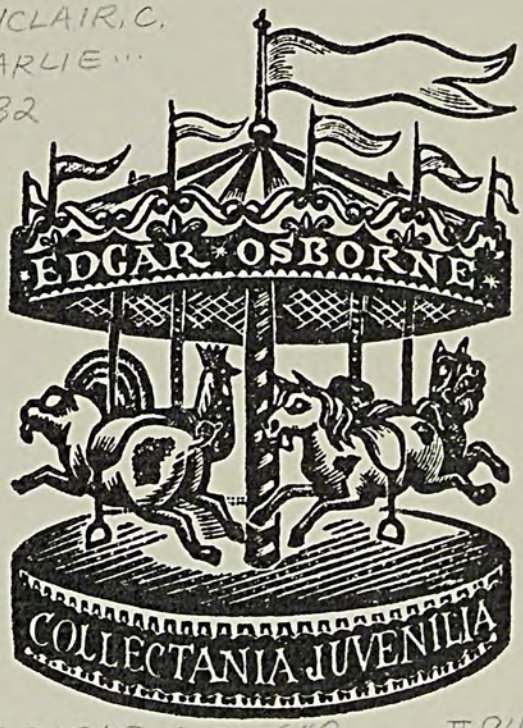

Cosmo Gordon

C. L. Bower

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Charlie considering which of his two aunts he likes best.

CHARLIE SEYMOUR;

OR THE

GOOD AUNT AND THE BAD AUNT.

A SUNDAY STORY.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

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HAVING printed some years ago "*A Letter on the Principles of the Christian Faith*," by Hannah Sinclair, my daughter, which has already appeared in seventeen editions, and been, through the blessing of the Almighty, eminently useful to many Christians,—I am thence induced to publish this little work by her sister, written with a view to suit the taste and capacity of a very juvenile understanding, as it explains, in the simplest language, those important precepts which were once so affectionately and so piously inculcated on herself; and if the intention be adequately accomplished, I hope that the benefit, which was meant for one child only, may now be extended to many.

JOHN SINCLAIR.

133, *George Street,*
Edinburgh, 1*st Jan.* 1832.

PREFACE.

I was lately requested by a friend in the country to select some books of Sunday reading for her children; and it surprised me to observe, what a large proportion of the volumes recommended had frontispieces to represent a death-bed surrounded by the clergyman, the physician, and the afflicted relatives of a dying Christian; the memoirs of children *especially*, which I examined, were almost invariably terminated by an early death.

It is undoubtedly impossible to overstate the shortness and uncertainty of life, or the importance of preparing for that hour when all its joys and sorrows are to be terminated;

but yet, if religion be not woven into every moment of our existence, and associated with our gayer hours, it will appear but as a stranger to us, in the time of adversity. The object of this little story, therefore, is to show, that in the amusements of children, in their studies, and various occupations, all may be done to the glory of God, and may yet be done consistently with the most perfect cheerfulness. My desire has also been to make children themselves aware, how superior is the happiness enjoyed under a judicious system of moral and religious discipline, to any that can attend the victim of blind and foolish partiality.

As many of the conversations here recorded really took place with a child of great intelligence, all the facts and sentiments which could tend to amusement or edification were at once inlisted into the service, from whatever quarter they might

come; and, as it has since been found impossible to restore these borrowed goods to their original owners, the *enlightened* reader (for whom these pages are *not* intended) is requested to act as was done by the learned member of a country congregation, whose parish priest was a notorious plagiarist,—whenever a quotation was brought forth, he audibly exclaimed, "That's Flavel!" and, again, "That's Baxter!" but when any thing trite or commonplace was uttered, he always added, "That's *his own!*"

"Que m' importe d'ou il soit, pourvu qu'il se trouve utile," might have been the reply of the clergyman, as it was of the French poet, and, as it is hoped, may be sufficient for this little volume.

CHAPTER I

THE FAREWELL.

I ONCE knew a little boy called Charlie Seymour. He was taught to fear God, and to be gentle and kind to every body; and to pray that the Lord would make him a good boy, and a comfort to his mamma, who often told him how much easier it is to be naughty than to be good. She used to explain, that there is nothing but wickedness in people's hearts, unless God changes them, and teaches us to love him; and when we love God, then we learn always to consider, before we do any thing, what will please our Heavenly Father, and not what will please ourselves.

One day Lady Seymour sent for Charlie very early in the morning, and he was surprised to see her eyes red, as if she had been crying very sadly,—her face was very white too, and she seemed to be in great distress. "My dear child," she said, "I have got a letter this morning from your papa, to tell me that I must go far away and leave you."

"Oh no, mamma!" said Charlie, putting his arms round her knees, and keeping a very tight hold of her; "you must not go away; you must take me with you. I shall be a very good boy; you can put all my clothes into a little trunk, and take me in the carriage."

"My dear *dear* child," said Lady Seymour, with a face all raining down in tears, "it breaks my heart to leave you, but it must be done. I am going where your papa is, and you know I have often explained what a far-away country it is, too hot for little children. The black people come from there, and the little babies in that place are all black, but white children

like you, Charlie, become very sickly when they go there, and generally die if they are not sent home immediately.

"Is it so very, *very* hot, mamma, and is that where the lions and tigers live," said Charlie, "and where the people do not know about God, and never read their Bibles, and never say their prayers?"

"Yes, my dear boy, it is, and when I go there, it will be some comfort to me for leaving you, if I can teach those poor children to know better. There is no situation in the world where we cannot have some happiness, if we love God and one another; since every person may do something for the glory of God, and the good of those that they live amongst; it is only people who are selfish and care for nobody but themselves that are ever perfectly miserable. You may see a bright side to every thing in the world *except sin*, and I hope, Charlie, that as we must be separated now, you will shew me how cheerfully you can submit to the will of God, as this is the first time he has tried you with any real sorrow."

Charlie could not speak a word, but he burst into tears, and sobbed as if his heart was breaking. Lady Seymour took him on her knee, and tried all she could to comfort him, but that only made him feel more sorry to think that this good mamma who was so kind must soon be taken away from him.

"My own dear boy," whispered Lady Seymour, "you know God orders every thing that happens, and whatever he pleases is always best; now, my darling child, when I am away, what do you think it would grieve me more to hear than any thing else in the world?"

"If you heard that I was dead," said Charlie, "that would make you more sorry than any thing else in the world."

"It would be a very great distress to me, indeed, Charlie; but there is something that I would be still more sorry to hear," said Lady Seymour, "because if you were to die, I hope for Christ's sake that God would take you to heaven, and that I should soon meet you there myself; but guess again, my child, why it is that I am so very

uneasy at leaving you, and what it is that I have been praying to God all this morning to keep you from ?"

" To keep me from being naughty, mamma."

" Yes, my child !" cried Lady Seymour, folding him again in her arms, and shedding many tears. " I shall be long, *long* away, and my Charlie will be a big man before I come back. You will soon forget your own mamma, but I shall pray every day that you may never forget God, who will keep you safe and keep you happy."

" I shall say my prayers night and morning, and I shall not forget God, and I shall remember you too, mamma," said Charlie earnestly ; " will any body take care of me when you are away, mamma ?"

" Yes, my dear child, said Lady Seymour, " you have two aunts that you never saw, and I must leave you with them. They will both love you very much, but your papa says that as aunt Jane and aunt Mary are never of the same mind, and he likes them equally well, you are to choose

one of them to have the care of you, after having lived in their house for a short time.

"How funny! said Charlie, laughing. "Am I to fix which aunt I am to belong to, quite out of my own head, and nobody to interfere?"

"Exactly so," said Lady Seymour, "your papa says I must not tell you which to prefer, and I am very sorry for it, because one of them is a very good aunt and the other is a bad aunt.

"I shall soon find out which is the best," said Charlie, looking very wise.

"Perhaps not," my own dear child, answered Lady Seymour, "for if you only think of what pleases yourself, then you will probably choose a different aunt from the one you would prefer, if you think of what will please God and your mamma; now, Charlie, let us pray to your Heavenly Father that he will graciously teach you to choose what is *really best.*

CHAPTER II.

THE ARRIVAL.

Soon after this conversation, Charlie was put into a carriage, and sent away to the house where his two aunts lived. He felt very sad indeed when he bid his dear mamma good-bye, for she cried and wept so bitterly at parting with him. But before the journey was done he got better again, and began to think about his aunts, and to wonder which of the two he would like best, though it was difficult to guess, as he had never seen either of them. Presently Betty, the maid, pointed out the Lady Seymour's house, and it looked so pretty and cheerful, that Charlie thought he would like to live there all the rest of his life. It was a white-washed cottage,

covered all over with roses and jessamine, standing in the middle of a lovely green park, where the grass was as smooth as if it had been swept by the house-maid every morning. There were many tall trees that threw their long dark shadows on the ground, and there was a broad river glittering in the sunshine, on which Charlie was glad to observe a pretty green boat with white sails, and he passed a garden full of fruit-trees and flowers, and he saw that the sea-shore was not very distant.

At last the carriage stopped before the porch, which was so covered with honeysuckle, it looked like an arbour, and it perfumed the whole air with its delicious scent. Two ladies instantly ran out to the door, and Charlie had hardly time to wonder which was his good aunt, before he was embraced in their arms, and kissed a hundred times over by them both. He thought them very kind indeed, and began to think that he would soon be able to love them nearly as much as his good mamma, for they seemed to be so very fond of him.

"I almost think they are *both* good aunts," said Charlie to himself, "and mamma must have made a mistake about one of them being a bad aunt."

Lady Jane Seymour had on the finest bonnet that Charlie had ever seen, covered with a great many long white feathers; and she wore a beautiful red gown, and a great many shining gold chains; she had a very pretty face, with pink cheeks, and such fine curls, and looked so pleasant and funny, that Charlie thought to himself, "Perhaps I shall like aunt Jane best;" but then he remembered how often his mamma had said, that the grandest dress in the world may be spoilt by a single shower of rain, and that a good heart is better than a good face, because the prettiest face in the world becomes ugly when it is old; but a good heart grows better and better, till God at last makes it perfectly good in heaven.

Charlie next looked at Lady Mary, who was so like aunt Jane, he could not have told the difference except in their dress; but she had only a large straw bonnet on, and

a white gown, and a little gold watch at her side; but she smiled, and looked as pleasant as Lady Jane, so Charlie felt more puzzled than ever which to like best, and determined to think well before he fixed; and to pray to God often, as his mamma had desired him, that he might be taught to know which was *really* his good aunt.

"What a dear pretty little boy you are!" said Lady Jane, taking Charlie on her knee, and kissing him twenty times over. "I like your large blue eyes, and your nice curly hair so much; and what a fine new dress you have got on, too! You must love me very much *indeed*, Charlie, for I love you more than any other little boy in the world, and shall try all I can to make you happy."

"Jane and I mean to make you *good* as well as happy," said Lady Mary, taking Charlie's hand, "for you know that the only way to be really happy, is to be good."

"Oh! Charlie is *always* good!" said Lady Jane, kissing him again, "it is only little

beggar boys, with dirty faces, that are ever naughty, and they ought to be whipped all day; we shall send Mary away to teach them."

Charlie laughed at his aunt Jane's funny face, when she said this; and he thought her very droll, and very kind.

"Are you *always* good, my dear boy?" said Lady Mary, stroking his head, and looking kindly in his face.

"No! I am very often naughty," said Charlie, "and then I feel a sort of pain in my temper that makes me not like my lessons, nor do what mamma bids me, nor attend to my prayers, nor do any thing that is good and pleasant."

"How very sad," replied Lady Mary, "and yet I would rather you told me all this than that you had said you were *always* good, because that is impossible; we must all sin, and must pray to God to forgive us, and to bestow a clean heart upon us. You know, when little children are naughty, their hearts look as filthy in the eye of God

as those little beggar children's dirty faces that Jane was speaking about. Now, if she or I were to see you with a dirty face, we should take you up stairs to wash it, and we could soon make it quite clean; but nobody can give you a clean heart, except God."

"And how does God do it?" asked Charlie.

"God has promised to send his Holy Spirit into our hearts, to make them good, if we ask him."

"And is all that God promises quite sure to be done?" asked Charlie.

"Yes, my dear boy, it is," said Lady Mary. "You know, if I promised you any thing, I might not, perhaps, be able to do it, though I wished ever so much to keep my word; and very often wicked people make promises without intending to perform them; but whatever God has promised, he *can* do it, and he *will* do it. Nobody was ever disappointed of any thing that God had promised them."

"How does the Holy Spirit make our hearts good after they have been naughty," asked Charlie, "I do not understand."

"You must not expect to understand every thing that God does, though you will learn more and more the longer you study his word, and the oftener you pray for his teaching; besides which, I shall always be happy to explain to you all that I possibly can myself."

"And shall I very soon understand as much about God as you do?" said Charlie, anxiously.

"Perhaps not," my dear child, replied Lady Mary, "you know, babes must only be fed with milk, and strong meat is for grown people; now, for instance, look here, whose hand is biggest, your's or mine?"

"Your's is almost twice the size of mine," said Charlie, smiling.

"Well, then! if you tried to hold as large things in your hand as I can hold in mine, they would tumble down; and, in the same way, you have got a small mind, that can only hold small things."

"Then big people have all got large minds, I suppose," said Charlie.

"No, my dear boy, there are many grown up ladies and gentlemen who have minds no bigger than your's, though that is so very small. For, if people do not pray to be made wise and good, and if they do not read, nor listen to what is said to them, their minds continue always little; and then, nobody in the world is a bit the better of their having lived in it, and it would have been better for themselves too, if they had never been born."

"I shall try not be like these foolish people," said Charlie, "but to grow wiser and wiser every day, till at last I know as much as you."

"Dear, dear child," said Lady Mary, "ever since you were born, I have prayed every day and every night, that God would give you a heart to love him; and now, I hope we shall often pray together, and ask him, for Christ's sake, to bless you."

Charlie looked at Lady Mary, and saw her gazing so kindly at him, that he al-

most jumped off Lady Jane's knee, to go and kiss her. "Now, after all," he thought, "I almost begin to think that aunt Mary is my good aunt, instead of aunt Jane; for mamma used often to say, it is easier to praise little boys, and to say they are good already, than to take the trouble of trying to make them good."

"Come, come, Charlie," said Lady Jane, keeping hold of him, "shall you and I have some gingerbread, and some nice strawberries and cream; you are to eat as much as you like; and then we shall amuse ourselves all day with doing mischief and all sorts of fun."

Charlie laughed, and was running out of the room with Lady Jane, when Lady Mary called him back. "My dear child," she said, "your dinner will be ready in half an hour, so, would it not be wise to wait for it, and not to spoil you appetite with trash? do stay here, and I shall show you a pretty book of pictures; or else you may come with me, to pick up some beautiful shells on the sea-shore."

Charlie was just going to say, "Yes! that will be best," when Lady Jane put her head in at the door, and held up a large piece of gingerbread; instantly he sprung forward to seize it, and sat down upon her knee till he had eat it up, and finished a whole plate of strawberries and cream."

"Whether do you like me or that slice of gingerbread best?" said Lady Jane, laughing to see how he enjoyed it; "now, let us go and have some racing in the park."

"I have got a new spade and a rake for you, Charlie," said Lady Mary, and it would be very pleasant if you were afterwards to make a little garden of your own, —here is a watering-pot, too,—and I shall give you some peas and potatoes to plant in it, and some turnips and carrots,—then, when they are all ready, you may invite Jane and me to dine in the moss-house, where we shall eat nothing but what has been planted by you."

"Oh yes! I wish to go and see my garden now, aunt Mary, with you," exclaimed

Charlie, joyfully, "we shall be of great use, digging and planting all day."

"I may almost send away old Thomas, the gardener, since you mean to work so hard," said Lady Mary, smiling.

"Yes! I am the gardener now," cried Charlie, laughing and clapping his hands.

"But your peas and beans will not be ready for three months," said Lady Jane, "and what is the use of caring about any thing that is not to happen for three months; if you will come in the boat with me now, I shall help you to catch fish for our dinner to-day; I have got a fine long rod for you, and the trouts will almost jump into the boat, they are in such a hurry to be caught."

Charlie thought he had never heard of any thing so delightful in his life, and he ran to Lady Jane, who took him instantly down to the edge of the river, where the beautiful green boat was waiting for them to step in. They unloosed the long chain which fastened it to the pier, and floated gently down the stream. Charlie caught one little fish, and felt so happy on the

water, that when the gong sounded for dinner, he would hardly leave the boat; and when he did at last go, he had no appetite; there was nice roast mutton, and a rice pudding, with currants in it; but the sight of them only made him feel very sick, after all the rich gingerbread and strawberries he had taken in the morning. As soon as the table-cloth was taken away, Lady Jane rose up from her seat, saying, "Now shall we return to the fishing-boat."

