trust in God, who may perhaps yet deliver us. The afflicted farmer made no other reply than by a wild gaze on the favourite chair, and a broken sigh; while his miserable companion bowed down her silvered head, as if to say, "The will of God be done."

But now the scene was speedily changed by a few words from Mrs. Manor, which (operating powerfully on the surly possessor) restored the family to peace and joy, while their grateful hearts overflowed with the loud praises of their benefactress.

As our readers may wish to know
the

the nature of those expressions which wrought so strange an alteration, we briefly explain ourselves, by observing, that while the disconsolate mourners stood lost in meditation, our compassionate lady advanced to the terrific being who guarded the spoils of seizure, and (questioning him respecting the debt) commanded him to return to his employer in her name, and desire his immediate attendance, when his demands should be answered.

The arm-chair was instantly vacated, the savage frown dispelled, and the surprising orders quickly attended, while the astonished couple fell on their aged knees to invoke such blessings on the head of their dear deliverer as the spacious globe could not afford, and which celestial hands alone confer.

If Phillis was before absorbed in anguish,

guish, she now was nearly mad with joy: she looked ten thousand thanks, though her tongue could not express a single sentence; she embraced the feet of their noble friend, pressed and kissed the hand of Lucinda, jumped round her father, embraced her mother, and strove by each expressive action to speak the bliss that swelled her soul to transport.

The landlord now arrived, and attempted a stammering vindication of his conduct; but Mrs. Manor disdainfully refused her attention, and discharging his account, dismissed him with a look that seemed to pierce his avaricious heart, and stained his cheek with a guilty hue.

“ Well, my good people (said the bountiful donor) your rent is cleared, and your goods restored, I therefore hope you now can taste again of com-
 O fort;

fort; let me therefore see you calm these emotions, and shew us what your pantry will afford; for after our morning's walk, I think we may accept a light refreshment with our friends.

The farmer gazed in wonder at the condescension of his guest, his dame began to spread her cloth, and Phillis rather flew than ran to fetch their little stock.

The board was presently crowned with a simple display of cottage-food; and the visitors evinced their approbation by cheerfully partaking of the rustic meal, while the inhabitants of the farm restrained by violence those emotions which trembled beneath their eye-lids, and palpitated in their bosoms.

The company now withdrew (mutually delighted) to Manor-house, while

would gradually decay, and paradise
once more smile amidst the creation.

CHAP. XV.

A WORTHY CONQUEST OF AN
AMIABLE HEART.

A Few revolving months enlivened
the family at Manor-house, by a se-
cond visit from Frederic and Maria,
who were now accompanied by their
mother to that seat of peace and hos-
pitality.

With the juvenile pair our readers are
already acquainted; and we presume a
competent knowledge of their parent
may probably be desired; we there-
fore briefly sketch out the portrait
for their amusement and satisfaction.

Mrs. Wellbred was reputed hand-
some

some in her younger days, and still retained sufficient charms to illumine her declining years; but her accomplishments were more conspicuous than her beauties; and the decay of vigour was forgotten in the contemplation of her undiminished abilities.

She was in most things the counterpart of her charming sister, tho' widely differing in age and appearance; virtuous, kind, and affable in her behaviour, she claimed the affections of the young and generous; and by her prudence, good sense, and piety, insured respect from her worthy cotemporaries. Lucinda, on their first interview, beheld her with admiration, and willingly devoted to her a share of that heart which ever bounded to meet the children of virtue, while Frederic and his sister politely reminded her of their united demands

on her friendship, and were fully satisfied by her endearing returns. Augustus was next presented (as the sister of Lucinda, and the favourite of Providence) on whom the most brilliant compliments were bestowed; and to whom the ardent embrace was given with all the proofs of unaffected esteem.

Refreshments were ordered while the usual enquiries took place, and the most interesting news from the town detailed; to which succeeded a presentation of such articles as were adjudged by the purchasers the most worthy of their friends acceptance, consisting of plate, china, and muslins, for the use of Mrs. Manor; books, paintings, and music, for the accomplished Lucinda; and some elegant trifles designed for the daughter of the benevolent Rector, who was accordingly

ordingly invited to join this happy party.

To these was added, by Mrs. Wellbred, a lottery-ticket for the ensuing year which was expressly intended for our heroine, who, destitute of the gifts of fortune at present, would by this means become a candidate for her future favours. Such kind tokens of affection were naturally received with the warmest acknowledgments by the persons to whom they were devoted; and their visitors were obliged to silence the numerous thanks which they occasioned.

