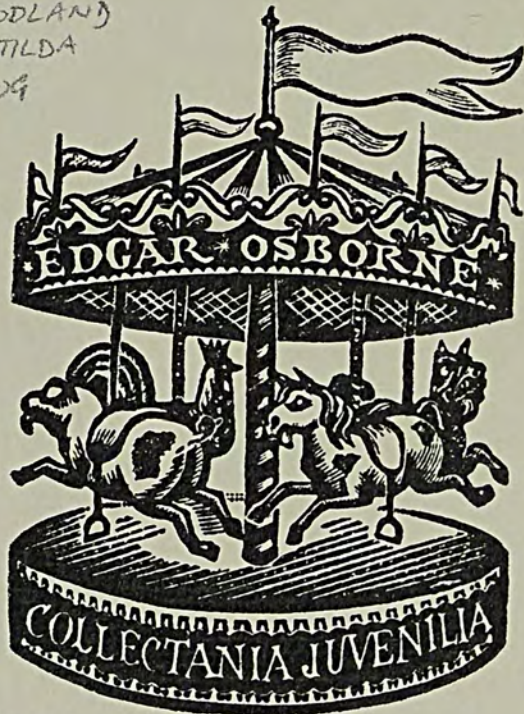


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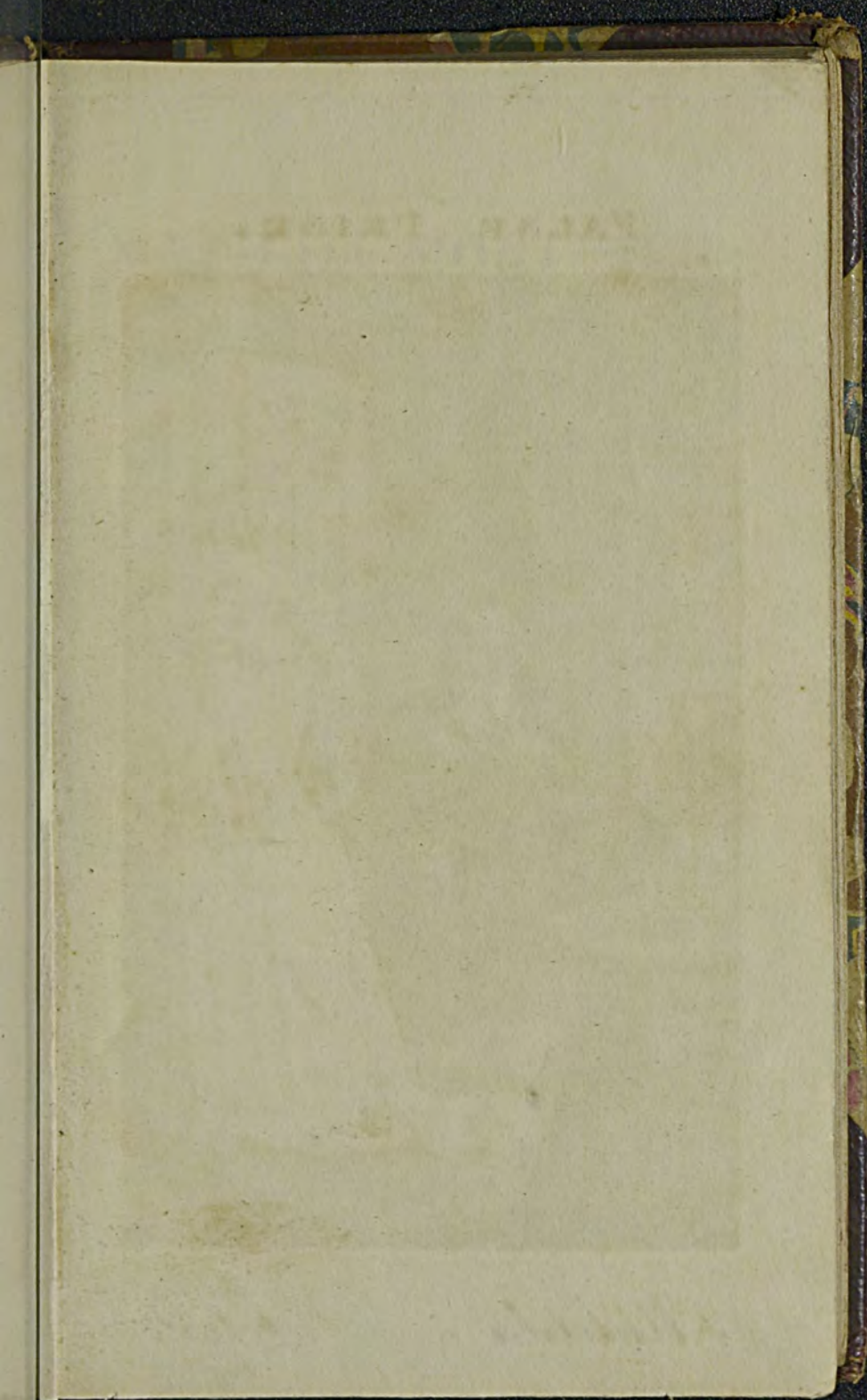
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FALSE PRIDE.