"Stop a moment, Charlie—you have forgotten something," said Lady Mary; "it is only horses and dogs that leave off eating, and go to play, without thanking God for his goodness to them. There are many poor little boys crying just now with hunger, and not knowing where to find a morsel of bread; but it is better to be like one of them, and get no dinner at all, than to show an ungrateful heart to the good God who sends it to you."

"Yes, Aunt Mary, so mamma says too; and now, if you please, I shall say my grace

as fast as possible, and then run to aunt Jane."

"My dear child, say it seriously and thankfully, but never speak to the great God of heaven in a careless or hurried manner. I shall take you afterwards to Aunt Jane, and you will feel much happier for doing your duty properly."

Lady Mary looked so affectionately at Charlie, that he liked to stay with her, and he was just beginning to say the grace, when Lady Jane put her head in at the door, and stretched out the long fishing-rod till it touched his head. "Now, Charlie, I am fishing *for you*," she said, "and if you are not caught this minute, I shall go away, and never take you in the pretty green boat again."

"Then I can say my grace another time," said he, running away to the door where Lady Jane stood.

"Charlie!" said Lady Mary gently, "when your little fish swallowed the bait so greedily this morning, it soon found that there was a hook in it; and when little

boys think of nothing but their own pleasure, they generally have reason to repent of it afterwards."

"What harm is there in fishing," said Lady Jane angrily.

"None whatever," replied Lady Mary; "you know St. Peter was a fisherman; but still, he did it to make his livelihood, and Charlie only does it for his amusement. I would not take life from any thing when it can be avoided."

"But all animals are for our use," said Lady Jane, "you cannot deny that."

"Only when we require them; but we must not take pleasure in their sufferings," answered Lady Mary, "and even the most innocent amusements become wrong when they interfere with our duty to God; what I regret at present is, to see Charlie going to play before he has done what I consider a sacred duty."

"Very few people say a grace at all now," replied Lady Jane, "it is quite old-fashioned to do so."

"It is a very old fashion indeed,—ever

since the time of our Saviour, when he blessed the bread before he distributed it," said Lady Mary gravely; even the heathens long ago, who worshipped idols, used always to place them on their dinner-tables while they ate, and return thanks for being provided with food; and the early Christians never forgot, that though their God was invisible, he was as much present with them as these stocks and stones of the Pagans."

Charlie heard Lady Mary give a sigh when he left the room, and all the evening he felt naughty and unhappy; he caught no more fish, and was soon so cold and tired, that when Lady Jane at last said it was supper-time, he was quite glad the evening was ended. As soon as they reached the landing place, she jumped on shore, and Charlie was following in a great hurry; but it was very deep water at the pier, and when he leaped out of the boat, he tumbled into the river. Lady Jane screamed with terror, and ran away, calling "help! help! help!"

"Oh, Aunt Jane! Aunt Jane! take me out," cried Charlie, "I am drowning! oh, help me! come here! come here, aunt Jane!"

But the louder Charlie screamed, the more Lady Jane was frightened, and the faster she ran away calling for help. At this moment he saw the door of the cottage open, and Lady Mary ran across the park quicker than the wind; she instantly plunged into the water, though it reached above her waist, and stretched out her arms to take hold of him; but by this time Charlie was so exhausted that he sunk down to the bottom of the river, and was in a moment buried under the cold waters before his aunt Mary could get hold of his clothes. Charlie did not know for a long time what happened; but, when he next opened his eyes, Lady Mary was lying on the bed rubbing his cold feet to warm them; and Lady Jane was walking about the room, wringing her hands, and crying, "Oh dear! oh dear! poor Charlie is dead! what shall I do!"

"Pray to God," said Lady Mary, in a soft and trembling voice, "dear Jane! He alone can give you peace, both *now* and *always*. I do not believe that Charlie is in any danger at present; but if the Almighty had taken our dear child, though we should both have grieved now, yet still, when we got to heaven, we should then have seen reason to be glad that God's will was done, and *not our's*. He does not afflict willingly, but for great and wise purposes; I would rather this dear child never lived again, than that he lived to be wicked."

Charlie remembered what his mamma had said when she parted from him, so he crept closer to Lady Mary, and put his arms round her neck. "Aunt Mary," he whispered in her ear, "I shall always be good now, and do what you bid me."

"My dear boy," cried Lady Mary, clasping him in her arms with tears of joy, "may God give you strength to do his will always; and now let us thank Him with our whole hearts for having spared your life."

"Charlie, Charlie!" exclaimed Lady

Jane, rushing up to the bed, "is my own Charlie recovered! I feared you were dead; I thought I should never have heard you speak again; oh, Charlie! dear Charlie!"

"Jane," interrupted Lady Mary, "you know we are desired to keep him very quiet, so when Charlie has said a short prayer, and taken his medicine, our best plan will be to try if we can compose him to sleep."

"Charlie must not be agitated with saying any prayers to-night," said Lady Jane; and as for the medicine, I am sure he has had vexations enough, poor little fellow, without teazing him any more; he really seems pretty well without it, and you are very cruel to insist on his taking that horrid stuff; I never could endure physic myself."

Now Charlie had already forgotten his good resolution to do always what Lady Mary bid him (since he had not prayed to God for a heart that is strong to do good, and able to hate evil continually); so he let Lady Jane put away the nasty black draught that Dr. Smith had sent, and never offered

to say his prayers, though he saw that Lady Mary was anxiously waiting in hopes he would propose to do so, and that she moved away with a disappointed look, when she saw that he had nothing to say that was right and good.

"Now, Charlie, I am tired, and shall leave you," continued Lady Jane; "one of the maids may sit up here, to see that you want for nothing, so lie still and go to sleep. Do not think any more about what has happened, since Dr. Smith says it might make you worse; oh! I shall never forget my fright when I saw you struggling in the water, and screaming for help,—and when you were brought out in Mary's arms, looking as cold and stiff as if you were dead, —and when"———

Lady Mary put up her finger on her lips, for she saw that it made poor Charlie tremble all over, to hear such an exact account of the terrible accident; so Lady Jane made him lie down on his pillow to try if he could sleep, and she then slipped away to her own bed.

Now, Charlie was very hot, and he felt a shocking pain in his head, so that he could not sleep; all that Lady Jane had said caused him to remember what he had suffered when he was drowning, and every instant he started up, thinking he had fallen into the water; then the strawberries and gingerbread made him very sick, so he got worse and worse, and he tossed and tumbled in bed till he felt as ill as possible. The room looked dull and dark, as there was only one little candle it it; and every thing was so still and quiet, that Charlie had nothing to do but to think. "I never was awake in the night-time before," he said to himself, "God always used to give me quiet rest; but this has been the naughtiest day I ever spent; and it is good for me to have time now, that I may remember all my wickedness before I die. What an idle, greedy, wilful boy I have been, and this is the first time in my life that I ever went to bed without saying my prayers. If God were to do as I deserve, he would be good to me no longer; but I think, that for

Christ's sake He will hear me if I ask to be forgiven for preferring my own pleasure to His will. Every thing is so quiet, that I feel as if there were nobody in the world except myself; but I need not be afraid, if God watches over me; perhaps I may die soon, for I feel so very, *very* ill. Oh! what a pity that I did not take Aunt Mary's advice, and say my grace after dinner, and pray to God at night, and swallow my medicine, for then I might have been happy now, instead of feeling so sad and miserable. I guess who mamma meant to call my good aunt, but she will not care for me now, I dare say, as I have vexed her so sadly all day."

Charlie's tongue was so parched, that he opened the bed-curtains to ask his maid for a glass of water; but what was his surprise and joy, when, instead of Betty, he saw Lady Mary close beside him reading her Bible, and sitting as still as a statue for fear of disturbing him.

"Aunt Mary! Aunt Mary!" he cried, throwing his arms round her neck, and

bursting into tears, "Oh! I am so happy to see you, and to tell you that I know what a naughty wicked boy I have been, and I want to ask your pardon, and to beg for God's forgiveness of all my sins before I die; for indeed I am very sick, and very ill, and perhaps I may never get well again."

"You will very soon be better, my dear child," replied Lady Mary in a soothing tone, "you are only feverish, but not in any danger. Here is your medicine, and I have got some vinegar and water to sponge you with, which will soon make you feel perfectly cool and comfortable."

When this was all done, and Lady Mary had beat up the pillows and smoothed the bed, she took Charlie in her arms, saying, "Now, my dear child, your body is at ease, and your mind will feel more at rest when you have thanked God for all his goodness in preserving you to-day; and, above all, for making you sensible to-night how much you need his forgiveness, which

I trust, for Christ's sake, he will grant to you."

"Oh! Aunt Mary!" cried Charlie, when his prayers were ended, "You must never, *never* leave me, and then I shall always be good."

"Remember, Charlie, it is only when God never leaves us, that we can always be good. We must trust to no one but himself. You might as well expect that another person's eating and drinking could nourish your body, as that they could be religious for you. God's Holy Spirit must dwell in your own heart, to prepare it for heaven, and then you will be preserved from sin amidst a hundred temptations, which I could not teach you to resist, though I were to watch over you night and day. Charlie, this thought consoles me whenever I think of you, because, whether you belong to Jane or me after this week, I pray to God that he will preserve you, and then no other care is necessary. Now, do try if you can sleep."

"But will you stay with me?" said

Charlie, putting his arms round her neck, "I like *you* best, aunt Mary."

"I shall stay and sleep with you to-night," answered she, "but, Charlie, I do not quite approve of little children saying, '*I like you best*,' to one person, and then, the next minute perhaps, they say, to somebody else, 'I like *you* best;' now, they are seldom able to judge who is really kindest to them. I am sorry that you will be obliged some day soon to say whether you prefer Jane or me. But since your papa pleases, it must be done; only till that time comes, say nothing about either of us that is not kind, because you know how fond we both are of you."

"But aunt Jane is always telling me she is my best aunt, and that you are only my *second best*; and she says you are Mrs. Particular, who will never let me have any fun; and that you will not . . . .

"Stop! stop! Charlie, dear! this is what I call back-biting. Jane did not mean you to tell me all this. It is a grand secret about my being so cross and ill-natured;

but you would very soon have found it out at any rate."

Lady Mary smiled, and looked so droll, that Charlie said, "Now, you are very like aunt Jane when she says one of her funny jokes, only I think you are still prettier than her."

"No! my dear child, I am not so pretty as your aunt Jane," replied Lady Mary, "but as God gives us our faces, we must neither be proud of them, nor ashamed; for we may be quite sure that he knows what is good for us. Probably if God had given me a better face, I might have thought too much about it."

"I am sure aunt Jane does," cried Charlie laughing; "I saw her stand before her long looking-glass for an hour at a time to-day making curtsies to herself, and smiling and . : . . .

"Charlie!" interrupted Lady Mary, putting her hand over his mouth, "I must fix a padlock on your lips to keep them from telling tales, or you may soon find something naughty to relate about me. I

remember once seeing a very funny picture of a man carrying all his own faults in a large bag behind his back, that he might never see them; and all his neighbour's faults were hung in a bag before his face, that he might not lose sight of them for a moment. Now, let you and I carry the bags a different way to-night, and try to think of our own follies, and to forget every other person's, till we fall asleep."

CHAPTER III.

LADY MARY'S SITTING-ROOM.

NEXT morning when Charlie awoke, he said his prayers and hymns, and he read a chapter in the Bible to Lady Mary, which she explained, so that he soon understood many things he did not know before, and he liked to hear all she said, because it was so very plain, and so very interesting.

"Aunt Mary!" said Charlie, when she stopped, "this day has begun very pleasantly, so I hope it will be better spent than yesterday."

"I hope so too," answered Lady Mary, "and let us always endeavour that every day of our lives may be better spent than the one before it, so that we may be able to

say at last, as Solomon did, that 'the day of his death was better than the day of his birth.' You know, Charlie, every day is like a whole life, for, when we awake in the morning, it is almost the same as if we were born; and at night when we go to sleep, it is just as if we died."

"So it is," interrupted Charlie, "I shall remember that to-night when I am in my bed."

"And, my dear child, if you were every night of your life to think over the past day," continued Lady Mary, "and confess all your sins, and prepare for sleep as you would prepare for death, then, when at last you come to die in real earnest, you would only have the work of one day to do, instead of beginning your preparations, as many people do, at the very end of their days; and having to think over their past lives, when probably most of it is forgotten."

"Aunt Jane says nobody should ever talk about death till it comes, because it is so melancholy," said Charlie, "but I rather like to hear all you say about it."

"Death is not melancholy to those who love God," answered Lady Mary; "the good Dr. Doddridge used to tell an intimate friend, that whenever he thought on death, joy sprung up in his heart; and David said he could pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil."

"But are not most people afraid to die?" asked Charlie, "and how can I learn to feel like David, and not be afraid?"

"By accustoming yourself to think of death," said Lady Mary, "you saw yesterday, when my horse started, how the groom led him back to the thing that frightened him, that he might see it again and again, till at last the animal was so used to it, that he could not be startled again. It is the same with those Christians who often contemplate death. Do you remember what a happy state St. Paul was in? He was in a strait between two things that he wished for; he was anxious to depart and be with Christ; and he wished also to live, and serve God on earth. Now, people who live

without God are much oftener in a strait between two things that they *dread*; they are frequently wearied of life; and they are afraid to die."

"I would not like to be put in a black coffin," said Charlie, "and buried in the ground, as poor Jane Howard was last week."

"But, my dear child, when people are dead their bodies neither see, nor feel, nor know anything,—and whether they are buried in earth, or water, or burnt in the fire, it is quite the same. If you were accidentally to hurt your leg, so that it had to be cut off, you would never care what became of it,—and many soldiers have their limbs shot off in battle, and do not inquire whether they are buried or not,—it is only the soul that is of consequence,—it leaves the body a mere piece of clay, like any clod on the valley, till it returns again on the day of the resurrection, and raises it to life and glory, through the power of Jesus Christ.

"Why do I not see my soul?" asked Charlie; "I would like to see it."

"My dear boy! do you *see* the words I am speaking to you just now," replied Lady Mary, "or do you *see* your own thoughts? No! Well then,—people's words and thoughts come from the soul, and they are not seen any more than the soul itself.—Heaven also, which is the place of the soul, is not seen at present, because these sinful bodies we wear now, are like a dark veil that hides from us every thing which belongs to a future state."

"That reminds me of the hymn I said this morning," interrupted Charlie.

"An house eternal, built by God,
Shall lodge the holy mind,
When once those prison walls have fall'n,
By which 'tis now confin'd."

"I am glad you remember that hymn so well, and can make a right use of it," said Lady Mary; "it is delightful to think, as the verse tells us, that when our bodies are laid low in the dust, our souls shall immediately pass into glory; but remember, Charlie, it is only by making our souls rule

over our bodies in this world, that we shall secure a happy resurrection to them *both* in heaven. The body loves ease, and indolence, and fine dress, and eating and drinking,—but the soul that loves God will despise all these things;—its happiness is 'hid with Christ in God,' and it cares not for outward show, but delights in thinking of God's mercies, in praying to him, and in the sure hope of everlasting happiness."

"What sort of happiness is there in heaven?" asked Charlie.

"It is greater than you can possibly imagine," replied Lady Mary; "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, anything to compare with it;—all the sorrows we can ever know in this world will then be at an end for ever. When you hurt yourself at any time, remember you will have a body that can feel no pain,—when you are in distress, (as you were when your mamma went away,) recollect that you will have no more sorrow nor separation in Heaven—and when the worst of all happens, and you feel that you have been tempted to commit some sin

against God, then, in the midst of all your shame and repentance, remember that in Heaven there will be no temptations and no sin,—think of the happiness it will be, at the resurrection, when we see all the friends we ever loved and prayed for, and all who ever served Christ on earth, rising out of their graves, and going, with us, into the presence of our Father in Heaven;—but, my dear child, all this is nothing to the joy which a redeemed soul will feel, on seeing the face of our divine Saviour, and on beginning an everlasting song of praise to that glorious and almighty Being, in whose presence we are to rejoice for evermore."

"Why do we not see God now?" inquired Charlie.

"Because He is too glorious for us to look upon," said Lady Mary. "You cannot even gaze at the sun, without feeling your eyes almost blinded by its excessive brightness;—and God who made the sun and stars, is far more glorious. Do you remember that beautiful description of an

angel in the Bible, 'clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head, and his face as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire;'—yet that was only a servant of God. When the Almighty spoke to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, they begged that they might not hear his voice again or they would die, for it sounded like seven thunders in their ears; so Moses was appointed to be a mediator, and speak for them, just as Jesus Christ is our Mediator to intercede for us now."

"What is the exact meaning of being a Mediator?" asked Charlie.