Supremely happy in themselves and in the enjoyment of each other's company, the united friends passed this, and many pleasant days, in social converse, scientific amusement, and healthful recreations, while nature bloomed around their residence, and Heaven accepted their unremitting devotions.

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The rising sun beheld them prostrate before their Maker's throne, to which their petitions ascended for the needful blessings of the day; the early walk created appetite, and gave fresh vigour to the awakened powers, while virtue, temperance, or the beauteous act of charity, flowed from their tongues, and shone refulgent through their conduct.

The remainder of the day was devoted to study, enlivened by the notes of harmony, or appropriated to their usual meals, where the mind was an equal partaker by means of that discourse which was founded on superior judgment, and guided with equal skill and vivacity.

Thus passed their time, and thus their joys increased with the circling hours, when the subject of our little tale

achieved

atchieved a worthy conquest of an amiable heart.

On the first arrival of Frederic Wellbred at Manor-House, we observed some particulars in his behaviour, which clearly evinced that he was by no means indifferent to those perfections that captivated the applause of all who knew Lucinda; but now those charms which formerly demanded attention were sufficiently matured to kindle the holy flame of love within the bosom of the youthful visitor, who had not yet attained his twentieth year.

The beauty, wit, and accomplishments of our heroine now presented themselves to his view in all their resistless splendor; and the goodness of his heart found still more valuable qualities in her generous mind and noble temper. For some days he
concealed

concealed the emotions of his spirit, nor appeared to regard the orphan otherwise than as a valued friend; but a short excursion taking place, in which Lucinda and himself were appointed partners in walking, gave rise to a short discourse that unveiled the true situation of his thoughts, and convinced Lucinda of her important victory. The evening was serenely refreshing (in the course of the autumn, when the rich fruits display their burnished rinds on every bending branch, and the golden sheaves adorn the fertile valley) when the domestic party proposed a walk through the corn-fields after the usual employments of the day. The plan was approved, and they left the house in the following manner: Lucinda supported by the arm of Frederic; Miss Felix attended by the amiable Augustus; and

and Maria listening to the converse of the benevolent sisters, whose company she preferred for the sake of instruction. Various were the objects of their discourse; which, however, generally centered in the merciful disposition of those blessings wherewith the Ruler of Heaven had deigned to invest his fallen creatures. This was a pleasing and exhaustless theme; for every verdant bush, each painted blossom, and each smiling scene, called forth afresh the burst of grateful praise to Him who crowns the year with his goodness, and by his sovereign power renews the needful fruits of the earth.

On this agreeable contemplation the youthful pairs bestowed their time, till turning from the path, they wandered beyond the limits of their first intentions,

intentions, and found a landscape worthy their observation.

A few irregular, but lovely cottages, skirted an easy ascent that led to the neighbouring mill, whither the happy gleaners conveyed the fruits of their success, and where the sons of the village often retired to hear the miller's harmless song, or taste his sparkling cyder.

Some wandering sheep strayed round their owners huts, while the blooming lasses sat spinning at the door, and the returning labourer whistled away the dull fatigues of life.

"Are not these people to be envied?" said Augustus. "They claim, indeed, my strongest admiration," replied his companion; "but I hope they will never excite so direful a passion as *envy* within my breast."

"Sweet

“Sweet girl,” resumed the enraptured youth, “your artless mind is of too pure, too delicate a formation to admit the reception of such a guest; yet, when I view these happy villagers blessed with their virtuous brides, or tending the morals of their prattling offspring, I am almost ready to envy their transporting situation; for, O! my beloved Lucinda, could I but ever hope to taste with you that calm delight which they at close of day experience within these lowly mansions, I should esteem myself the happiest of my race.

These words were sufficient to convince our heroine of her glorious victory over the affections of her agreeable Frederic; but stopping the praises that rapidly followed this expression, she with equal prudence and becoming modesty answered, ‘Young

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and inexperienced as we both are, I presume you have chosen an improper subject of discourse, more especially as it is unknown to our friends, who have an indisputable right to the direction of our actions. For my own part, you are no stranger to my situation; a retrospective view, though painful to my feelings, may be an incentive to a spotless conduct; and while I look to Mrs. Manor as the friend of my infancy and the source of all my comforts, I am in no great danger of those errors which might probably wound her benevolent bosom with the thorns of distress and cruel disappointment.