Engraved by C. Knight.

Matilda & Sr. Felix.

Page 77.

MATILDA MORTIMER ;

OR,

FALSE PRIDE :

A MORAL TALE.

BY MISS M. WOODLAND.

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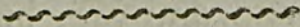
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# MATILDA MORTIMER :

OR,

FALSE PRIDE.



## CHAP. I.

NOTHING subjects young people to more mortification than false pride: nothing is more injurious to their advancement in life. It creates them innumerable enemies, and exposes them to contempt and ridicule; it renders them helpless in misfortune, and mean in adversity. It is to be wished that every parent, and teacher, would crush this evil propensity, more destructive



to happiness and moral excellence, than it is supposed to be, in its birth.

Matilda Mortimer was the only child of a gentleman and lady, who lived in elegant affluence, and who gave their daughter an accomplished education. She had the first masters for music and drawing, but it was in the latter she excelled: she had indeed great taste and freedom of hand, and drew in a superior style. Beside the agreeable accomplishment of dancing, which she had acquired to perfection, she knew French and Italian extremely well, and was no less skilled in the ornamental and useful part of needlework. Her temper and disposition were excellent, and her understanding good; but she had a defect which made her disliked by her inferiors, and, in the sequel, caused



herself and her tender parents much unhappiness.

Oh, how watchful should teachers be over the infant mind! How careful to eradicate errors in its birth, and give a right bent to the understanding! How much future trouble, anxiety, and evil, would be prevented, by an early attention to the habits children contract, and their prevailing propensities.

The defect of which I speak, and which I cannot too strongly censure, was false pride! That I may not be suspected of exaggeration, I will enumerate some of the inconveniences and evil consequences it brings. False pride makes the possessor dependent on others: it prevents us from learning to think and act for ourselves in the common occurrences of life; so that,



when it becomes absolutely necessary for us to exercise our judgment, we are at a loss how to proceed. False pride will make us submit to obligation, rather than exert the talents we may possess, for an honorable support, should we be involved in sudden misfortune. False pride will teach us to prevaricate, whenever the truth is offensive to our feelings. This is not all; false pride, when indulged to excess, will make us ungrateful to our parents, indifferent to our friends, and disliked by every one!

Though the temper and disposition of Matilda were excellent, she had been suffered to acquire the unamiable and pernicious quality of false pride, which banefully influenced her most trivial actions. "What are servants made for," she would say, "but to wait upon us?"



Are not they paid for their labor? Why should I give myself trouble to spare them?"