"I will explain it to you," said Lady Mary. "Suppose your papa was angry at you for some very naughty thing you had done, and that your mamma went and asked him, for her sake, to forgive you, then she would be a Mediator. But Jesus Christ did far more for us,—he suffered the punishment that we were to have endured."

"But why could not God forgive our sins at once?" asked Charlie.

"Because God is just and holy, as well

as merciful and good. Sin is so hateful in His sight, that there must be an atonement for it, or the sinner is to be banished from his presence for ever. We could do nothing at all to make ourselves fit for His mercy, and therefore God himself thought of a plan so wonderful and so merciful, that it never would have entered into our hearts to conceive it. I once read in history, of a king who made some laws which were so very strict, that any person who broke the very least of them, was to have his eyes put out: the first man who offended was the king's own son. You may imagine how sorry he was, but still he resolved to be just, and not let him off, though he loved him; so he ordered *one* of his son's eyes to be plucked out, and one of his own, that the law might be fulfilled. But Christ did *more* for us than the king did for his son,—he suffered the *whole* punishment of our wickedness,—he left all the glory and happiness of Heaven, where he had legions of angels to serve him,—and he came here, to live a life of suffering and sorrow for

our sakes,—and he died a painful death, to save *your* soul and *mine*, Charlie, from going to hell."

"And is it really quite sure that even when I have been very naughty, still Jesus Christ will intercede for me, if I ask him, and if I feel very sorry for my wickedness?"

"He will, indeed," replied Lady Mary. "Do you remember, in the Bible, when Jonathan puts his own life in danger, from the anger of Saul, to save David; and after that, do you think David would ever doubt that Jonathan would be ready to do every thing else in the world for him? Oh! let us pray for grateful hearts, to love and trust our blessed Saviour as we ought."

"Yes! let us pray before we go down to breakfast," said Charlie eagerly, "and I want to say something more to you, aunt Mary, if you will not be angry."

"Never feel afraid of my being angry," said Lady Mary, kindly, "I like to know all you think."

Charlie put his arms round her neck, and

whispered very low in Lady Mary's ear, "I want to pray for aunt Jane, too, that she may come to heaven as well as us."

"Yes, my dear child!" said Lady Mary, whose eyes were filled with tears, "I pray many times a-day for Jane, and ask every thing for her that I ask for myself; so it will make me very happy to have your prayers joined with my own."

"And will you teach her all you have been telling me?" added Charlie, "for she says that she does not often read the Bible, —and she does not care for going to church —and she wants me not to go either."

"My dear boy," said Lady Mary, "it would not do for you and me, who are both younger than Jane, to set ourselves up as her teachers; when we wish to recommend religion to those we love, the best way is, to show that it really makes us happy in our own hearts, and teaches us how to be humble, gentle, charitable, and kind. But we should be very sure it is our duty to teach our elders before we begin. It was only Timothy, who was a clergyman, that

was desired to be 'instant in season, and out of season;' but young ladies and little children should remember it is their business to be taught and not to teach. Let you and I both continue to be 'like little children,' Charlie, 'hoping all things, and believing all things,' and rejoicing that there is always *something* we can do for our friends, so long as God is good enough to hear our prayers, and promises to answer them."

"How glad people will be when they see their friends beginning to love God," exclaimed Charlie; "and how happy they must feel that they prayed for them!"

"Yes!" said Lady Mary, "I think any one who could feel satisfied to go *alone* to heaven, without caring for the salvation of others, is not very likely to get there *at all;* but to those who resemble the character of Christ, in earnestly desiring the pardon of sinners, his promises are most precious and encouraging. St. Augustine's mother felt so sure of her prayers being answered, that though her son was a very wicked little boy

when she died, yet one of her last words was, 'I know that the child of so many prayers can never be lost.' And there was once also a very, *very* good man, called Mr. Howard, who had a son so wicked that it almost broke his heart. You may be sure he prayed for him often; but at last poor Mr. Howard died, and still his son was as naughty as before. However, after some years, he became ill, and he thought upon his evil ways; and the Holy Spirit of God touched his heart with a sense of his sins; and he prayed that Jesus Christ would take the burden of them from him, for they were too heavy for him to bear. At length he obtained a peaceful death, and one of the last things he said was, 'How astonished my father will be when he sees that I have got to heaven.'"

"Then his good papa's prayers had really been heard!" exclaimed Charlie, "though Mr. Howard did not know it himself."

"But, I dare say, he had great hopes they would," said Lady Mary; "people

must always expect an answer when they pray to God: they should be like the importunate widow, who asked again and again; or like Jacob, who said, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' But they must not afterwards despair if their wishes are not immediately fulfilled, for our prayers are often answered many years after we have ourselves forgotten them, or even when the tongue that uttered them has long been silent in the grave."

"That is very good and merciful of God," said Charlie.

"It is not often, my dear child, that we have to *wait* for a blessing, when we ask it in faith," continued Lady Mary. "God is continually *waiting* to be gracious to us; and he has said, 'Before you call, I will answer; and while you are yet speaking, I will come unto you.' Was there ever a more condescending word than that! Therefore, when you pray for your friends, you may believe, that, at all events, it brings a blessing on yourself; and that, if it be consistent with the glory of God, those prayers

will be sooner or later answered, for Christ's sake, in the salvation of those you love."

"I am very glad of that," said Charlie, "and I shall often pray for aunt Jane."

"We all need your prayers, dear Charlie," added Lady Mary, kissing him affectionately; "and one of the most delightful promises in Scripture is contained in these words, 'I will bless thee, and *thou shalt be a blessing.*' You see we must be blest *ourselves* first before we can be a blessing to others; and the surest way to be of service to those you love is, to pray that God will give you more and more of his Holy Spirit in your own heart."

"How good it is of God to let us ask for all we want," said Charlie; "I love him very much for that."

"It is the highest and noblest employment in this world, Charlie, to pray to the great God who made us," continued Lady Mary, and her eyes shone brightly with pleasure as she spoke. "Do you remember in the Bible, when Paul was first converted, he went to an obscure lodging at

Damascus, and there *he prayed.* Now, at that time, Damascus was a great city, full of fine houses and splendid equipages, and there were many people in it who thought themselves very noble, and rich, and celebrated. Suppose any one had said to these great personages, 'There is only one man in all this city who is to be remembered for ever in the world,' each of these people would have supposed it was to be *himself;* and if they had afterwards been shown St. Paul alone at his prayers, and this person had said, '*There* is the greatest event that ever occurred in Damascus, and that is the man whose name is to survive for centuries after yours are all forgotten,' how astonished they would have felt! Oh, Charlie! God sees not as we see; for he knows that the greatest glory of man is to serve him; and he cares not for outward pomp, unless he perceives within a soul which is preparing to be clothed with the immortal glory that Christ has purchased for those who love him."

CHAPTER IV.

LADY JANE'S SITTING-ROOM.

After breakfasting with his two aunts, Charlie had gone to Lady Mary's room, and was busy studying his lessons, when a message came that Lady Jane wished to speak to him; so he went immediately to see what she had to say, though he would much rather have remained where he was, as he liked learning all that Lady Mary taught him, she was so very entertaining, and had so many pleasant ways of making things easy which used to be difficult, and of teaching him to be wise as well as good.

Lady Jane's dressing-room was so dark, there was nothing but twilight, and Charlie tumbled over half-a-dozen of footstools before he got near her. There were tables

without number in it, covered with ornamental baskets and musical work-boxes, and china mandarins, that nodded for ever when they were once set agoing. There were also gilt cages full of canary birds, and glass globes with gold fish in them; and the room was perfumed with lavender bags, and pot pourri, and pastiles; and a large fire was burning in the room, though the day was very hot. Lady Jane was stretched full length on a sofa, working a purse that was too beautiful ever to be used; and she had a little book of stories and poetry, in a pink silk cover, lying beside her; as well as a large box of bon-bons, dyed of every different colour, and she reached a handful of them to Charlie when he sat down beside her. They were the most beautiful things he had ever seen in his life: some of them were like mushrooms, others were like beetles; and there were scissors, and cherries, and walnuts, all made of sugar; so Charlie thought them too pretty to eat, but Lady Jane told him to finish these, and he might have as many more as he liked.

"I sent for you to amuse me a little," said she, looking very wearied and dull; "I really pitied you for being so long in Mary's room: what could you be about there?"

"I was learning some questions in history and geography," replied Charlie.

"How tiresome!" cried Lady Jane; "come to me and I shall teach you how to answer questions. Now attend. Who plagues me with lessons? Aunt Mary.—Who keeps me in order? Aunt Mary.—Who is kindest to me? Aunt Jane.—Who lets me do what I please? Aunt Jane.—Who thinks me pretty? Aunt Jane.—Who thinks me always good? Aunt Jane.—Who gives me sugar-plums? Aunt Jane.—Who is my best aunt? Aunt Jane. Will you remember all that?"

"I shall try," answered Charlie, laughing; but he afterwards thought to himself, "It is very curious that aunt Jane often praises herself, and aunt Mary never speaks about herself at all, except when I begin,

and then she changes the subject as soon as possible."

"I wonder how Mary employs the whole day," added Lady Jane, with a very long yawn; "for my part, when I get up in the morning, there is not a single thing I am *obliged* to do, till I go to bed again at night, which is often tiresome enough; so I am really happy to have you here to divert me."

Charlie thought how different aunt Mary had looked, with all her occupations about her. The cheerful sun had shone into her room, instead of that blazing fire; her window looked out upon the river, and had a balcony in front, full of geraniums and myrtles that perfumed the air. She had many books, all in beautiful bindings, arranged on the shelves, or laid on the table; and the tame robins hopped in at her window to be fed every morning, and then flew away to enjoy themselves, instead of being pent up in gilt cages, from which they were never to be free. "I would rather be one

of aunt Mary's robins," thought Charlie, "than any of aunt Jane's fine canaries; for it is better to be happy than to be great."

"Shut the door, and stir the fire," continued Lady Jane. "I am sorry that the cold weather is beginning, because all winter I can do nothing but contrive how to keep myself warm."

"Aunt Mary says," thought Charlie, "that the happiest life in the world is the one that is most *useful*: I wonder if aunt Jane thinks so too."

He was next desired to hold some skeins of silk, while Lady Jane wound them up; and though at first he was very glad to oblige her, yet they soon got so entangled, that she tugged and pulled them all wrong; and then she thought he did not hold them properly, so she scolded him, and at last got so out of patience, that she pulled them all off his hands, and tossed them to the other end of the table. "You careless child, you have spoilt all my beautiful silks!" she exclaimed in a loud angry tone.

Charlie had been taught by his mamma never to answer a word when he was found fault with, and he held his tongue, because he remembered the text she had desired him to repeat to himself when he was unjustly blamed—"If, when you do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." But he could not help thinking, "even aunt Jane does not think me *always* good."

"Now go and amuse yourself with this cup and ball for half an hour at the other end of the room," continued Lady Jane, in rather a cross voice; "and there is a plate of figs and of almond cakes that you may eat for your luncheon."

Charlie wished himself back at his lessons, or digging in the garden, but he tried as much as possible to feel good-humoured, and amused himself in the corner of his aunt's dressing-room, till at last she called out, "Charlie, come here!—it gives me a headach, the noise you make catching that tiresome ball in the cup, so I must amuse you some other way. Here is a

treat for you,—I shall let you see all my jewels: look at this pretty diamond broach, and do you see what beautiful blue stones are on this necklace, and here are three pairs of gold ear-rings."

"They are very fine indeed!" exclaimed Charlie, "do you wear them all at once, aunt Jane?"

"You stupid child!" she exclaimed, "I have only one pair of ears."

"Then, what is the use of all these ear-rings?" asked Charlie.

"That question is very *aunt Mary-ish*, Master Charlie!" said Lady Jane, angrily, shutting up her jewel-box. "Now, take notice of what I say; there is nothing in the world I dislike more than a *sensible* child; and if you ever dare to begin moralizing in my room, you shall never enter it again."

"Indeed, aunt Jane, I did not mean to be at all sensible!" said Charlie; "and I do not know what you are angry at me for; but I am very sorry if I have said any thing naughty."

"Well! well! I forgive you this time!" answered Lady Jane; "and before we go down to dinner, I shall show you something very funny to astonish Mary with."

She took out a large parcel of newspapers, and made them up with large plaits into the shape of a petticoat, which she put upon Charlie. After that she cut out a body and sleeves for him of paper, and a large paper cap, so that he looked exactly like a little buy-a-broom girl; then she taught him how to sing a song as they do, and at last, when the gong sounded for dinner, she led him down stairs, with this curious dress on, so that the servants could hardly wait at table for laughing at the odd figure that Charlie was,—and she made him sing, "Buy a broom," twice over, before she sat down to dinner.

"So you have got into the newspapers, Charlie!" said Lady Mary smiling, when she looked at his merry face. Lady Jane would hardly allow him to answer, she was so anxious to keep Charlie entirely to herself; and she helped him always to the same

dish she chose to eat, and allowed him to drink a large tumbler of porter after dinner, which he liked very much, and finished, though Lady Mary begged him not to take it. This made him so sleepy all the evening, that he could not enjoy some very amusing games that she had promised to show him after dinner; but he fell asleep on one of the sofas in the drawing-room, and continued in this way till long after his usual hour of going to bed. When he opened his eyes again, Lady Jane was slumbering on the opposite sofa, and Lady Mary was playing some beautiful tunes on the organ, and singing; but the moment she saw that Charlie was awake, she started up and came to him. "I did not disturb you, my dear child!" she said, "because I wished you not to be drowsy when you read to me, and say your prayers; so now, let us lose no time in doing so."

"Very well!" cried Charlie, yawning exceedingly loud; "I shall try to keep awake, and attend to what I am about."

"Unless you can do that, it will be bet-

ter not to pray at all," said Lady Mary. "When any one approaches the Great God of Heaven, without thinking what they are about, it is an insult that they would not venture to show to any of the kings or great men of the earth, and there is a curse you know upon all those who *forget* God. It is not merely those who sin against God, but those that *forget* God, who are to be punished. I remember once reading of some ignorant savages, (called Tartars,) who had invented a praying-machine, which they wound up every morning like a clock, and it continued all day to whirl up their written prayers towards heaven; and when I think that any person is praying to God, without thinking of what he says, I always consider him as merely a praying-machine. But I trust my own dear Charlie will never be anything so sinful and useless."

Charlie was roused up to exertion by what Lady Mary said, and by the kind, earnest tone in which she spoke to him; so he read with great attention, and when he

prayed, he thought with much pleasure, that as God had given him a heart to pray, He would also hear him, and answer him. in the way that was most for his good, and for God's own glory.

CHAPTER V.

THE FAIR.

"Now, Charlie! you are to be completely happy to-day," said Lady Jane, after breakfast next morning. "I mean to take you with me to the fair, where you are to do whatever you please, and get whatever you ask for!"

"Oh, aunt Jane! aunt Jane! how happy I am!" exclaimed Charlie, skipping round the room with joy. "When will it be time to go; may we set off now,—this minute?"

"Stop! stop!" replied Lady Jane; "I must dress you very smart first. Your hair must be curled with the hot irons, to make you look as pretty as possible, that every

body may say, what a fine little fellow my Charlie is!"

"But I am dressed already! and there is no use for dressing again," replied he. "Is there, aunt Mary?"

"My dear boy! it is always best for children to obey whatever they are desired to do, unless it is sinful; at the same time, I think, that though no time is wasted that we spend in making ourselves neat and tidy, yet, when that is once done, the less we think about our clothes the better. Some old author says," continued Lady Mary smiling, and turning to Lady Jane, "that as the sin of a woman first caused a necessity for dress, we have always since been trying to make it an advantage."

"Well! you may say what you please," said Lady Jane, "but I would not wish to live another day, if I was not to be well dressed. People's appearance is of more consequence than you think. What would have become of the world, if Helen of Troy had not been well dressed; or if her nose had been an inch shorter than it was?"

Lady Mary could not help laughing, to see how earnest her sister Jane was, who turned next to Charlie, exclaiming, "I am so glad you are not an ugly little creature, with red hands, and red hair, for then I never could have liked you at all, but now I can look at you all day, my darling, you are so pretty."

"Aunts and mammas always think more of their own little boys, than any body else does," said lady Mary. "I dare say there are hundreds thinking just as much of their Charlies, as you do of ours, Jane. Do you remember the old song that says,

> "Was there ever seen a mother,
> Would give her booby for another?"

I hope we shall both like dear Charlie quite as well, if he were to become deformed and helpless, as we do, now that he is just like other boys. God knows the real value of every thing, and he teaches us it is the mind, and not the body that is of importance. I often think, when I see children with weak or deformed bodies, which may prevent them from enjoying

the honours and pleasures of this world, how merciful it is of God, that nothing but wilful sin shuts us out from his love ; and how little we need care for outward advantages, when God values them so little, and gives them often to those who love him the least."