‘Your own mother, my valued friend,’ continued she, ‘may have other views for the darling of her soul; nor is it indeed consistent to suppose that she would ever consent to the
union

union of her son with the poor unfortunate Lucinda, who, though honoured with her friendship, is unworthy her alliance, and utterly destitute of that fortune to which you may justly aspire.'

"My beloved parent," rejoined her admiring companion, "is too generous and too affectionate to prefer the riches of a lady to her virtues; I only therefore intreat permission to address her on this important subject: and tell me (he added with an enquiring look) if *she* requests, will you complete my happiness? 'If' (returned Lucinda) 'a mother's fondness should indeed so far be shewn as to overlook my distressed situation; and if my Patroness should herself approve that action, you might indeed then expect (when sanctioned by our friends) that Lucinda is too sensible
of

of your great deserts to admit of her refusal.'

With this valuable assertion the heart of Frederic was effectually transported; and he persuaded the company to return, while he secretly panted for a private audience with his revered parent.

CHAP. XVI.

CRUELTY REWARDED
BY THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE.

WE must now take leave of our heroine and her charming associates for a short season, in order to present our readers with some particulars respecting that unfeeling and unnatural Uncle, who (unmoved by her youth, beauty, and distress) so cruelly chased from
his

his presence the dear child of his departed sister.

The following day to that afflictive one described in our first chapter, he disposed of what little property remained to the orphan, and suddenly quitted the village, alike ignorant and careless of the fate of his hapless niece.

'Tis true, indeed, his conscience was not so absolutely past feeling, but that at times a disagreeable sensation thrilled along his veins, and his guilty heart accused him of baseness and ingratitude; but such emotions were soon dispersed by the cup of inebriation, or the false reasoning of sordid avarice. I acknowledge (he would sometimes say) that fortune has smiled on my endeavours; and I am blest with plenty while thousands are starving around me; but am I therefore

obliged to take a destitute child beneath my roof, and devote that wealth to her which I treasure carefully for myself? certainly not. The world indeed may call me cruel; but the world is in that sense beneath my regard; my riches will entitle me to its comforts, and therefore its censure will never disturb my rest.

With such detestable arguments would he strive to drown the clamours of a convicted soul; and thus for some time passed through the scenes of life on the high tide of human prosperity, unmindful of his God, regardless of virtue, and a total stranger to every idea of refined felicity.

But when the great luminary of heaven had measured out a few successive years, he began to find the instability of that fortune which he had so often vauntingly declared would ensure

ensure his happiness through life; and began to taste himself that cup of sorrows which he had so barbarously presented to the little Lucinda.

Unwilling to trust his property even in the bank of his country, he, like a true miser, concealed his money at home, where he could brood over it at his leisure, and contemplate its all-powerful charms, never reflecting on the important authority which informs us that, "Riches often make themselves wings, and flee away." Having spent the evening (a few miles distant with some thoughtless and gay companions, it was late before he arrived at the place of his residence; and when he did arrive, his senses were nearly distracted by horror and despair, on beholding his house encompassed with the devouring flames that burst with resistless fury through every aperture,
and

and illumined the night with their terrific brightness. The conflagration had arrived at so tremendous a height, that all idea of assistance was utterly precluded: the servants indeed had saved their lives by a timely flight; but not a single article was rescued from the fiery ruin. Dumb with astonishment, and transfixed with agony, the wretched owner stood gazing with the multitude on the spreading devastation, when the burning walls gave way, and fell asunder with a horrid crash; thus swallowing up at once the house, the goods, the papers, and the money of this man, who (unthoughtful of his Creator) worshipped the golden idol which now eluded his grasp for ever.

In vain he offered a reward for some workmen to attempt recovering the chest wherein his property was deposited. Whether it was ever found, is in itself

self uncertain; but, whether discovered or not, its former owner never recovered a single shilling.

Now turned adrift with a few guineas only in his pocket, behold the slave of avarice and cruelty, trembling to enter on that world whose upbraidings he so lately contemned and derided.