I would not advise young persons to encourage idleness, either in themselves or any one else, but I should be sorry to see them careless of the trouble they gave to servants, and consider them as mere beasts of burden. If the fire wanted stirring, Matilda thought it beneath her dignity to move from her chair: she would ring fifty times in the day for the servants, without the smallest necessity; and her manner to them was so haughty, that they did nothing she desired them to do with good will. It is true, she was generous, and willing to procure them pleasure, whenever the opportunity offered; but her haughtiness, and partial contemptuous indifference to the la'



they underwent, made a far stronger impression than her frequent presents. Servants, though comparatively ignorant and ill educated, have feelings as strong perhaps as our own, and as quick a sense of injustice, and oppression. It is cruel to render the situation of beings, sufficiently unfortunate by their want of education, and the servitude to which they are subjected, still more hard. We should never treat them with familiarity, but always with kindness and respect, while they continue to do their duty. Thus Matilda, with a kind heart, and a disposition always ready to oblige, by false pride, made those whom she obliged dislike her. Though a clever neat maid, she would not stir a step to help herself, which made her always be at hand, when she was going out in



a hurry, and keep her parents or companions waiting. This gave her the character, among her acquaintance, of being ill-mannerly, a character which I am sure every sensible young person must be sorry to acquire.

The parents of Matilda, dotingly fond of their only child, did not perceive the ill consequences that might arise from a defect, which appeared to them, as it does to many others, trifling. It was not therefore to be wondered at, that Matilda, unreprieved by her parents, for whose judgment she entertained the most dutiful deference, should not be convinced by the just censure which some well-meaning friends occasionally gave. But every young person should be aware that defects may escape the more partial eye of a parent, which are very conspicuous to observers less under the in-



fluence of affection : beside, we should be diffident of our own judgment, when it dissents from that of older and more experienced persons, who, not being blinded by parental egotism, are more capable of seeing with unprejudiced eyes.

Matilda tenderly loved her excellent parents, and was a dutiful child ; but false pride made her forego one of the sweetest pleasures, not to say duties, of a daughter. If her mother wanted her gloves, she would ring for the maid to fetch them ; if her father had occasion for a pocket handkerchief, Matilda would sit quietly by his side, while the servant brought it. I am sure every young woman of sense will pity Matilda, and would not suffer anybody but herself to attend on her parents, and discharge those endearing little offices of kindness. She says to her-



self: " My dear good parents took care of me, when I was unable to take care of myself; they spent anxious days and nights to secure my welfare; they have watched me in sickness, guarded me from harm, and taught me to be good, and happy! I never can make them amends for their anxious tenderness; I never can pay them sufficient attention." Let children always keep this in mind, and they never can be ungrateful, or undutiful. Filial piety is certain to secure our own happiness, and the world's esteem!



## CHAP. II.

I HAVE said that, in consequence of the false pride in which she indulged, Matilda was not beloved by her inferiors. I will now give the reader an example of the ill consequences of such indulgence, and the mortification and disappointments it is liable to occasion. Matilda, who was then in her fifteenth year, was invited to a private ball, in the neighbourhood: she was extremely fond of dancing, and for a week before could think and talk of nothing else but this ball, and the pleasure she should enjoy. The happy day at length came, Matilda's heart beat high with expectation, but disappointment awaited her!



The carriage of Mr. Mortimer on that morning had met with an accident, and could not be used; the evening turned out stormy and rainy; a covered conveyance could not be procured without going two or three miles, for they lived five miles from London, and at a distance from any village; the footman was sent, it is true, to endeavour to procure a post-chaise, but, having no inclination to oblige a young lady, who treated him, and every servant in the house, with so much pride, at the expence of a long, wet, and dreary walk, he stopped a couple of hours at an alehouse on the road, taking the chance of meeting a return post-chaise, and brought home the melancholy intelligence that none was to be had. Matilda was obliged to stay at home. Had she not been proud, she most probably would have



gone to the ball; and, what is infinitely of more consequence, she would not perhaps have caused a servant to forget his integrity, tell a falsehood, and deceive a kind master and mistress. Matilda would have shuddered, could she a moment have supposed that, by the indulgence of false pride, she taught her parents' servants to deceive them, and contract the pernicious and odious habit of lying. Yet these are the consequence of such conduct; it often betrays yourself and others to actions at which principle revolts.