"But a good face is a letter of recommendation all over the world," said Lady Jane, looking into the glass, "and I like to please people, and to be pleased myself."

"Those who are anxious to please, generally succeed whether they are plain or otherwise," replied Lady Mary. "You have heard of Wilkes, who was so very clever and so very ugly. He always said, that a handsome man was preferred to him for the first five minutes, but *never longer*, because he was so agreeable. If those who are despised by the world for being plain, are happy enough to love God, and to be approved of by Him, they may feel like a miser I heard of long ago, who used to be laughed at by all the little boys for his

shabby clothes: but he did not care, because when he went home, he had rich treasures belonging to him, that no one else knew of."

"Well! we shall not be clothed like the miser to-day," said Lady Jane, laughing; "so come along, Charlie, and be dressed."

"Aunt Mary! you promised to let me see the wild beasts," cried Charlie; "will you come with us?"

"Wild beasts!" exclaimed Lady Jane, "I never could go into a menagerie in my life! Such a noise and such a stench! No, no, Charlie, you shall come with me to see a play at the Theatre instead, and let Mary leave her card with the elephant and the tiger. I cannot think what people enjoy in staring at wild beasts!"

"I like to see all the wonderful works of God," said Lady Mary, gently, "but I am glad you have set the example of objecting to my taste, Jane, as it encourages me to say a single word against taking Charlie to a play,—you know," she whis-

pered in a very low voice, "I would not interfere in a trifle; but his mamma disapproved of plays so much, she never took him to one, and children with such lively spirits as Charlie require very little to amuse them; give him a feather and he could play with it all day,—what is the use, therefore, of taking him where vice and indelicacy are both encouraged?"

"I never could see the harm of going to a play," replied Lady Jane.

"Let us only consider it for a few moments in the light in which Christians ought to view *every thing*, as it respects the honour and glory of our God, whom we are created *on purpose* to serve; in all theatres his name is taken in vain, which is contrary to his express law, and even solemnly invoked by prayer."

"But that is only sometimes," answered Lady Jane.

"He that offends against the law in *one* point is guilty of all," continued Lady Mary; "the chain of morality is so linked together, that if you once break it in any

part, the whole is unloosened; actors must take whatever part is assigned them in a piece, whether there are oaths in it or not; sometimes women are obliged to dress themselves in men's attire, contrary to another express command of Scripture; they paint their faces too.—

"Well, well!" interrupted Lady Jane, "they will do all that whether I go to the theatre or stay at home."

"It must needs be that offences come, but wo is denounced against those by whom they come. My dear Jane! do not let us encourage, for an hour's amusement, what may risk the everlasting happiness of others; you know, from the earliest ages, actors were considered as outcasts from religion, and not allowed Christian burial in the Catholic countries, and only yesterday you told me, nothing would induce you to live in the neighbourhood of a theatre,—why then should you ever enter one?"*

Lady Jane put her fingers into her ears, and ran laughing and shaking her head out of the room.

* Wilberforce.

When Charlie arrived at the fair with the Lady Seymours, it was the gayest sight he had ever seen in his whole life. There was an immense green field perfectly covered with white tents, which were ranged in long straight rows like streets, and when he walked into the midst of them, every booth was filled with the most beautiful articles for sale. Some were hung all round with dolls and painted toys, work-boxes, fire-screens, and necklaces. Others were adorned with coloured sweetmeats, cakes, and fruit. Many had crowds of people seated in them, who were drinking gin and brandy, while bands of music played in every direction. There were several caravans also with large pictures in front, to tell what wonderful giants and dwarfs were to be seen, and likewise learned pigs that knew their alphabets, and dogs that could dance, and little birds that could act plays, and pretend to be dead. Wherever Charlie turned, there were men walking about with paper caps on their heads and white aprons, and large trays full of gingerbread-nuts,

which they were always bringing up to him, and begging he would taste to see how very good they were, that he might be tempted to buy some, but Charlie had been so sick with gingerbread the day before, that he would not have swallowed a morsel for a guinea, unless they had taken a ramrod to thrust it down his throat.

Many, many things were to be seen, however, that Charlie wished to have, and whenever he looked twice at them they were bought for him by Lady Jane, who also purchased every thing that she liked herself, so that they were soon perfectly overloaded, and Lady Mary smiled, saying she thought Jane and Charlie should set up a booth themselves, for they had already collected plenty of things to furnish one.

"Indeed," said Lady Jane, "I wish we could dispose of more than half this trash, for I see every thing is much better at the other end of the fair than at this."

"Shall I assist you to carry them?" replied Lady Mary, in an obliging tone.

"But are you not going to buy a single

thing yourself?" asked Lady Jane, with great surprise.

"Probably not," replied Lady Mary. "I seldom buy a new dress or a new work-box merely because it is pretty, unless I had wanted something of the kind before I saw it."

"And do you mean to give nothing at all to poor Charlie?" exclaimed Lady Jane.

"*Poor* Charlie!" replied Lady Mary, laughing, "you have been so very kind to him that there is nothing left for me to do."

"How very shabby not to make him some pretty present," continued Lady Jane. "I am quite ashamed of you, Mary, and Charlie knows now who is his *good aunt* I think."

"If there was a thing in this world that could add to his happiness, I should try with my whole heart and with my whole purse to get it for him," replied Lady Mary, gently; "and if you had not been so liberal as to anticipate all his wishes, I might have desired him to choose any *one* play-thing that pleased him; but he should not have had more, nor have been allowed to

change, after he had once fixed on what he preferred."

By this time Charlie could scarcely carry all that he had collected at the fair. His pockets were filled with a large box of nine pins, a humming top and an immense quantity of squibs and fire-works. In one hand he carried an enormous kite, and a gun that fired off little copper caps, and made a tremendous explosion like a real soldier's gun; and in the other hand he had a large basket of peaches, and a whip that was almost big enough for a coachman, and behind him followed an immense omnibus, pulled by a long string, and which Lady Jane filled as full as it could hold with sweetmeats. Lady Mary took no notice, though she saw that Charlie had encumbered himself sadly; sometimes people who passed put their feet by accident on the string of the omnibus and twitched it out of his hand, and often it was upset, so that he wished most heartily he had never seen it. If he attempted to run a little way that he might see any thing curious, all his peaches were bruised, and

at last his feet got entangled in the tail of his kite, so that he tumbled down and hurt himself very much. The skin was rubbed off his nose, and his white trowsers were soiled, which made Lady Jane very *very* angry. She said she was ashamed to be seen with him now, as he did not look either pretty or smart. "I declare," said Lady Jane, "every little boy who meets with an accident should be well whipped, and it would teach him to be more careful."

Charlie was very sadly hurt, though he was too much a man to cry merely for a tumble; but when he heard his aunt Jane speak in such a loud angry tone, he burst into tears.

Lady Mary said nothing, but she helped him to pick up all his toys, though she did not offer to carry any of them; and she took her cambric pocket-handkerchief for some water to wash the mud off his face, and to stop the bleeding of his nose.

"You may go to the wild beasts, for I am sure you are enough to frighten them

with such a face," said Lady Jane in a very cross voice.

"I know who is my bad aunt now," cried Charlie sobbing, "and I don't care———"

"Stop, stop, my dear boy," exclaimed Lady Mary, "say nothing naughty, or you will be sorry for it afterwards; you are in a passion at present, and not fit to have an opinion about any thing, till you get into good humour again."

"I always get myself hurt in some way or other when I follow aunt Jane's naughty advice," continued Charlie sulkily.

"But you might have had a fall, my dear boy, whether you were doing good or evil," replied Lady Mary; "the only difference that is shown, in this world, between those who act right or wrong, is to be in the way they bear their vexations and trials; but we are all equally liable to accidents. God makes those that love him feel happy, whatever occurs, but he does not promise to keep them from pain; and, you know, both the good and the bad die at last; but

then begins the time when God shows the prodigious difference; you know, wicked people would try to be good, if they saw that it was to keep them from all evil; and good people would perhaps forget that heaven is happier than this world, if they never felt pain or sorrow in it; so that you see God is both wise and good, to make us all alike upon earth, and to allow his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, and his rain to fall on the just as well as on the unjust."

CHAPTER VI.

THE WILD BEASTS.

Lady Mary had now reached the menagerie, where the wild beasts lived; and after paying a shilling for herself and sixpence for Charlie to the man in a scarlet coat, who stood at the door to receive them, she descended a long wooden stair like a ladder, followed by Charlie, who was quite confused with all the wonders that he saw and heard. A man with a long stick stood in the middle of the floor pointing out the laughing hyena, that can never be tamed; the ostrich, that can swallow iron and not be the worse of it; the coati mundi, that eats off its own tail when it is hungry; the eider duck, that flies ninety miles in an

hour; and the camel, that drinks enough in a day to serve him for a year. The man afterwards twisted a large serpent round his neck, which he called his boa; and then made one of the tigers leap over a large pole, to show the company his agility and obedience.

A loud roar close behind him caused Charlie to start and cling to his aunt with terror. "Take me away, take me away," he said; "that dreadful animal is staring at me as if it would like to tear me in pieces."

"My dear child, he is shut up in a cage," said Lady Mary, laughing; "but, Charlie, if you are so frightened to see a tame lion, shut in with iron bars like that poor animal, only imagine how terrified you would have felt, had you been cast into a den of hungry lions, (as we read this morning that Daniel was); do you think that you could have trusted in God to protect you, as that good man did?"

"I don't know," replied Charlie; "I am

afraid not, if they were such terrible beasts as these."

"No, Charlie; unless God gave you faith, you could not trust him in any case," continued Lady Mary; "and though you are never likely to be tried as Daniel was, yet you should continually pray, that in whatever way God proves your faith in Him, he may send you strength sufficient for the occasion."

"Are there any lions in the place where mamma is gone to?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," said Lady Mary, "and there they go about at liberty hunting for their food; that poor animal was once a king in the forest, but here he is a slave; formerly he would eat nothing but what he killed himself, but now he must devour any carion that his keepers choose to throw at him."

"I hope mamma will take care that she does not meet any wild lions," exclaimed Charlie, "for I suppose they would kill her in a moment."

"She will take good care to avoid them," answered Lady Mary; "but, Charlie, do you remember who is compared to a roaring lion going about and seeking whom he may devour? no refuge is safe from *him*, except the care of Almighty God; and if you fear one who can only kill the body, how much more should we shun him who would destroy both soul and body together?"

"Look at that funny beast," exclaimed Charlie, laughing; "he is like a little ugly man grinning at us."

"These are all monkeys," answered Lady Mary, "and though they are such nasty-looking creatures, there is a country called Ceylon, where they used to be worshipped as gods."

"I never heard of any thing so foolish," said Charlie; "I did not think any body could have been so stupid."

"It shows you what poor silly creatures men are, when they forget the true God that made them," replied Lady Mary; "there is nothing so foolish or disgusting that they have not worshipped,—leeks and

onions,—stocks and stones,—pigs, white elephants,—and even monkeys, such as you see there."

"Oh! what funny faces they are making at me," cried Charlie, holding his sides with laughing; "there is one of them nodding as if he knew me."

"I shall buy some apples for you to throw up to the bars of their cages," said Lady Mary; "you will be amused to see how nimbly they can catch them."

Charlie screamed with joy when he saw how they snapped up every thing he threw to them, and devoured it in a moment. "Look how they are quarrelling and fighting," said he, laughing.

"What a want of good manners," answered Lady Mary, smiling; each prefers himself to his neighbour; but you and I have a better principle to guide us, Charlie, and we must show it, by not being selfish or greedy, like these poor animals, but in all things preferring others to ourselves."

"Here is a monkey throwing the empty nut shells at me, because I am giving him

nothing more," exclaimed Charlie; "what an impudent-looking animal he is."

"That puts me in mind of the way in which the black people in Ceylon used to get cocoa nuts," said Lady Mary; "they had no ladders, and the trunks of the trees were so long and strait, that they could not climb up to reach the fruit; but the monkeys had no difficulty in scrambling to the very highest branches; whenever they were seen there, a number of men assembled under the trees, and threw stones at the monkeys; this was sure to put these animals in a great rage, and as they had no stones to revenge themselves with, they tore off the largest cocoa nuts from the branches of the trees, and dashed them down at the enemy, which was the very thing that their tormentors wished."

"Oh, what fun," cried Charlie; "I would like to have seen one of these battles with cocoa nuts instead of cannon balls."

"Monkeys always copy what they observe men do," added Lady Mary, "I suppose they are proud of being so like us.

I remember once hearing of a servant who hated a pet monkey of his master's, but he did not dare to kill it. However, one day he took up a razor, when the monkey was watching him, and passed the blunt side of it two or three times across his own throat; when the malicious servant left the room, soon after, every thing happened as he expected; the monkey seized the razor to imitate him, but, by mistake, he passed the sharp side of the razor completely through his wind-pipe, and killed himself! Only think how astonished his master was, when he saw the monkey commit suicide!"

"Look at that enormous animal, like a mountain, with something like a tail coming out of his mouth," exclaimed Charlie, eagerly seizing hold of Lady Mary's hand, and leading her forward, "is that the elephant?"

"Yes, it is!" replied Lady Mary, "and if I had time to tell you all the stories that are known of elephants, you would be astonished what gentle wise animals they are, and so grateful to those who treat

them kindly. Now, you shall see him buy an apple out of that old woman's basket."

Lady Mary held up a halfpenny to the elephant, who stretched out his trunk, and took it out of her hand; then he swung it towards the old woman, and after giving it to her, he waited patiently till she reached him what he wanted.

"All these apples will hardly be a mouthful to him," said Charlie; "what an immense dinner an elephant must eat when he is hungry."

"I dare say he does," replied Lady Mary. "In India, when any of the great princes wish to ruin one of their courtiers, they send him a present of an elephant; of course, he cannot part with what his prince has sent him, nor kill it; so, the expense of maintaining this enormous gift very soon ruins him."

"What a curious trick!" said Charlie. "Will the elephant hurt me if I go near him?"

"No, little master!" cried the showman,

"he will let you ride on his back, if you please."

"But I do not like that," exclaimed Charlie, shrinking back, "I would be frightened."

"Many young gentlemen have ventured to mount him," continued the showman, "and they all liked to ride my elephant better than their own hobby horses, for he is much quieter."

"How did they get up?" asked Charlie, "had they a ladder to climb?"

"No, master!" replied the showman, "he lifts them up with his trunk, when I bid him; and sets them down again, as gently as a lamb."

"Does he?" replied Charlie, looking very suspiciously at the enormous elephant. "I would not let him touch me with his trunk for all the world."

"Come, come, take courage, Charlie," said Lady Mary; "I like to see a bold boy, who is afraid to do nothing, except what is wrong; let me see you mounted on the elephant's back, like Tippoo Saib."

"No! no!" cried Charlie, clinging close to his aunt. "He must not touch me!" continued he, seeing that the showman was making a sign to the elephant to pick him up, "take me away, take me away! he is looking at me; I am sure he will hurt me!"

"Compose yourself, Charlie," said Lady Mary, "you shall not be forced to go near the great elephant, unless you please; but try to be resolute, and walk up to him yourself. Many little boys have dared to do so, and they were very glad of it afterwards."

"Will he not let me fall?" said Charlie.

"Certainly not!" answered Lady Mary, "he will pick you up as easily as I would lift a pin off the ground. I never would advise you to do anything that could possibly hurt you; so now for it, Charlie."

With much fear and hesitation, Charlie was at last persuaded to let himself be mounted on the elephant; but, when he was once safely seated on its back, nobody was ever so happy before as he was. "Aunt Mary!" he cried, "I can do whatever I

like, now, for nobody can reach me! You look *quite little* down there!"

"So, you look down upon me, master Charlie, now that you are a great man!" said Lady Mary, smiling. "Shall we take the elephant home with us, and make a pet of him in the stable yard?"

"Yes! yes!" cried Charlie, laughing, "and let me have a ride on him every day; and you too, and aunt Jane."

"Well, then! tell him to pack up his trunk, and come with us," replied Lady Mary. "But I fear we shall soon be ruined with feeding him."

At this moment a message was brought in, that somebody wanted to speak with Charlie at the door.

"What does somebody want?" said he, pettishly. "I do not wish to speak with any body. I like to stay here, and play with the wild beasts."

"Charlie," said Lady Jane, coming into the menagerie, "let us go now to the theatre, where you will see something much more funny and wonderful than this."

"Shall I?" cried Charlie, dismounting immediately from the elephant's back. "What is there to be seen more funny and wonderful than those dear wild beasts?"

"Come and see," replied Lady Jane, leading him away. "But if you prefer staying with Mary, I see she is waiting in hopes you will return, and I shall go alone, for I would rather see a play than any thing in the world."