Unused to any employ, too proud to beg, and frantic with his loss, his harrassed mind revolved a thousand schemes, but none would serve his turn; the day was spent in unavailing exclamations, and the night refused to obliterate the torments of his soul; for if by chance his eyes were closed in sleep, a guilty and disordered fancy presented to his imagination the helpless Lucinda shivering in the storm, and clasping with stiffened hands her mother's grave, while the gushing
tear

tear (which froze before it fell) appealed to Heaven for that protection which the barbarity of her relative refused her. Such dreams of course must add new horrors to his poignant anguish, who already groaned beneath a load of woe, and vainly thirsted for the desirable waters of oblivion.

We have already shewn our readers (in the history of Miss Wilful) the consequence of a *beginning* in wickedness; you have there clearly seen how one transgression led her on to another, till she fell the victim of abominable vice.

Such was the case with the character before us, whose cruelty had hurled his helpless charge to apparent destruction, whose avarice had refused the smallest trifle to the wretched and forlorn, and whose principles were consistent with this system of diabolical practices.

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We have informed you in the present chapter, that he was unable to work and unwilling to beg; his plans were fruitless, his hopes defeated, and his last shilling changed, when a new crime was added to the former, and he fixed at length on a resolution which (while it shocks our nature) was consonant with his former actions; and he who robbed Lucinda in her tender years, now sallies forth to draw by violence the gains of industry from the unwary or timid passenger.

He put this dreadful plan into execution immediately; armed with a brace of pistols, and flushed with drinking, he rushed upon an unsuspecting farmer, and robbed him of property to a considerable amount; but, conscious of his danger, and aware of the ignominious death that must infallibly overtake him if he should be detected,

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he determined on a speedy flight ; and (the place to which he should remove being perfectly indifferent) he seized the opportunity of a returned carriage to quit his present station.

Absorbed in deep reflection, he neglected to ask the name of the town or village that he was approaching, till the driver informed him their journey was concluded ; and, to his utter astonishment, he beheld the very place where he had once abandoned the young, the harmless Lucinda.

Here he was too well known to permit his entrance into any shelter, and therefore (though the weather was extremely severe) he was obliged to wander about thro' the silent hours of the night.

But now the time of retribution was come, and his guilty soul was awfully summoned to prepare her strict account ;

count; for whilst he was roving on the uninhabited boundaries of the village, he was suddenly attacked by two footpads, who instantly despoiled him of his ill-gotten wealth, wrenched from his trembling hands his useles pistols, and (having wounded him severely by a cutlass) threw him into a ditch, and hastily departed. In this deplorable condition he remained (exhausted with loss of blood, and trembling with cold) till the morning, when he was first discovered by Lucinda, who, with her companions, took her early walk past the spot of his dreadful accident.

Pallid as his features were, and miserably disfigured by the sanguine stream that issued slowly from his wounds, he was still recognized by his astonished niece, who uttered a faint scream, and threw herself into

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the arms of her Patroness. She, however, shortly recovered sufficient strength to point out the object of her surprize, and earnestly intreated her friends to seek some help for her expiring uncle.

These words arrested his attention, when, gazing on the speaker with a look of wild and unutterable anguish, he enquired if this beauteous creature was named Lucinda Rosedale. On receiving an answer, he exclaimed, "Heaven has justly rewarded my cruelty!" and, with a heavy groan, he instantly expired before any assistance could be procured.

Mrs. Manor (deeply affected by the tragic scene) withdrew her favourite from the painful sight; and the company returned in silent contemplation on the dread reward of the unmerciful, while Lucinda's face was bedewed with

with the tear of regret for the sad catastrophe of her unfeeling relation.

CHAP. XVII.

GRATITUDE EVINCED IN THE CONDUCT OF LUCINDA.

OUR readers may naturally suppose that Lucinda's petitions respecting her unfortunate uncle, would obtain their intended influence on the generous mind of Mrs. Manor. The body was accordingly removed by her orders to a neighbouring cottage, till suitable preparations could be made for the funeral, which was solemnized in a few days, with every mark of decency and respect; and attended in person by the amiable Lucinda, who freely forgave the injuries she had formerly

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received,

received, and buried the sense of those wrongs in eternal oblivion. The clouds of sorrow now began to dispel, and in a few weeks the impatient Frederic publicly solicited his mother on behalf of that union which lay so near his heart, and whereon he imagined his future happiness to depend.