Having done wrong, the only atonement we can make is a candid acknowledgment that we have been in an error. What is it prevents us from making that generous acknowledgment? False pride!

The general conduct of Matilda was praise-worthy, but the best and



most experienced persons are not infallible. One evening, being at a private concert, in company with some young ladies and their mamma, with whom she was slightly acquainted, Matilda forgot herself, talked and laughed aloud, and, in the effervescence of her spirits, two or three impertinent remarks escaped her, which, however, did not pass unnoticed by Mrs. Seymour and her daughters. In bringing Matilda home in her carriage, that lady, who thought that her age authorized her to speak openly, very gravely said:

“ My dear Miss Matilda, I am sorry to find you are little aware of the delicate propriety, and modest diffidence, which become a young lady of your age and situation in life. I was led to expect that no young



person was better behaved ; but either I was misinformed, or you strangely forgot yourself ; I am willing indeed to believe that the latter was the case."

Matilda *had* forgotten herself, but false pride would not suffer her to acknowledge, either to herself or others, that she had been in the wrong.

" I am sorry, Madam," she answered, with a little tincture of resentment, " that you think my behaviour was indecorous, but I cannot see the harm of a little merriment."

" Nor do I, Miss Matilda," said Mrs. Seymour, mildly, " at a proper time and place ; but to disturb a whole company, who are assembled for the express purpose of listening to excellent music, and show a total want of respect for those persons who



exert their talents for your amusement, is not only very improper but very unamiable behaviour.

“Indeed, Madam,” continued Matilda, more than ever averse to own she had been in the wrong, “I have a great respect for every body there, and I think I never behaved with more attention to propriety.”

“Then I must hope,” replied Mrs. Seymour, still more gravely, “Miss Matilda, that you will form no intimacy with my daughters, Caroline and Eliza, during the short time we are going to stay in England; I should be grieved to see them copy such behaviour.”

How humiliating was such a caution to a young girl of fifteen, whose general conduct was very different from what her foolish and censurable false pride had given Mrs. Seymour,



who was almost a stranger to her, reason to suppose! How ashamed she felt, how much she repented that she did not at once candidly own she had acted improperly! How sunk she felt in her own estimation! Yet, she was unconscious that it was false pride, which had induced her to persist in error. As her heart was really good, and as she felt a just dread of the unfavorable report Mrs. Seymour would have the right to make of her conduct, she burst into tears, and hid her face in her hands. Mrs. Seymour, moved by her sorrow, yet, uncertain whether she wept from anger or a more worthy motive, said in a softened tone:

“Miss Matilda, if you are really convinced that you have acted improperly, and feel the necessity of altering your conduct, I will never mention what has passed, and shall be happy



to see you associate with my daughters; but if these tears arise from anger, or resentment——”

“ Oh no, Madam,” interrupted Matilda, sobbing; “ I am ashamed of having first behaved so ill, and then of attempting to defend such behaviour. I hope you will not think me quite so bad as I have led you to suppose, by my culpable obstinacy; I hope you will forgive me!”

“ With all my heart,” answered Mrs. Seymour, kissing Matilda: “ I now see that you are not the ill behaved unfeeling girl I supposed; but beware, my dear, of being too proud to own you have done wrong, or you will meet with more severe mortifications, as you go into the world.”