"Let me go too," cried Charlie, grasping hold of Lady Jane's gown. "I want to see the theatre with you, for aunt Mary says she will never take me there at all."

When he returned home at night, Charlie was tired and sleepy, and cross. "I do not care for a play," he said, "the wild beasts are much better!"

"Let me hear what you saw," said Lady Mary, "and all that you did."

"There was an old man who seemed to be always in a terrible passion, and swore the most frightful oaths," said Charlie; "and there was an officer who did nothing all night but tell lies; and there was a

young lady, with a red painted face, who never would do as she was bid; at last she cried, and promised to behave better; so the old gentleman got into good humour, and said she might do what she pleased; then the officer promised to tell no more stories, and took hold of the young lady's hand; so they all made curtsies and bows, till we came away. But I liked the monkeys and the elephants much better."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BEGGAR AND THE THIEF.

"Aunt Jane! aunt Mary! I want you both to give me a shilling," said Charlie, next day, running into the drawing-room: "It is for a poor beggar woman, who is at the door; and she has some miserable little children with her, who look so cold and hungry, it is quite sad to see them."

"Here, my darling," cried Lady Jane, holding out a shilling to Charlie, "send her away with this, and tell her never to come back. You are a dear child, to be so charitable and kind to the poor."

"Charlie," said Lady Mary, smiling, "I saw a sixpence in your hand this morning, and you said it was to buy a new

whip; did you give it to the poor beggar woman?"

"No!" replied Charlie, "because I want a new whip, and I cannot have one if I give my sixpence to the poor woman; but, aunt Mary! if you give her a shilling that will do much better."

"But you know that is *my* being charitable, and not *you*," answered Lady Mary; "there are many things I want to do with my shilling also; but if you spare her your sixpence, then you may ask me to give her a shilling, and perhaps I shall do it."

"Well!" said Charlie, looking at his sixpence, "I think I will give her this; but then, what shall I do without my whip?"

"You can wait," replied Lady Mary; "it would be better for you to have no whip, than for these poor children to have no dinner."

"So it would," said Charlie; "I shall take your advice, aunt Mary, and buy my whip some other time; so now let us come down and give her all the money we can spare."

"I must first see if she is so very poor as you think," added Lady Mary, "for perhaps she is only idle."

"Oh, aunt Mary! she is very, *very* poor; for she told me so," exclaimed Charlie, "and she is as ragged and dirty as possible."

"She need not be dirty, at any rate!" said Lady Mary, "everybody can afford to wash themselves. God is so very good as to make what is most necessary, to be most common also; and you know the two cheapest things in the world are air and water; but come, let us talk a little to your poor beggar woman."

"I wonder you would go near that filthy creature!" said Lady Jane; "what is the use of making such a fuss about a shilling? just send one, and get rid of her at once; I would see her miserable face continually before me the whole day, if I did not send something to quiet my conscience."

"But we are answerable to God for the use we make of our money; and if I give

it away carelessly, there will be nothing left for those who really need it," replied Lady Mary; "I would much rather throw a shilling into the sea, than let it be spent in idleness or wickedness. If this poor woman is so very ill off, I shall relieve her now, and give her some work to be paid for afterwards."

"Well! well!" said Lady Jane, "I would rather send her twenty shillings, than talk another minute on the subject. I daresay you will find out she deserves to be hanged."

"I hope not!" replied Lady Mary, laughing, and following Charlie out of the room, who ran on before her, and put Lady Jane's shilling into the beggar woman's hand.

"Ah! bless your pretty sweet face," said she; "I knew you was a real gentleman, and would be kind to a poor distressed woman."

"How came you to be in such poverty?" asked Lady Mary, in a kind, gentle voice.

"Because, please your ladyship, I have no money, and I can't work."

"But why cannot you work?" said Lady Mary.

"It is all I can do to look after the children, my lady!" answered the beggar, in rather a sulky voice.

"Could you not keep them a little cleaner then?" continued Lady Mary, "if you do nothing but attend to them, their clothes might be mended."

"'Deed ma'am, it 's of no use washing and mending for them," interrupted the beggar, "they'll be just as dirty and ragged again as ever, five minutes afterwards."

"How very unfortunate," said Lady Mary, "but suppose we try the experiment. If you will wash them all thoroughly, and mend their clothes, and bring these children here quite tidy to-morrow, this little boy will give you sixpence, and I shall give you two shillings, which will make half-a-crown, to encourage your industry. After that, we shall find some work for you and your children, which you shall be paid for, at the usual rate of wages."

"Thank you ma'am," said the beggar, in

a very discontented tone, "but I can't afford to let the children be mended and cleaned, or nobody would pity them; and we get more money by begging than we could ever get by work."

She walked away, looking exceedingly sulky, and muttering to herself in an angry voice. Lady Mary looked at Charlie, who seemed quite mortified and disappointed, that he had been taken in by such a naughty, idle woman.

"My dear child," she said, "do not be discouraged, though you have been mistaken this time. It is difficult even to do good when we wish it, for the world is so full of evil; but still the children of God must persevere in their efforts to serve Him. When people merely try to serve the world, it will thank them only if they *succeed.* But God's ways are not like our ways. His blessing is sure, whether we are successful or not, if we endeavour, with a humble spirit, to promote his glory. He examines the *motives* for what we do; and if God saw to-day that you wished to relieve that poor

woman, because you loved Christ, and remembered that he has desired you to clothe the naked and to feed the hungry, then, whether you are cheated or not by her, you have God's blessing. We have had a lesson to-day, Charlie, never to be hasty in our judgments of what is good and what is evil, but to examine well."

"I shall never believe a word people say after this about being poor, and hungry, and all that," exclaimed Charlie, indignantly; "and I am very sorry that impudent woman has got aunt Jane's shilling."

"My dear child, I would rather see you imposed upon a hundred times, than that you became suspicious," continued Lady Mary. "It is a very miserable feeling some people have, that they think every poor person a cheat till they are proved to be honest; but, you know,

> Love harbours no suspicious thought,
> Is patient to the bad;
> Griev'd when she hears of sins and crimes,
> And in the truth is glad.

You see it is *the truth* we are to seek for.

And, since God has declared, that, as long as the world exists, there shall be poverty and suffering, and has committed the care of the needy and the destitute to his children upon earth, we must not merely relieve distress when it is brought before us, but we must seek it out; and be assured that it has not ceased from the earth, even though we might shut our ears altogether to the sufferings and wants of the poor."

In the evening, when Charlie was walking into the village with his aunts, they saw a great crowd of men and boys approaching.

"Oh! aunt Mary!" cried Charlie, "there is a parish officer taking up the naughty, idle, beggar woman,—what has she done?—here they come quite close to us,—will you ask what is the matter? Are you taking that woman to prison?" continued he, running up to the bailiff.

"Yes! little master," replied the officer, "she is drunk and disorderly, and that other prisoner is a thief."

"A thief!" cried Charlie, with a fright-

ened look, "I never saw a thief in all my life! where is she? Aunt Mary, that woman is a thief! Aunt Jane, look! look! there is a thief!"

The beggar woman had been making such a riot, that every body was collected round her, and no one noticed a little woman who followed behind, in the custody of another bailiff. Her eyes were fixed on the ground, and she never spoke nor looked up; but her face was very white, and she had scarcely any clothes on, and Charlie saw she was trembling all over, so that the policeman was obliged to support her as they walked along. Since nobody seemed to be looking, Lady Mary ventured to ask the officer, as he passed, what the woman had done.

"She stole a duck, madam, which had strayed out of Farmer Bingley's yard."

"What made you do that, *honest* woman?" said Lady Jane: "I am sure," continued she, laughing, and turning to Charlie, "if ever I steal any thing, it will not be a

duck, for it is the worst eating in the world."

The miserable creature looked earnestly for a moment at Lady Jane: "Ah, madam!" she said, "long may your heart be as merry as it is now,—mine was once as light as your's, but it can never be so again. I have struggled hard through many a year of poverty and suffering, with a cheerful heart, but now I am a guilty creature, and from this day I shall never know peace again."

"Pray to God," whispered Lady Mary in a very low voice; "never despair of his mercy, for that would be the greatest sin of all."

"It is many a day since any one has spoken in a voice of kindness to me before," said the poor creature, looking gratefully at Lady Mary; "but I do not deserve it, —I deserve nothing now from either God or man."

"None of us deserve any thing from God," said Lady Mary, "but yet he promises all we ask,—entreat of Him to keep

your sins always before your own mind, but to blot them out of the book of His remembrance, for Christ's sake."

"I will, madam, and shall pray for a blessing on your head as long as I live,—but oh! if you have any pity, ladies! send some help to my poor fatherless children."

"Why are they not with you?" said Lady Mary, in her usual kind gentle voice.

"Because, madam, I never had the heart to make beggars of them, and little did I expect they would ever live to have a thief for their mother,—I had begged from door to door all day, for work or for food,—but that poor creature who is going to prison before me, had more to say, so no one attended to me. I was returning without a morsel for my hungry family, when the duck ran past, so convenient, that I whipped it under my apron, and thought no one had seen me."

"You may thank God that it was discovered, or probably you would have often been tempted to sin in the same way again,"

said Lady Mary; "but now I trust and believe you never will."

"Never! never! madam."

"Then remember you must ask night and day to be kept from temptation, for it is only God's Spirit in our hearts, that can preserve sinners (as we all are) from yielding to every wicked desire,—take the opportunity of your being in a solitary prison to think of all your past offences, as we must either repent of our sins in this world, or we shall repent of them for ever in hell. Go now, and set your mind at rest about the children, for I shall take care they do not want."

"Thank you, madam! thank you! oh! that a poor creature like me could bring a blessing on your head," cried the woman with tears in her eyes, as Lady Mary walked on.

"Well! master Charlie!" said Lady Jane, "you see honesty is the best policy."

"People must have a stronger motive for being honest than merely that it is good policy," said Lady Mary, smiling, "it

would not have prevented that poor creature from stealing the duck,—though if she had remembered, that the eye of the Lord is in every place, seeing the evil and the good, she might have feared to offend him, and she might have trusted, that while she kept in the way of His commandments, God never would utterly forsake her."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHILDREN'S PARTY.

NEXT morning, after Lady Mary had heard Charlie say his prayers and his hymns,—and explained a chapter in the Bible to him, she said, "I have some very pleasant news to tell you, Charlie,—a great many little cousins are coming to spend the whole day here, and I hope you will be very kind to them, as you are to be the landlord of the house."

"Yes!" said Charlie, laughing, "I shall be the landlord,—how many little boys are coming,—I want to see a great many."

"There are to be five little cousins to-day," replied Lady Mary, "shall I tell you their names?"

"Yes!" said Charlie, "and how old are they?"

"Very nearly the same age as yourself," answered Lady Mary, "Frank Pryse is a year older, and then there are Richard and David Jones, Ned Whitmore, and Laura Fitzroy."

"Do you think I shall like them?" asked Charlie, "are they all good children?"

"I hope so," answered Lady Mary, "I always suppose people to be good, till I find them out to be naughty, and then I take the first opportunity to believe that they are good again. Now, remember, I expect you will be very kind to those children who are come so far to see you,—show all your play things, and make any one welcome to use them, even if they were to wish for your new box of colours, or the grand painted wheel-barrow,—at dinner, recollect how shamefully the monkeys scrambled yesterday, when any thing was given them to eat, and always help your cousins first, and send them what is best,—in short, try to forget that the gentleman

called Master Charlie Seymour, has any thing to do, all day, except to make his visitors happy, and that is the real meaning of the text I showed you this morning,—'Use hospitality one towards another, *without grudging*;' in the Bible we find the best directions for every occasion, and you see it even teaches you lessons of politeness."

"When do you think they will arrive?" exclaimed Charlie, running to the window, and gazing eagerly out of it.

"Not till two o'clock," replied Lady Mary, "and they are to go away at eight, so there are six hours of happiness for you."

Charlie thought two o'clock would never arrive; but after looking at Lady Mary's watch fifty times during the morning, he at last discovered that the hour was come,—and soon after a green chariot was seen driving along the approach at full speed,—a number of little hands were stretched out of the window, waving white handkerchiefs, and a loud hurra was heard in the carriage

when it stopped at the door. Lady Mary flew down with Charlie, to receive all the cousins, and there was a very happy meeting. Frank Pryse did not seem to despise Charlie, though he was a whole year younger than himself, and though Richard Jones was nearly an inch taller when they were measured, yet they soon became very good friends.

Lady Jane presently complained that the children made such a noise, it gave her a headach, so she proposed to them to sit down, and play at dominos till dinner time, as she thought it too cold to venture out; but Lady Mary said they might run about in a corn-field near the house to which she accompanied them,—the sheaves were all standing on the ground, so they played at hide-and-seek amongst them, and raced round the corn-stacks till they were all perfectly fatigued; after which she led them to a hay-field, where every one built a house for himself of hay, and made a grass seat, where they might sit down to rest.

Charlie was very polite in lending his

rake to little David Jones, and the painted wheel-barrow to Ned Whitmore, who seemed very happy to get it, and Lady Mary gave him a smile and a nod of approbation for doing it, which made Charlie feel more happy than if she had rewarded him with sugar plums. After every body's house was finished, they built a grand palace, twice the size of the others, for Lady Mary; and when it was done, and furnished like the rest, with a grass seat, she sat down in her nice, new, green arm-chair, and told them a very amusing story, which was all true, and so very surprising, that the children were quite sorry when it was done. Soon after, they heard the gong sounding for dinner, so Lady Mary proposed that all the little boys should try a race to see who would get home first, and it was quite wonderful to see how fast they ran. Poor Charlie tried with all his might to be first, and thought he was quite sure to beat every body, but Frank Pryse soon got before him, and reached the house a whole minute sooner. Charlie returned back to Lady

Mary with a hundred complaints of how Richard Jones had pushed him, and how Frank Pryse had gone a shorter road than the others.

"My dear boy," said Lady Mary, "you know only one could have won, and four must have been beaten, so it was better that your visitor had the pleasure of being first, besides, you know, he is older and stronger than you; but Charlie," she added, as they walked slowly on to the house, "there is a race in which we may *all* win, and the success of one will not diminish the happiness of the others, but, on the contrary, it will increase our joy,—do you know what I mean?"

"Yes," replied Charlie, "the text I once read to you, 'so run that ye may obtain.'"

At dinner Charlie felt very hungry, but still he remembered what Lady Mary had said about always letting his visitors be helped first, so he waited patiently till she sent him a slice of roast pheasant, and in the second course he had got some very good

rice pudding with currants from her, when Lady Jane exclaimed, "You stupid boy! do you take rice pudding when you might have raspberry cream? I never knew such a thing! send your plate here this instant, and I shall give you something eatable."

Now there was very little raspberry cream left, and Charlie had seen Frank Pryse send to ask for some a minute before, but Lady Jane heaped it all upon one plate which the servant brought to him. Charlie saw Lady Mary glancing towards his cousin to put him in mind that he should offer it to Frank Pryse, but he devoured it up in a minute without thinking or caring for his visitor.

"Frank," said Lady Mary, "what will you eat, for I regret to see you have no chance of any raspberry cream?"

"Any thing you please," replied Frank. "I do not much care what I eat, so it is lucky Charlie got the raspberry cream, he seems so very fond of it; when he is a year older, like me, he will probably not mind these things so much."

Charlie was quite ashamed to see how foolish Frank Pryse thought him for caring so much what he ate, and his face became as pink as the raspberry cream with vexation. It might have been expected that this lesson would have taught him not to be greedy again, but nobody would believe how often people may be made sensible that they have been foolish or naughty, and yet do the very same thing over again, till at last they learn that in trifles as well as on great occasions, they must constantly remember there is a rule for their conduct, and that whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they must do all to the glory of God.

There was a dish of beautiful large American apples at the dessert, which contained one for each of the company and Lady Jane immediately picked out the finest and reached it to Charlie, saying, "Here! this is your's for being a good boy."

"We have *all* been very good to-day," said Lady Mary, "so I vote that Charlie

shall put that enormous apple back into the plate, as he is no better than his neighbours, and let it be given to Frank who is older."

Charlie thought the prodigious apple looked so very nice that he pretended not to hear Lady Mary speaking, but he snatched up a fruit knife in a great hurry and cut it in two. But oh! what a disappointment! The apple was quite rotten in the middle, and not fit to be tasted.

All the little boys had been watching this nice apple and wishing for it, and wondering that Charlie took the best to himself when they were his visitors, but as soon as it was opened, they all burst out into fits of laughing, and did not recover their gravity for a long time afterwards. Charlie was ready to cry when he saw how ridiculous they all thought him; but what vexed him most of all was to think how foolish he must appear to his aunt Mary.

"Dear Charlie!" exclaimed Lady Jane, "how sorry I am that my apple is finished, or you should have had it."