This pleasing woman had already learnt the important secret of her son's desire in private; but (willing to assure Lucinda of her intentions) she frankly answered before the assembled family, — “ If my beloved Frederic had travelled through the regions of the many-peopled globe to single out an object whereon to bestow his own affections, and wherewith to make me fully blest, I am certain he never could have succeeded better than in the present instance. | Yes, my son, I am indeed

deed delighted with your choice, and humbly trust that no untoward accident will cross a wish that sits very near my heart; and in the accomplishment of which I hope you will enjoy uninterrupted felicity;— my beloved sister has hitherto acted a mother's tender part by her charming girl; and I must now expect to have my share of that endearing task. Lucinda is indeed more valuable in my estimation than I can easily explain; her virtues are too conspicuous, her goodness too sublime, to leave a denial on my part possible.

To her alone you must therefore look, my Frederic, for that consent on which our mutual felicity depends.

Lucinda rose to express her warm emotions, inspired by gratitude and directed by politeness, when Mrs. Manor insisted on her compliance with

the united request of her sister and nephew. "A request," said she, "that will make me doubly happy, as binding my darling to me afresh in the bonds of relationship, and bestowing on my worthy young friend that hand which he alone deserves."

'Cease your unmerited applause, my noble lady,' said the amiable girl, 'for I am, alas, unable to express my sense of such exalted goodness; but if by bestowing the hand of your Lucinda on the worthy and accomplished youth who demands it, I can give the smallest pleasure to such tried, such matchless friends, I must indeed be ungrateful to your bounty, and undeserving your slightest attention for the future, if I should presume to refuse;' then presenting her hand to the enraptured Frederic, she completed their desires, by submitting to their
entire

entire disposal and accepting that rank to which the present design would raise her.

About the same time Augustus received a remittance from his Indian patron, which evinced the generosity of his mind, accompanied by a friendly letter, wherein he admired the conduct of our heroine, praised the astonishing kindness of her patroness, and blessed the accident that led his beloved boy to this peaceful abode; he then concluded, by leaving the youth to his own choice of returning to India or settling at home, kindly assuring him that, in case he should prefer the latter, he would take the same care of his fortune as though he should again revive him by his agreeable company.

Augustus did not long delay his choice, for his expanding heart was
already

already filled by the image and modest deportment of Miss Felix, who, during her visits at Manor-House had completely captivated the delighted Rosedale. This was a fresh source of delight to his grateful sister, who eagerly undertook to prosecute his design; and, by her soft persuasions and well-timed intreaties, rendered both the Rector and his lovely daughter as agreeable to her brother's marriage as Mrs. Manor and her sister were desirous for the completion of her own.

Now time rolled swiftly by on wheels of joyous expectation, while the needful preparatives were made for the approaching ceremony.

Every heart was truly gay, each feature brightened with the serenity of inward satisfaction, and the plans of future life repeatedly adjusted, when a proposal respecting Lucinda's residence

dence in London called forth her refusal, and evinced her gratitude in the most striking manner; for no sooner was the subject started than our heroine (unable to conceal her thoughts) exclaimed, "What! must I forsake my friend, my guide, my benefactress? after so many years of fond endearments and kind attentions, shall I leave her destitute of company or that amusement which I often have the bliss to give her? O never let me act so base, so unworthy the affection which you all profess to bear me!"

At the close of her sentence she fixed her speaking eyes on Frederic's countenance, who (wiping from her face the drop of tenderness) replied, No, my amiable girl, you shall not leave your valued friend: I will reside in the same village, nay (if you prefer it)

it) in the same house, and our happiness shall be mutually experienced.

This kind assurance restored the grateful mourner to content, enraptured her Patroness with the smiling prospect, and gave a fresh proof to Wellbred of the unexampled affection of her intended daughter. The plan was therefore thus fixed with universal approbation, that the years should be equally divided; and while the summer was devoted to the enjoyment of the country, the winter should be destined for a visit to the metropolis.

By this procedure a constant union would be maintained between the families, and thus the time would pass in a flow of uninterrupted comfort.

With this proposal therefore every one was pleased, and waited the approach

proach of the following week, wherein the youthful lovers were to pledge their vows of unalterable fidelity in the presence of their Maker.

CHAP. XVIII.

FORTUNE PROPITIOUS,
AND VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT.

THE happy family were assembled around their social fire, accompanied by the good Mr. Felix and his daughter (it being now the latter end of February) when a packet arrived from the post-house, containing (with several others) a letter directed to Miss Rosedale.

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Our heroine was utterly at a loss to imagine from whom it could come, or what could possibly be the subject of its contents; but her reflections were soon converted into a most pleasing astonishment, when she read the welcome news that her ticket was drawn a prize of five thousand pounds.