Matilda found an opportunity of retrieving her good character before Mrs. Seymour and her daughters, who



were going soon to India, went abroad; she won their good will: but Mrs. Seymour, who perceived the deep root false pride had taken in Matilda's heart, very seriously warned her of the ill consequences it might have; nay, she had the kindness to endeavour to direct the attention of Mrs. Mortimer and her husband to that defect in their daughter; but they did not look with impartiality, neither did they consider it abstractedly in its true light. It would have spared themselves much sorrow, and Matilda much deserved mortification, had they taken in time the friendly advice of Mrs. Seymour. But a tender parent is so loath to find fault, so willing to excuse error, so apt to say, "It is but a trifle! She will know better as she grows up!" Dangerous security! Pernicious indulgence! I am sure young



women of sense, when they see the evil consequences of such weak tenderness, will be happy to think their parents have been more judicious.



## CHAP. III.

ANOTHER ill tendency of false pride is to make one ashamed of having done a praise-worthy action, if it bring our *gentility* the least into question. I will give the reader an instance, which will show how contemptible that pride must be, which makes us ashamed of doing our duty, and of being seen in the wretched abodes of misery. Matilda will again be the heroine of this anecdote, and the reader will again pity, while he must blame, a young lady who, in every other respect, was good and amiable, but whose indulgence of false pride led her, in the sequel, into culpable errors, and exposed her to the danger of losing



the love and esteem of all virtuous people.

Matilda was generous ; she was no less alive to compassion ; her heart and purse were never shut against distress, but she would have been very sorry to have been seen administering help to the wretched, in their miserable hovels, by her acquaintance, who were young ladies of fortune and fashion. She seldom, therefore, went herself, to investigate the real state of those who applied to her for relief ; but trusted that office to servants, who might or might not bring her a true account ; and whenever, by any accident, she did go, she always chose a time when she thought herself in no danger of being seen, by her *fashionable* acquaintance. One day, as she was walking in an adjacent village, a little girl, sickly in appearance and half naked,



ran after Matilda, sobbing, and begged her for God's sake to give her a half-penny, for her mother was sick, and had not a morsel of bread to give her." Matilda happened only to have a shilling in her purse, which she gave the little girl.

"Here, child," "said she, take that to your mother, and tell me where you live?"

The child, sobbing out her thanks, added, in a tone of earnest supplication,

"We live hard by, Miss: oh, if you would but come and see mother! She is so sick! She cannot leave her bed; and now there is not a soul with her, for our neighbours are as poor as ourselves, and must work all day; so they can only come and see mother for a few moments every evening and morning! She must die," continued



the little girl, bitterly crying, "for she has no money, and cannot work for any; and I am so little, nobody will give me work! Do, pray do, Miss, come and see mother!"

Matilda, whose natural goodness of heart prompted her to visit the sick woman, was nevertheless afraid of meeting with somebody, by whom she might be known; she looked wistfully round, but no person was in sight, and she followed the child.

She found the poor woman lying sick, in bed; her face was emaciated, and every thing showed the most deplorable poverty. Matilda, understanding the poor creature had not eaten for three days, promised to send some broth, and light but nourishing food, with money to pay one of her poor neighbours to attend on her.

She listened to her story, which was,



“that poor Margery (that was the woman’s name) earned her bread by hard labour; that her husband had been sent abroad for a soldier; and that, being taken suddenly ill, in consequence of over-working herself, she was unable to work any longer, and was forced to live on the little her child could procure, from the charity of passengers.”

Matilda, renewing her promise of immediate assistance, prepared to quit the cottage, when the child, who had been sent for bread, came running out of breath, and said,

“Mother, here is a fine gentleman coming to see you! He is just behind me! He says he will give you money, for the doctor to make you well.”

“Dear me,” said Matilda, “how provoking! I shall be seen! I dare say it is Sir George Worthy: he is often



walking hereabouts. Dear dear! What shall I do? Can you find no place to conceal me? These cottages are very inconvenient, I declare; let me stand behind the curtain; I would not be seen in such a place for the world!"

If Matilda had thought a moment, she must have known that she was doing the poor sick woman harm by flurrying her spirits; and that the repugnance she expressed to being seen in the homely cottage was unfeeling, particularly at such a time: but false pride stifles a generous attention to the feelings of others.