"Mine is not begun yet," whispered Lady Mary in a low tone to Charlie, "but I would not bestow a morsel of it on a boy who is selfish and greedy. Let me hope you will remember this lesson not to be too anxious to please yourself, and always to look beyond the *outside* of every thing before you decide what is best. There are many other rotten apples in the world, Charlie, and you will generally be disappointed when you make a hasty judgment."

In the evening, Lady Mary shewed a very funny trick to amuse the children. She took Laura Fitzroy into her dressing-room before the boys came up stairs, and she painted little doll's faces on the back of Laura's two hands,—then she put a doll's wig and bonnet over her fingers, and a doll's frock which covered her arms from the wrist to the elbow, after which she hid Laura Fitzroy behind a large screen in the drawing room, so that nothing was seen of her except her two arms standing on the table like two little live dolls. When the boys came into the room they were quite

startled at the sight of these two very little ladies, and none of them could guess who or what they were. When Lady Mary asked them a question, they nodded as if they meant to say "Yes," or if it was "No," they shook their little heads, and at last when Lady Mary played a reel they danced in time to the music, so that Charlie was more puzzled than ever.

"I think they are really alive!" he exclaimed, laughing so heartily that the tears came into his eyes.

"Yes," replied Lady Mary, "they are as much alive as you are,—go up and pinch their cheeks that you may see they have a skin like your own."

Charlie approached very cautiously, but the moment he touched the dolls, Laura shook her hands as if they were very angry at his taking the liberty of coming so near them, and in an instant she drew them in, behind the curtain, so that they disappeared, to Charlie's very great surprise.

"I think these droll little ladies are as extraordinary as any of the shows at the

fair!" said Charlie; "are they little dogs dressed up and taught to play these funny tricks, or what are they?"

In the middle of all the laughing that followed after Lady Mary showed the boys how they had been cheated, Lady Jane entered the room. "What is all this noise for?" she said, "Charlie you are getting quite vulgar with that loud way of laughing, which always gives me a headach. I am come to take you all with me, that we may have a nice game at cards. There shall be half a crown for the winner, and a barley sugar drop for whoever has the best hand. As Charlie never learnt to play, and does not know a knave when he sees one, nor a queen from a king, I shall take charge of his cards."

Lady Mary whispered something in a beseeching tone to her sister, which Charlie did not hear, but the answer was given in such a loud angry voice that it was distinct enough for every body. "Nonsense!" said Lady Jane, "do you think such a little boy as Charlie could learn a taste for

gambling, or a love of money?—it saves a great deal of trouble in amusing children to set them down to cards; and if Charlie gets too eager, as you expect, it will be all the better fun. Do not come unless you like, Charlie," added Lady Jane, seeing him hesitate, "there are plenty of little boys will be glad of this half-crown besides you." She walked away holding it up in her hand, and Lady Mary stood at Charlie's other side looking anxiously at him, but he forgot in a moment every thing except the half-crown, and darted away after Lady Jane.

The game soon became very interesting, and Charlie's heart beat and his face grew red, and his hands shook so with anxiety that he could hardly pick up the cards; at last every body had lost their lives except himself and Frank Pryse. There lay the round white half-crown ready to be picked up by the winner, and Charlie thought of twenty ways in which he meant to spend it, but he never remembered how disappointed Frank Pryse might be, nor how many pleasant ways he might have of laying out the money

also if he got it. The last hand was dealt. Lady Jane played her very best, and Charlie's eyes almost jumped out of his head with fear and anxiety; a few minutes afterwards Lady Mary heard a loud exclamation of anger and disappointment, which was followed by such crying and sobbing as it was quite frightful to hear, for Charlie had lost the game. Lady Mary continued her work for some time at the end of the room in perfect silence, and taking no notice whatever of what was going on, but at last she called out, "Charlie, do you mean to set the house afloat with all these tears? we shall certainly be drowned in a few minutes!"

"What makes you think it is Charlie?" exclaimed Lady Jane, hiding his head in her lap, "it cannot surely be Charlie, but some little naughty boy from London, who is making all this noise. I am sure my Charlie would not do such a thing for the world!"

"Jane!" said Lady Mary, in a gentle, but very earnest tone, while she rose from

her seat, and walked to the card table, "never let us teach this child to depart from truth, even in jest. No crime is so easily committed as lying; and, you know, it is one of the greatest of all offences against God and man; for there is nothing on this earth so precious as truth. All that we know of our future destiny, or of the ages that are past, depends on the evidence of truth; and nothing is so delightful as to know and to feel, that it is a God of *Truth* whom we serve. But his curse is fearfully recorded against 'him who loveth or maketh a lie;' therefore, one of the most solemn and important duties we owe to dear Charlie is, to warn him against the very possibility of uttering a falsehood."

By this time Charlie had raised up his head from Lady Jane's lap, but such a face was surely never seen upon any body before; his lips were pouting two or three inches out, his eye-brows drawn together into a frightful frown, and his cheeks and eyes as red as a lobster. "Charlie!" said Lady Mary, "you have met with a disap-

pointment, and I am sorry for it; but you have had a far greater misfortune in losing your temper than even in losing your money. I shall allow you five minutes by my watch, to recover your good humour; but if, at the end of that time you do not look quite cheerful again, I shall take you out of the room; because you are not fit company for your little cousins at present."

Lady Mary returned to her work, and laid her watch on the table, that she might see when the time had expired for Charlie to recover himself. In the mean time, Lady Jane did her best to coax him into good humour, but the more he was petted the worse he got; and, all the time, he muttered, in a low, sulky voice,

"I don't care for anybody! I want to go to bed! I wish all the little cousins were away! I do not like them!"

Frank Pryse was a very good-natured boy, and seeing Charlie so vexed, he came up to him, saying, "I shall give you the

half-crown, since you seem so disappointed at not winning it."

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed Lady Jane, eagerly, "that is a dear good boy, Frank, I shall give you another afterwards."

Instead of being obliged to his kind cousin, and feeling how undeserving he was of such a gift, the moment Frank held out the half-crown, Charlie struck a blow at him, saying, "Go away! I do not like you! I will not speak to you!"

The half-crown was knocked out of Frank's hand, and tumbled down on the floor with a great noise, rolling away to the other end of the room; and, immediately afterwards, Lady Mary rose up, without saying a word, and led Charlie up stairs, who became quiet in a moment when he saw the sad and serious face with which she looked at him.

"Alas! alas! Charlie, is this the end of a day which began so happily?" she said, as soon as they were seated in the nursery. "You had peace in your own mind this

morning; you were at peace with every one around you; and, what was best of all, you felt at peace with God; but now, what a wreck has sinful passion made of all that looked so pleasant. Poor child! it is a sad reverse; and, the worst is, to think that you have brought it on yourself, merely for a foolish half-crown, that you do not need. Jane gives you as many toys as you want, and you have already got plenty of pretty books. I cannot think what makes you so anxious for money!"

"I do not like Frank Pryse," cried Charlie, bursting into tears, and crying violently, "nor I do not like aunt Jane, nor I do not like anybody, but you, aunt Mary," he added, clasping his arms round her neck, and sobbing as if his heart would break.

"Be calm, my dear child," said Lady Mary, "we shall talk this matter over together, and that will do you good; for I wish you to be like yourself again, and to go down in half an hour, to bid your cousins good night. They will be frightened to come back, if they think you are often

in such a way as they have seen you to-night."

"No! no!" said Charlie, vehemently, I shall not go down any more. I do not like Frank Pryse. I shall never, never see him again!"

"Charlie!" interrupted Lady Mary, "do you know what makes you hate Frank Pryse? it is envy, the very feeling that Cain had towards Abel."

"Yes! but Cain murdered Abel; now, I am doing no harm in wishing never to see Frank Pryse again."

"My dear boy," said Lady Mary, "did you ever hear of a man who was able to carry an ox, because he had begun when it was a very little calf, and he got gradually accustomed to it? In the same way, if we begin with thinking nothing of little sins, we shall soon feel quite easy under the greatest offences. Frank has been very kind to you all day; but, even if he had been rude or disagreeable, you should remember he is your visitor to-night, and certainly not let the sun go down upon your

wrath. Frank Pryse came from his own comfortable home, where every body loves him, to see you, because he expected you would love one another as cousins ought to do; and all your dislike at him is on account of his winning the race in the morning, and getting the half-crown at night. It is not like a good boy, or a good Christian, to be so very selfish."

Charlie said nothing, but his lips did not pout so much as before, and the terrible frown on his eye-brows had almost totally disappeared.

"Now!" exclaimed Lady Mary, "I hope you are in a right mind again; and if so, let us pray that God will forgive you for setting your heart so much on the things of the world, and for forgetting to prefer his will to your own. And, Charlie," she added, affectionately, "let me be convinced that you have no remaining envy of Frank; pray for him when you pray for your friends, and then let us go down to wish him a cordial good night."

Charlie did as he was bid, and when he rose from his knees, one would scarcely have believed he was the same boy who had looked so sulky before, as his face was cleared up, like sunshine after thunder.

"My dear child," said Lady Mary, "before we go down stairs, I wish you to consider for a moment, very seriously, whether you feel happier now or a few minutes ago?"

"Now! now," cried Charlie. "Oh! aunt Mary! I would not be the naughty boy I was in the drawing-room, half an hour ago, for all the world."

"Then, my dearest Charlie, *always* remember, when any evil passions come into your mind, that they are a taste of the misery which wicked people feel in hell; and the peace and cheerfulness you feel now, are a taste of what the happy enjoy in heaven for ever. I have mentioned, that in a few years you are to go to school, that you may be taught how to be a learned and clever man; and if you are idle and naughty,

it is impossible to become so. In the same way, we are all sent into this world, as to a school, where we are to be prepared for heaven; and those who neglect their duties here, will not be prepared to perform the higher duties, or to enjoy the better pleasures of an eternal world."

When Charlie went down stairs, he walked kindly up to Frank Pryse, and shook hands with him, saying, "I am very glad you won the half-crown to day, for I did not deserve it. I hope, next time you come here, I shall not be so naughty as I have been to-day."

Frank Pryse embraced Charlie, and seemed to love him very much indeed. Immediately afterwards, all the other little cousins came round him, and looked quite happy that he had returned to play with them.

Lady Mary advised them to have a little blind-man's buff, and Charlie soon forgot all about the game at cards and the half-crown, till the carriage came, when every body felt sorry to part, and Frank said, he

hoped they might be allowed to come back again some day *soon*, as he had enjoyed his visit very much, and liked Charlie extremely, who was very happy when he heard him say so.

CHAPTER IX.

SUNDAY.

"THINE earthly Sabbaths, Lord, we love,
But there's a nobler rest above;
O that we might that rest attain,
From sin, from sorrow, and from pain.

"In thy blest kingdom we shall be,
From ev'ry mortal trouble free;
No sighs shall mingle with the songs,
Resounding from immortal tongues."

"WHAT day is this, Charlie?" said Lady Mary, with a cheerful smile, when he entered her dressing-room.

"Sunday!" he replied, "it is God's own day."

"Yes!" said Lady Mary, "this is that happy day in which we are to forget, as

much as possible, all things connected with this world,—to lay aside every care and every sorrow, and to live in that state of tranquillity and peace which we hope soon to enjoy for ever in the presence of God. My dear child, it is just in proportion as you enjoy the Sabbath on earth, that you are prepared to enjoy it in heaven; for those who do not really love God, find this day of rest the most fatiguing day in the whole week."

"Is that the reason," interrupted Charlie, "that aunt Jane told me she always remains two hours longer in bed on Sunday than any other day?"

"My dear Charlie! we need not inquire how any one else employs the Sabbath, for our chief concern is, to see that we enjoy it ourselves, and that we are truly grateful to God for giving us such a foretaste of heaven," said Lady Mary. "Many people waste much of their own time by watching to see how other people waste theirs. But let us rather show that to those who love the Lord our God, his Sabbath is not a day

of mere idle repose, nor even a day of wearisome drudgery in his service, but that it is indeed and in truth, the busiest, as well as the happiest day of our existence."

"But how shall we do that?" said Charlie. "What do good people do all Sunday?"

"In the first place," replied Lady Mary, "we must search the secret corners of our hearts to see what sins we are indulging in, and drag them out to the light, by confessing them before God, who knows them already, but who must yet be told of them in a voice of sorrow, before we shall be healed. Then we should look back upon our whole lives, and thank God for whatever has happened to us,—for our sorrows, because He has attended to our real interests, instead of only consulting our wishes,—and in thanking Him for all our past happiness, we should especially be grateful that it has not been such as to take away our thoughts and affections from heavenly things. But above all, let us praise His name continually, for the redemption of our souls from

sin, and for every opportunity we enjoy of being instructed in the ways of holiness."

"Then I should thank God for giving me an aunt Mary to teach me," said Charlie, putting his arms round her neck, and kissing Lady Mary affectionately. The tears dropt from her eyes upon Charlie's hand, when he said this, but Lady Mary could not answer him for some moments.

"It is one of the happiest duties of this day, to converse with you, my dearest Charlie," said she in a very low voice. "God seems to have answered my prayers already, when I see you here, as I have so often wished to do; and when you listen to me so attentively, while I endeavour to describe all the happiness which is to be found in true religion."

"Tell me more about it," cried Charlie earnestly. "I like to hear all you say."

"My dearest child! words seem hardly able to express all which I wish on the subject," continued Lady Mary.—"When I speak from my heart, and try to tell you the happiness I experience my-

self, all that I say seems cold and lifeless, compared with what I feel. If any one is kind to me, and my heart is warmed with thinking of it, I remember there is One who loves me still better. When any thing makes me happy, I reflect that there is yet greater happiness prepared for me, which is never to end. When I admire any one who is good, or generous, or charitable, or kind, I think of Jesus Christ, who was perfect in all these things. When I see the glories of the sun, shining in the day, or the moon and stars by night, I consider, if God gives so much to a sinful world, what will be the brightness of that eternal scene to which I am hastening. And when I talk to you now, Charlie, and feel the happiness of loving you, my heart rejoices to believe that we shall love each other more perfectly hereafter, and that every anxious feeling I ever had for you will, at last, be ended by our meeting together before the throne of our Father in heaven, and rejoicing in his presence for ever. Oh, Charlie! what would it profit us, to gain

the whole world, if we lost such hopes, and such feelings as these?"

"I wonder every body does not think the same," said he, "for I am sure what you say must be very true."

"Remember, my dear boy, who is the prince of this world, and what is the broad and easy road in which you and I would both have been walking, if God had not led us to the new and living way," replied Lady Mary. "It is not by our own choice that we are so much happier than many other people; but it is the particular mercy of God to us, and therefore, when we see any person who does not know our heavenly Father as we do, let us feel the deepest pity for them, and pray for all those who do not pray for themselves, entreating that God will be as merciful to them as he has been to us. We were once like brands in the fire, Charlie; and it was not you who first asked to be preserved from it, but it was God who snatched you from destruction by his own free choice. How wonderful, my dear child, that amongst the hun-

dreds and thousands who are left to perish in their sins, you and I should be thought of and cared for, and adopted into the family of God."

"I love God very much for being so good to me," exclaimed Charlie, "and I wish to love him still more."

"I wish the same for myself," replied Lady Mary, "and as the more we know of God, the more we love him, our best plan will be to read the Bible carefully, as well as to pray frequently. It is not enough, in studying the word of God, merely to know what age Abraham was when he died, or what was the story of Joseph, or how many tribes of Israelites there were; but you must also read the Bible, to hear from God why he is good enough to pardon *your own sins*, and to give *you* eternal life."

"Shall I find all that in the New Testament?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," replied Lady Mary, "and quite as much in the Old Testament; for the principal subject of them both is, the death and resurrection of our Saviour. That is the

key to the whole Bible, and if you keep it constantly in your mind, every thing becomes plain to you at once."

"But when is Jesus Christ mentioned in the Old Testament?" asked Charlie.

"So much is told of Him there," replied Lady Mary, "that when you have finished reading the Psalms and the Prophets with me, you will be convinced that every thing which our divine Saviour did upon earth, was known hundreds of years before he was born."

"How was that possible?" exclaimed Charlie. "For instance now, I do not know what will happen to me next year; and last week, I never thought mamma would go away, and leave me with you and aunt Jane."

"No! nor nobody else had the least idea of it either," answered Lady Mary; "but think how surprised you would be, if I could take down one of these old books from the shelf, and show you that somebody, who has been dead many years, knew that this was to happen, and wrote it all

in a book, before you were born. How astonished you would be, and how wonderful we should think it, that the author knew so much. But yet the memoirs of Jesus Christ were written ages before he appeared in the world. To show you this, we may now read the 53d chapter of Isaiah, which was extant seven hundred and twelve years before Christ, and yet it tells all the circumstances of his death and burial, as exactly as if the author had been present."