Her heart was too full to permit an explanation; she therefore gave the letter to her Patroness, and threw her arms around the honoured lady whose goodness had entitled her to such a reverse of fortune; for whereas she lately lamented that her poverty rendered her an improper person for the pursuit of the charming Frederic, she now found herself possess'd of a sum equivalent to her wishes, and worthy the partner of her destined husband. Congratulation now succeeded to surprise in the company, and every heart rejoiced

rejoiced in its own felicity; while admiring those marks of celestial favour which had so repeatedly been shewn to the child of former misfortunes.

Mrs. Wellbred was delighted with the success of her little gift; her sister triumphed in the contemplation of that benevolence which she was assured would attend the actions of her girl; and their reverend pastor applauded them both for that purity of heart which their generous exultations displayed; “for this (said he) is a proper subject of rejoicing. This is a blessing bestowed by the hand of a just and all-righteous Providence on the endeavour which originated in kindness, and was devoted to the cause of virtue, while we have beheld some awful proofs of divine displeasure descending on the heads of the guilty, and overwhelming them with

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a mighty ruin (as in the case of the hardened Wilful, and the impenitent uncle). We here behold the wreath of honour encircle the head of distressed innocence, which now rejoices in the favour of God and the estimation of man." Believe me then, Miss Rosedale, continued the worthy priest, I now experience a delight as copious and interesting to myself at the recital of this agreeable news, as I felt when (raising you from the freezing grave) I placed your lovely form beneath my coat for shelter. This feeling demonstration of their minister's joy drew tears from some, and loud encomiums from all, while the object of his delight repeated those grateful expressions which he had often strove in vain to silence, but which still flowed spontaneous from the lips of affection.

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The remainder of this fortunate day was spent in the most agreeable manner; while Maria sang, Lucinda played, Augustus read, and Frederic conversed with equal powers, and general approbation.

Miss Felix was soberly attending in the mean time to those instructions laid down by her worthy father respecting her behaviour on her approaching wedding, and in her conjugal state; wherein he said, he hoped to view her conduct with that satisfaction for which the world could barter nothing equal; and in the calm possession of which he hoped to close his eyes in peace hereafter.

At this juncture the faithful Phillis entered the room, and (court'ying humbly to the deliverer of her family and the friend who attended to corroborate her confession, when she prov-

ed so unfortunate) explained the reason of her appearance, by requesting her good lady's permission to marry a young farmer who had made her such an offer ; but to whom she would give no answer till her dear benefactress had been consulted.

Mrs. Manor was much delighted with the grateful girl's simplicity, and demanded whether the person in question was approved by the parents of Phillis ; to which she readily answered in the affirmative ; but still declared she would never listen either to his addresses or their persuasions, unless it met the countenance of her generous lady.

On hearing the name and situation of the young man explained to her satisfaction, the patroness of virtue assured the maiden of her full consent ; and promised (as a reward of that sincerity,

sincerity, filial love, and gratitude which had often dignified her actions) a present of one hundred pounds for a wedding-portion.

Poor Phillis nearly lost her wits in her attempt to acknowledge the unexpected favour; and nearly smothered her parents with embraces, while she related at home the success of her adventure.

The party at Manor-house in the mean time anticipated the pleasures of the following day through the course of the evening, and then reclined on their respective pillows, beneath the secure protection of the Almighty.

The rising day beheld them united in family-devotion, from which the ladies retired to dress, and shortly afterwards joined their elected bridegrooms at breakfast, while Mrs. Ma-

nor and Mrs. Wellbred alternately kissed and blessed the dear objects of their admiration.

Lucinda's dress was chastely elegant; and that of Miss Felix well suited to her interesting figure: the happy Frederic and his friend Augustus appeared to high advantage; and the lovely Maria (still the close companion of her elders) displayed a thousand charms in the habit which she had chosen for the occasion.

At the appointed hour they presented themselves at the altar, where the happy clergyman united the once abandoned Lucinda to the nephew of his friend; his own daughter to Lucinda's brother; and the artless Phillis to her enamoured farmer.

Thus have we seen (after a variety of attempts to overthrow the virtuous and establish the wicked) the slaves of
iniquity

iniquity severely punished, while (in spite of every opposition) innocence has appeared conspicuous, and virtue triumphant.

THE END.

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