"I would like to see that very much!" said Charlie, "it must be so curious."

"It was that chapter, you will remember, which converted the Ethiopian, who is mentioned in the Acts," continued Lady Mary; "and there was once a very wicked man, called Lord Rochester, who was advised to read it, and he felt so astonished to see how exactly it related every circumstance, as it afterwards happened, in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew, that he became fond of studying the Bible ever afterwards, and at last, by the mercy of God, he was converted to be a good Christian, prais-

ing God to his dying hour, for *this* blessed book, which we are now going to read, Charlie. I must show you, also, the twenty-second Psalm, where the very words are mentioned that Christ was afterwards to say on the cross, and where it was told that his hands and his feet were to be pierced, and that the people were to cast lots for his garments. But it would take days and weeks to explain sufficiently how every part of the Old Testament is filled with prophecies of Christ, which become clearer and clearer, the more nearly we approach the time of his coming,—just in the same way that you observe the morning twilight become brighter and brighter, which assures you that the sun itself will soon arrive to dispel all remaining darkness from the earth."

After breakfast, as Lady Jane had not yet appeared, Charlie and Lady Mary proceeded to church. The path which led to it was delightful, for it wound up the steep side of a glen, where the trees almost met over their heads, and cast a dark shadow on the turf beneath; a rapid river dashed and

foamed a long far below them; and the banks were scattered over with a rich profusion of violets and harebells, which enamelled the ground, while the wild roses and honeysuckles mingled their branches with the golden blossoms of the whin. Blackbirds and thrushes raised their tuneful voices above the murmur of the stream; and the rustling of the leaves in the summer gale added life and animation to the scene.

At length a new prospect burst upon Charlie's astonished eyes. The dark shadows of the glen were exchanged for a blaze of sunshine, and he emerged upon the summit of a lofty rock which overhung the sea. A charming summer-house had been erected here, from whence they could see the whole surrounding country, and Lady Mary proposed to rest in it after their fatiguing scramble up the glen. Hundreds of vessels were careering past, with their white and flowing sails extended to the breeze. Scarcely a ripple varied the blue expanse of the ocean; and the rocks rose from its shore

to the heighth of several hundred feet. The sound of the church bells was heard faintly in the distance; and crowds of country people were to be seen, in their gay Sunday attire, hastening along the beach, or standing in groups round the entrance to the house of God.

"One might suppose that God had left a scene like this upon the earth, Charlie, to give us some faint idea of what paradise would have been if we had not destroyed it by our sins," said Lady Mary. "Our Father in heaven once looked upon this world, and declared it was good; but he has never done so again. We brought ruin and desolation into it; and now there is only one thing that his holy eye can look upon with pleasure,—it is a broken and a contrite heart. Let ours be humbled this day before him; and let us also feel, like David, 'I am glad that it has been said unto me this day, Go ye up into the house of the Lord.'"

"What a pretty church it is!" exclaimed Charlie. "The walls of ivy, and the

steeple so very tall,—it is just like a long finger pointing up to the skies; and then these yew-trees look so very dark, as if they were a funeral procession; and I could fancy all the other gay-looking trees were dressed for a ball."

"Very true," said Lady Mary. "I am rather fond of evergreens in a church-yard, Charlie, because they always give me an idea of religious happiness. They are less showy in summer than the bright flowers and foliage of the season; but when the others are laid low in the dust, and scattered beneath our feet, these continue as fresh and as bright as before."

"What a number of grave-stones there are in the church-yard," continued Charlie; "I never saw so many in my life before."

"Yes," answered Lady Mary; "many, many generations have gone to that old church, as we are doing now, and are laid beside it in their tombs, waiting for the time when they shall be summoned to answer before God for the manner in which they listened to his message of mercy. Some are

there, Charlie, who had not lived as many years in the world as you have done, but now they are wiser than the wisest man in the world, and happier than the happiest."

"Why does God take people out of the world so very young sometimes?" inquired Charlie.

"Every one has lived long enough as soon as he is fit to die; and God only knows when that is the case," answered Lady Mary. "Now, my dear boy, let us attend to what we are taught this day in the way we shall wish to have done, when our bodies are laid beside these in the grave, and our souls are called before the judgment-seat of God."

"Yes, aunt Mary," said Charlie, "I shall try to listen and to understand every thing that is said."

"Perhaps you may be disappointed at first," replied Lady Mary, "because there are hundreds to be taught besides you, most of whom are older and wiser, so that much of what is said must be addressed to them. I require to be taught a great deal

myself, and shall need it as long as I live, just as you do; but, if we attend very closely, our understandings will be enlarged every day more and more."

"I shall do my best, then," said Charlie; "but, very often, when I am trying to listen, something else comes into my head, whether I will or no, that takes away my thoughts from what the clergyman is saying."

"That is what many people feel besides you, Charlie," answered Lady Mary; "and it used to be said, that, if any one's prayers could be written down, and all the wandering thoughts that come into their heads were interlined, it would be a sad thing to see how foolish we all are in the midst of our most solemn duties."

"I am glad that I told you the truth, then," said Charlie, "for I was afraid you would be surprised and angry at me for not being able to attend better."

"I can neither be surprised nor angry at any thing, Charlie; for I know my own heart, and can remember the time when it

was in all things the same as yours," replied Lady Mary. "If it has in any degree been changed, the praise be to God, for it is his doing. I recollect being struck with a curious remark of some old author lately. He said he wished that the moment people's minds became absent in church, their bodies were to disappear also. And often since then, when my mind is going to wander, I bring it back by thinking how ashamed I would be if all the congregation saw how inattentive I am; and yet my heavenly Father knows it, which is of far more real importance."

CHAPTER X.

THE ADVENTURE.

"Charlie," said Lady Jane, as soon as he returned from church, "I am glad you are come home at last, as I wanted to ask if you would like to take a drive in the donkey-cart with me. You need not look at Mary, for surely there is no harm in an airing; one must do *something* on Sunday."

"But, Jane," said Lady Mary, "we have six days of the week for harmless amusements and useful occupations: why should not this day be entirely sanctified to God? There are employments enough for it: in reading what the wisest men have said and thought upon the subject of reli-

gion, in visiting all who are distressed, in teaching those who are ignorant, in admiring the wonderful works of God, in praying for the happiness of all those we love, in anticipating the glories of a future state, in studying the word of God, and in attending his holy ordinances."

"Well! perhaps we may go to chapel at Bradley, if I have time; but as for your favourite preacher at Ashgrove, I never could endure him, he has such an odious manner."

"So have many of the greatest people that ever preached," replied Lady Mary. "It is even supposed that St. Paul himself had a bad manner. But, my dear Jane, I would as soon think of throwing aside a book because the binding did not please me, or of shutting my ears against a fine singer on account of his awkward appearance, as of not listening to the message of salvation because it was ill delivered. I am only thankful that the fault is no worse; for it appears to be our duty always to attend our parish church, whatever the

preacher is, rather than break a plain commandment of God, by making our servants and horses work on the Sabbath-day, or by remaining at home, which is still worse, since we are desired on no account 'to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.' If our taste is offended, we only testify the more obedience to God by going. The prayers and psalms must always be delightful to us; and a well-ordered mind will have ample food for meditation in the texts of Scripture which are occasionally quoted during service."

"Now, Master Charlie, after this little sermonette from The Reverend aunt Mary, what do you please to do?" said Lady Jane, taking him upon her knee; "I am going to the gardens at Bradley to buy fruit, and to gather a nosegay; there you shall see a pond full of gold fish, and a whole flock of piping bullfinches; after which we may perhaps pay a few visits, and return in time for dinner; it will be a charming little frolic for us, but if you prefer a *long* walk, and a *long sermon*, I have not a word more to say."

Lady Mary was tying on her bonnet while this was said, but she turned round with a very anxious and earnest look at Charlie when Lady Jane stopped speaking.

"The bells are ringing for church, so it is time to set off," said she; "my dear child, are you coming with me?"

Charlie's face turned very red; but he made no answer, and did not stir from his seat.

There was no expression of anger on Lady Mary's face, when she left the room by herself, but such a look of sorrow as Charlie had never seen before; and often, during the day, he remembered it again, which made his heart feel heavy, to think how he had grieved her.

Lady Jane's donkeys were very lazy, and it required all his strength, as well as her's, with long sticks in their hands, to beat them on; sometimes they ran to the side of the road, and nearly upset the carriage in a ditch; at other times they rattled furiously down the hills, till Charlie felt the jolting so rough, that his teeth chattered against

one another, and his bones all ached; the fruit at Bradley was scarcely ripe when they reached the garden; the day was so sultry, too, that all the gold fish were hiding themselves in the bottom of the pond; and not one of the piping bullfinches chose to sing.

"This is very hard indeed," exclaimed Lady Jane peevishly; so many disappointments in one day are really not to be borne."

"It is only aunt Mary who is *always* pleased *whatever* happens," thought Charlie, "I dare say she is now singing the psalms in church, and will soon be walking home through the pretty glen."

After calling on a number of old ladies, most of whom were at home, and all of whom Charlie thought extremely tiresome, he stepped into the donkey-cart once more with Lady Jane, and had proceeded towards home, as far as a high bank near the sea, when she suddenly exclaimed, "How very dark it is; I am terrified we shall have thunder immediately; was there ever such

an unlucky being on earth as I am? what shall we do? the only shelter within miles of us, is that summer-house on the rock that you went to this morning."

At that moment a bright flash of lightning glared in their faces, followed by a burst of thunder, and Lady Jane, in an agony of fright, threw away the reins, and covered her face with both her hands; instantly the donkeys set off at full speed towards the summer-house, wheeling the carriage along the very edge of the precipice, so that it appeared every instant on the point of falling over; and Lady Jane, seeing the danger so imminent, jumped out herself, leaving Charlie alone in this perilous situation.

"I shall be killed," thought he; "and oh! how sad a thing it is to die this day, when I have broken the Sabbath; mamma will be very sorry when she hears of it; and how grieved aunt Mary will feel: but I deserve it all for not remembering which is my best aunt."

After the evening church was over, Lady

Mary walked towards home; the air felt oppressively hot; large heavy clouds hung directly over her head, indicating an approaching storm; the birds were silent, and the animals were all gathered together in terrified groups, or else they were madly careering round the fields with every expression of affright.

"No wonder these poor creatures are alarmed," thought Lady Mary; "they cannot know, as I do, that they are watched over and protected by an Almighty arm, without whose permission a single sparrow cannot fall to the ground, and by whom the very hairs on our heads are numbered."

The crash of the thunder, and the incessant flashes of lightning, caused Lady Mary to hasten her steps to the summer-house; and long before she reached it, a torrent of rain and hail poured out their fury and drenched her completely through. On entering the little pavilion, great was her astonishment to see Lady Jane lying along the bench, and hiding

her eyes with a large shawl which she had thrown over her head.

"Jane!" she cried, "my dear Jane, how came you here; and where is Charlie?"

"Don't speak to me," exclaimed Lady Jane, "I am out of my senses with fright; such a storm! I have seen nothing of Charlie since the donkeys ran off, and I jumped out of the carriage; we must look for him as soon as the lightning is over, but I would not open my eyes now for the whole world."

Lady Mary made no answer, but rushed instantly out of the pavilion; the storm seemed to have redoubled its violence, but she did not heed it; and though the lightning might almost be felt, it was so vivid, she was scarcely conscious of its brilliancy; with great difficulty she found the track of the carriage-wheels on the grass, and she rapidly pursued the course of it, while she trembled to perceive how nearly it had grazed along the edge of the rock; with eager eyes, she glanced from bank to bank, and from rock to rock, but not a glimpse

of Charlie was to be seen. At length, a fearful sight presented itself to Lady Mary's terrified sight; near the bottom of a tremendous precipice lay the carriage of Lady Jane, broken into a thousand shivers, and the unfortunate donkeys apparently dead; still Lady Mary did not lose her presence of mind; where was Charlie? his hat lay crushed beneath the carriage; but when she reached the summit of the bank, who can tell the rapture of Lady Mary to find him there, laid upon the grass, and scarcely at all hurt? She clasped him in her arms, and carried him back to the summer-house in a paroxysm of joy that no words can describe; but, as the poet says, "our thoughts are heard in heaven," and God saw that her's were full of gratitude and praise for his merciful preservation of Charlie.

"It was a lucky chance indeed," cried Lady Jane, when she had heard her sister's agitated recital of all that had occurred.

"Chance!" said Lady Mary, "there is no such thing as chance in the world; does

the sun perform its daily round in the heavens by chance? or could the smallest insect that crawls on the earth be formed by chance? oh, Jane! let us never, on any occasion, forget what should be our greatest pleasure in all we enjoy, and our chief comfort in every danger; that it is not sent us by *chance*, but by God himself. He has a wise purpose in every thing; and having shown Charlie to-day how uncertain his life is, and yet mercifully prolonged it, how strongly does that call upon him to devote all his remaining days more entirely to his service."

"Another flash!" exclaimed Lady Jane; "will this dreadful storm never be over? there seems no end of it; what shall we do?"

"It is indeed very sublime," said Lady Mary, in a solemn tone; "how the sea is occasionally lighted up like a sheet of flame, and the whole earth seems shaken with the thunder. I never feel my own insignificance so completely as in a scene like this; how consoling it is to know that we are in

the safe keeping of him in whose eye no human soul is insignificant; who rides in the whirlwind, and who directs *this* storm."

"I would give a hundred guineas to be at home," exclaimed Lady Jane impatiently; "this is really almost like the day of judgment."

"It certainly may remind us of the time when the heavens shall pass away with fervent heat, and the earth be dissolved and burnt up," replied Lady Mary; "let us remember how soon that day may overtake us. Christ once came upon the earth with all the gentleness of a summer shower; but if we neglect his mercy, he will be armed, on his next appearance, with the awful thunders of Almighty vengeance. The Lord offers to be our refuge *now*, if we ask him; but soon (oh! how soon no one can tell) we may call upon the rocks to fall on us, and the hills to cover us from the wrath of the Almighty; but we shall then call in vain." Lady Jane turned impatiently away, and Lady Mary gazed to-

wards the contending clouds, while she repeated to Charlie, in a tone of impressive earnestness, these lines:

When shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead.

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay;
Be thou, oh Christ! the sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away.

Charlie looked at his two aunts; Lady Jane was cowering into the farthest corner of the summer-house,—her white face distorted with terror; while Lady Mary's shone with serenity and cheerfulness.

"If this were really the day of judgment," thought Charlie, "both my aunts would perhaps feel as they do now, and I am to choose which I wish to resemble." He crept closer to Lady Mary, and took hold of her hand.

"You are not frightened, my dear boy?" she said, gently; this is nothing to the storms that often rage in hot climates. I am

told that where your papa is, there are hail-stones as large as pigeon's eggs, and the lightning is twice as vivid. Did you ever hear of a great philosopher who invented an instrument by which he could cause thunder and lightning whenever he chose? he was called Dr. Franklin, and some day soon I shall read you a very entertaining account of his experiments.

"The storm is over at last!" cried Lady Jane, darting out of the summer-house with an exclamation of joy, "what a relief! I never felt more delighted at any thing in my life!"

The whole party set off immediately, to walk home, soon after which, the sun broke out in its brightest glory,—every leaf was spangled with glittering drops from the recent storm,—the air seemed to be perfumed with the odour of the surrounding flowers,—and a rainbow, forming a complete arch in the sky, was reflected again on the bosom of the ocean.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Jane, "life would really be too happy, if it were not

for a thunder-storm occasionally,—the very birds seem to be rejoicing that it is over; what a chorus they are making,—one would think they were practising all the difficult passages of their songs,—suppose we encore them, Charlie!"

"I never heard any thing more delightful!" said Lady Mary, stopping to listen.

> "They speak their Maker as they can,
> But want, and ask the tongue of man."

"After all! the piping bull-finches are better," continued Lady Jane; "these thrushes and blackbirds have something vulgar and common in their notes."

"It is not easy to improve upon nature," replied Lady Mary, smiling; "I never saw artificial flowers that I liked so well as real ones, nor rouge that was equal to a natural colour; but such paltry imitations of the works of God sometimes deceive us for a time, just as artificial happiness is frequently preferred to what is real, by those who do not consider well before they choose between them."

CHAPTER XI.

SUNDAY NIGHT.

In the evening, Lady Mary took from a drawer the most beautiful book that Charlie had ever seen,—the binding was of red morocco; and when it was opened, to his great surprise, all the leaves were made of coloured cotton instead of paper,—there were pages of pink, blue, yellow, and white muslin, upon which were stuck the most beautiful painted pictures, all relating to some story mentioned in the Bible.

"Charlie!" said Lady Mary, "I have for some years past employed myself in making this book for you; and most of the pictures are my own drawing; but I do

not mean it to be entirely your's, till you understand it perfectly; therefore, if you like, we shall examine some of the paintings every Sunday evening, till it is quite plain and distinct, after which the whole book shall be your own property, to be examined whenever you please."

Charlie thanked Lady Mary over and over again, and he felt very happy indeed at the thoughts of having such a nice beautiful book all to himself. The first picture he opened, was little Samuel at his prayers, and underneath Lady Mary had printed very neatly, this text, "they that seek God *early* shall find him." The next was little Moses in the bulrushes, and Charlie thought how sorry his poor mamma must have been to leave him there, for nothing is so sad as to see those we love quite helpless, while they are surrounded with danger and sorrow; but there was another picture in the next page in which Pharaoh's daughter was seen giving little Moses to be nursed by his own mother. When Charlie saw how happy she looked, he thought that perhaps God

had heard her prayers, when she was in distress, and been graciously pleased to answer them in this way.

"Here you see Jacob getting his father's blessing, by pretending to be Esau," said Lady Mary; "it was a very dreadful sin; because he first told one lie, and then he was led on and on, till he told a great many more,—this is always the case, Charlie, when people once venture to say what is untrue. Even if it is possible to make any body believe what is not the case, without speaking with your tongue, that is a lie in the sight of God, as you see here, that Jacob is making Isaac feel his hands, that he may suppose they are Esau's."

"And look at his poor blind father, who cannot see him," cried Charlie, indignantly; "oh! he was very, *very* wicked, indeed."

"How curious it is that the very same trick was played upon him afterwards," said Lady Mary, "and he well deserved it: do you remember in the Bible, when Jacob wanted to marry Rachel, it turned out that he had been cheated into taking Leah,

whom he did not like; and you know he was very angry, but he should have remembered that he had done the very same thing himself. It was his mother, Rebekah, who taught him how to impose upon his poor father, and it was Laban who contrived to cheat Jacob; so as Rebekah and Laban were brother and sister, I think they must have been very like one another."

"So they are!" exclaimed Charlie, "it is curious to see people behave so much in the same way."

"Yes!" replied Lady Mary, "and when Esau, whose picture you see here, sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, he paid almost as dearly for it as Adam did for the forbidden fruit: all the characters mentioned in Scripture have some resemblance to those we have seen, or read of elsewhere, the wicked as well as the righteous; and at the time Cain slew Abel, two distinct classes were begun upon the earth, which have continued in it ever since,—the godly and the ungodly."

"I never like to read about Abel being

killed, because I am so sorry for him," said Charlie, looking at the picture of Abel's death, which was in his book.

"And yet, Charlie! Abel had the happiness of being the first redeemed soul that went from earth to heaven;—was not that an honour more glorious than the longest life could have given him? Many worldly men are ready to lay down their very existence, that they may be always remembered and celebrated on the earth; but such fame as theirs is sometimes not more desirable than that of Pontius Pilate, who is mentioned every time the creed is read, by a hundred voices at once. Let us rather seek, like Abel, for a place in the remembrance of God, that we may be owned and acknowledged by Him, when the dead, small and great, are assembled before the throne of His judgment, and when every tongue that was ever created shall unite in acknowledging the justice of God's decrees towards us."

When Charlie went to bed at night, Lady Jane was always asleep on her sofa; but Lady Mary usually accompanied him

to the nursery, and talked over all that had happened during the day; remarking whatever he had done in the course of it that she thought right; and telling him, in the gentlest manner possible, if she had observed any thing amiss. "Not that I wish, at present, to reprove you," she said, "but merely that you may remember to mention and confess even the very smallest of your sins to God, that he may see you are sensible of his mercy in forgiving them."

"My dear child!" she said, on Sunday evening, "I was sorry when you preferred your amusement to your duty, this morning; but, if you learn to love God more entirely, that will teach you to care for no pleasure that interferes with serving him. It is not the bondage of a slave that God desires of us, but the love of a son; and I hope, at last, you will feel such gratitude for his goodness, that you will really think one day in the house of God is better than a thousand; and that it is indeed better to be a door-keeper there, than a dweller in the tents of sin. Till you really know this

from happy experience, I would not, for the world, that religion was always *pinching* and *restraining* you. People who have merely *a very little* religion, see nothing but the sacrifices it calls for, and they know none of its enjoyments; but the Spirit of God at last brings us to feel, as the saints did of old, that they only rejoiced to have worldly pleasures or possessions in their power, because it was something they could despise for Christ's sake."

"I think it was very wrong of aunt Jane to take me in the carriage," said Charlie, "instead of letting me go to church with you."

"It was your own free choice, my dear boy," replied Lady Mary; "and though it is difficult to say 'no!' when people offer what is kindly meant, yet we must do our duty, when it may be painful, as much as when it is easy."

"You should tell aunt Jane not to take airings on Sunday, instead of going to church," persisted Charlie, "it is a great sin to do it."

"There is no use for thinking what Jane ought to have done; we need not either find fault with people nor copy them, but look into our own Bibles, where there is a plain direction for keeping the Sabbath holy. You cannot learn too early to judge for yourself, what is right and wrong to be done on that day. In some parts of America there is a chain drawn across the streets every Sunday, that no person may be able to take out their carriage and horses on such a sacred occasion; and, you know, the Jews were not even allowed to carry a burden into the streets of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Now, why should not we, from love to God, keep it as holy as they did from obedience? For instance, if I desired you this evening to dance a reel, you would immediately reply, 'that would be breaking the Sabbath day;' or if I brought you an idle story-book, which might do very well on a week-day, you ought to say, 'thank you, aunt Mary, I shall keep this till to-morrow;' and even if I gave you a book of history, saying, 'this is all true,

so you may read it on Sunday,' I hope you would remember to think, 'There are six days in the week in which I may read history; but my thoughts, words, and actions, are all for God to-day; and whatever takes me off from thinking of him, is wrong.'"

"But, aunt Mary! you would never tell me to do any thing sinful," said Charlie, laughing; "I cannot suppose such a thing!"

"No person in the world is always right," replied Lady Mary; "and when my dear Charlie is a grown up man, he will see many whom he loves and respects, doing things which must not be copied. How little could Adam have foreseen that his wife, whom he loved and respected, would lead him into sin. And we are too often beset by friends who would mislead us, as he was misled; and by pleasures which might almost be said to have that inscription on them, 'Ye shall not eat of them, neither shall ye touch them, lest ye die.'"

"You told me yesterday, that it was

Eve who added these words, 'neither shall ye touch it,'" said Charlie; "I suppose she wanted to make out as if God had been more severe than he really was."

"Yes," replied Lady Mary, "it is a sin to exaggerate; and you see it was the first that Eve committed. St. Augustine used to say, that there is in every body a serpent, an Eve, and an Adam; our foolish wishes are like the serpent to tempt us; then, our desires are excited like Eve's; and, last of all, our reason gives way, like Adam. But there is a sure remedy provided for this sad evil. We see that, though Adam was put in the right path to heaven, he could not walk there *alone;* far less can we; but Christ, our merciful Saviour, is ready and willing to lead us there."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHOICE.

The morning at last came when Charlie was to declare which aunt he preferred; and on entering the drawing-room, before breakfast, Lady Jane was sitting there alone.

"Charlie is my darling," she said, singing an old song to him, which she was very fond of. "You are to be my own boy after to-day," she continued, covering him with kisses; "and we shall have no more aunt Marys to teaze us with lessons; but fun and holidays, from morning till night, shall be the order of the day, as long as you live. Mary and I agreed that we

were both to prepare some present for you to-day, so here is mine, a nice large plum-cake, covered with sugar, and a copy of Mother Bunch's Fairy Tales. But now, remember, if you do not choose to belong to me the very first moment you are asked, you shall never see these pretty things again, and I shall never speak to you, nor be kind to you afterwards. However, it is nonsense to talk this way, as I know you like me a hundred thousand times better than aunt Mary."

Charlie did not know what to answer, and was rather glad when the housekeeper came up to know what was to be ordered for dinner, as Lady Jane immediately left the room to give directions, and he slipped away to aunt Mary. In his hurry, he ran into her room without knocking at the door first, and was surprised to see her kneeling at prayers, and her eyes were streaming with tears.

The moment Lady Mary observed Charlie, she covered her face with her pocket-handkerchief, and continued silently en-

gaged in prayer, for some time, while he sat quietly down, and waited till his aunt was done. Her face was restored to perfect cheerfulness when she rose from her knees, and she folded her arms round Charlie with an expression of unspeakable affection on her countenance, though some moments elapsed before her voice could articulate what she had to say. At last, Lady Mary spoke in a tone so low that Charlie could hardly hear what she said. "My dear child," she began, "God only knows whether this is the last time I am ever to address you upon serious subjects or not! I have prayed that whatever happens to-day may be for your good, and I feel sure that the Almighty will direct you aright. There is no situation on earth in which God's power cannot keep you from evil; and though I have wished, only *too* earnestly, to take charge of you myself, yet my care is not necessary if God's Spirit dwells in your heart, and my instructions may be spared if you attend closely to those of the Bible; whether God

gives you to me or takes you away, he knows what is best. I seek not my own happiness, but *your's*, Charlie! and though you heard Jane say to me last night that I must teach you no more after her reign begins,—oh! remember that no power upon earth can prevent me from praying night and day, that the best blessing of God may continually attend you. She has already shewn you what her presents are, and here are mine. This watch belonged to your grand-papa, and while it was his it pointed to many happy hours spent in the service of God; but now he is gone to that place where time shall be no more, and where he awaits, in everlasting blessedness, the hour when we shall also join him in singing the praises of our great and most merciful God. Here is also a Bible which I have long promised to give you, and in receiving it, my dear child! remember that its contents are the best gift of God to us,—that the happiest of the human race are those who understand and value it most, and that it were better for any man never to have been born

than to read it with indifference. Keep both these presents, Charlie, whether you remain with me or not, and be assured that nothing can change my affection for you, or make me cease to love you with my whole heart." Lady Mary once more clasped Charlie in her arms, and after kissing him, she seemed unable any longer to restrain her tears, so she left the room. Now Aunt Jane had kissed Charlie so often that it wearied him, but when Lady Mary did it this time, his heart was melted with emotion, and he thought that surely there was nobody in the whole world so good and so kind as aunt Mary.

During breakfast Charlie had his tea and toast as usual, but Lady Jane contrived to slip a large piece of sugar into his mouth when Lady Mary was not looking. Afterwards she gave him some morsels of veal pie, and an immense tea-spoonful of marmalade; but Charlie was not hungry because he was agitated with thinking, that the moment breakfast was over he must tell which of his aunts he preferred.

At last the time he dreaded so much was come, and Charlie was placed in a chair between his two aunts, that he might hear what they chose to say before he finally decided which was best.

"Now fix at once, Charlie!" exclaimed Lady Jane, impatiently, "it is nonsense for you to pretend to hesitate, when I have promised you a whole holiday every day. You shall have a swing in the garden as high as the house; your nursery shall be like a toy-shop; you shall order your own dinner always; you shall have as many fine clothes as you like; we shall be laughing and joking from morning till night; I shall teach you how to be rich and great, and every body that sees you will say, 'What a pretty *good* boy that is!'"

"Charlie!" said Lady Mary, "I do not ask you to make haste, but to think very *very* seriously what you are doing. I need not say how anxious I shall feel to make you happy, but that is not to be done by mere indulgence and idleness. I shall talk to you, and read to you, and hear you your

lessons, and help you whenever you wish to do good, and amuse you during play-hours; but as soon as you are naughty, Charlie, I must tell you of it, and endeavour to correct you; because my first wish will be, to make you fit to meet your mamma when she comes home, and fit to meet your God when you die."

"I want to live with both my aunts," cried Charlie, "and I will not go away from either aunt Jane or aunt Mary."

"It is very right to love us both, but we cannot take charge of you together," said Lady Mary; "you could not both enjoy a holiday and say your lessons; you could not eat plum-cake, and afterwards be hungry for plain wholesome food; and you cannot hear yourself praised every day for being pretty and good, and yet keep your heart humble before God."

"There is a text in the Bible that sounds very like what you say," replied Charlie, "you cannot serve both God and mammon."

"Yes, my dear child," said Lady Mary,

"to serve mammon means, to be always doing what you like yourself and not what pleases God; to try to be rich and great, instead of seeking to be wise and good; and to endeavour to make every body praise you and think much of you, instead of wishing all men to remember, that it is only God's Spirit in your heart that can make you better than the naughtiest boy in the world."

"We must not let aunt Mary tease us any more about being naughty," said Lady Jane; "you are the best of men and the dearest of little boys; so if you come with me, we shall soon forget that there is such a thing possible as being naughty or unhappy at all."

"It is only in heaven that we can ever do so," replied Lady Mary, "and it is to prepare Charlie for that land where no one is ever sad or wicked that I am now so anxious to tell him of his faults, and to remind him that, though in ourselves we can do no good thing, God will work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure. Oh!

if any one knew the happiness of loving God, they would desire nothing better for ever; it is heaven already begun in the soul."

"How curious it is," said Charlie in a hesitating voice, "that aunt Jane always says *she* knows how to be happiest, and she tells me that you cannot enjoy yourself at all!"

"Suppose, Charlie, that some day or other you had gone down to the bottom of a dark deep coal pit," said Lady Mary, "and that there you found a little boy who had never been out of it, would not you pity him, and tell him of the bright sun he had never seen, and of the sweet flowers and the refreshing breezes that were so delightful above, and would you not try if he could be persuaded to come up and enjoy them? But suppose he answered, that some person had assured him it was much pleasanter and happier below, and begged of you to remain there *always* along with him, how would you hate the very thought of leaving what you knew to be so much bet-

ter, and how astonished you would feel at his preferring the darkness and misery of such a place to the light and glory of the cheerful day !"

" Yes !" said Charlie, " I would not stay down a moment with such a stupid foolish boy as that."

" Well," continued Lady Mary, " when I see any one who prefers the poor, trifling pleasures of this world, to the happiness of serving God, I feel exactly as you would do if you saw the little boy in the coal-pit. I would give the world to make them know the pleasures that I enjoy, and I think to myself, if they once tried the peace and happiness of living to God, they could never afterwards be satisfied with any thing else."

" Charlie !" exclaimed Lady Jane, in a waxing voice, " cannot you look back, and remember who has been kindest to you ever since you came here, and who has made you happiest ? I am sure, then, you will not listen another minute to Mary."

" Well ! my dear boy !" said Lady Mary,

" all I ask of you is, to look back, as Jane desires, on the past week, and to think, as she tells you, *when you have been happiest.* I leave out of the question at present, the precious hopes of a future state, which are worth more than all that this world can offer; and I ask you to pause, and reflect deeply and seriously, what feelings you had during the past week, that you would wish to have again, and when it is that you have really felt most dull or unhappy."

A long silence ensued,—for Charlie covered his face with his hands, and seemed to be considering. At length he slowly rose from his seat.

" Charlie! you are going the wrong way," cried Lady Jane, hastily. " I am here!"

But Charlie was going *right*, for he threw himself into the arms of Lady Mary, and hid his head upon her shoulder.

" God be praised!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears of joy, and clasping him to her heart.

" The child is mad!" cried Lady Jane.

"I never knew such a thing! Well, Master Charlie, I hope you will repent of this as long as you live. I am not at all sorry, so you need not suppose me in the least disappointed; you were become exceedingly troublesome, and I should soon have tired of you. Children are very amusing for a little while, but they always get spoilt at last, and when the novelty was a little worn off, I should have hated the sight of you. Indeed, I intended to have sent you away to school very soon, as you were getting so vulgar and noisy. Good bye, Master Charlie, for I never intend to take the least notice of you again, and I hope your whole life will be as dull and tiresome as you deserve."

Charlie clung closer to aunt Mary, when he saw the red, angry face with which Lady Jane spoke to him, and the furious looks she gave him. But in a short time he thought no more of them, and every day of his life afterwards, Charlie had cause to rejoice that he had chosen as he did,—for he grew in grace, as he grew in years, and

felt that he had indeed preferred that good part which should never be taken from him, and that happy, *most happy* is he whose God is the Lord, for his "path is like the morning light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day."

I hope every little child who reads this book would have decided as Charlie did. We are all our lives choosing between two things, from the moment we awaken in the morning, and *choose* whether we shall rise and be active, or lie slothfully in bed. We *choose* whether to be in good humour or in bad humour,—whether to be busy or idle.—whether we shall love the world, and the things of the world, or seek after God. May the Almighty Father himself direct our choice on all occasions, and teach us, like Charlie, to prefer wisdom to folly,—

and virtue, though accompanied with self-denial, to all the pleasures of vice. In short, always to know, which is A GOOD AUNT, and which is A BAD AUNT.

FINIS.

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