Matilda hid behind the bed-curtain, which, though of stuff, was clean, but not quickly enough to escape being seen by Sir George Worthy, as he looked in at the window.

This gentleman, a man of benevo-



lence and excellent sense, who had several times had occasion to observe the foible of Matilda, in his intercourse with her parents, immediately guessed the reason of her concealing herself, and resolved to give her a severe but useful lesson.

However, Sir George did not think the present the proper time; he therefore went into the cottage, spoke with the good woman, promised to send her a nurse and physician, and, without betraying his knowledge of the concealment of Matilda, almost immediately went away.

Matilda, thinking she had had a lucky escape, returned home, and sent the promised broth and more money to the poor woman, who, through the humane attention of that young lady and the baronet, in a short time recovered her strength, and was by that gen-



tleman given employment, that enabled her to look after her child, who, in consequence of her mother's being forced to work so hard all day, had been neglected, and was weak and sickly.

A few days after this adventure, several ladies and gentlemen came to dine with the parents of Matilda, and Sir George Worthy among the rest. After dinner, the baronet turned the conversation on the absurdity and ill consequences of false pride. Matilda, who was totally unconscious of having that fault, and who had not the least suspicion that she had been seen in the cottage by Sir George Worthy, joined warmly in the censure, which many others, as faulty perhaps in that respect as herself, expressed.

“ I am glad, Miss Mortimer,” said Sir George, who sat next to Matilda, “ that you think so properly on the



subject; I am sure you will feel, like me, pity for a young lady, who, with many amiable qualities and an excellent heart, has the absurd and pernicious fault I have mentioned. Would you believe that she carries this unamiable quality to such excess, that she is even ashamed it should be known that she is humane, and charitable? I could scarcely be persuaded I saw clearly, when, as I was passing the cottage of a poor sick woman, whom she had humanely gone to assist, I saw her hide behind a curtain, for fear of being seen to perform an act of moral duty and benevolence. Is it possible she can wish to give herself an unfavorable character, because she is afraid of appearing less proud than weak and insensible persons, whose hearts are incapable of tasting the purest of pleasures, that of humanity? I have so



sincere an esteem for her worthy parents, and so good an opinion of her heart and understanding, that I shall not scruple to warn her against a defect which is unworthy of her, and which, if suffered to go unchecked, will have more serious consequences than she can foresee."

Matilda, during this speech, was ready to sink with confusion; but the delicate manner, and friendly tone, in which Sir George conveyed his admonition, gave her sufficient fortitude not to betray her emotion.

Though not entirely convinced, she felt the kind intention of the baronet; and, when he had done speaking, said, with downcast eyes and in a low voice,

"I am sure, Sir, the young lady will be obliged by the concern you show for her happiness; though, per-



haps, she may think you judge her too severely."

Here the conversation dropped: Sir George was afraid the company might guess the truth, if it were carried further; and he flattered himself that he had made a strong impression on the youthful Matilda.

The lesson did her partial good, but it required mortifications more severely to convince her of the pernicious effects of false pride, and how necessary it was to be resolute in the determination to cure a fault, which was to cost herself and her tender parents much unhappiness.



## CHAP. IV.

I MUST beg the reader to have a little more patience, while I give one more example of the inconvenience and mortification to which false pride subjected Matilda, before she went into the world. It is my desire to make young persons thoroughly sensible of the ill consequences of false pride, and strongly to impress this on their minds. I therefore cannot be too fearful of suffering any convincing proof to escape me.

False pride, in adversity, will make people submit to obligation, which degrades; but, in prosperity, it makes them unwilling to receive the most trifling favor; and so jealous are they, of their supposed dignity, that they



will rather wound the feelings of those who offer to oblige them than conquer their own petty pride. They would confer favors on all the world, because it gratifies their pride ; but it is insolence, in any person, to imagine they will condescend to accept a favor.

Matilda was extremely fond of drawing : she devoted many hours to that delightful art, and had made a rapid progress. Her parents every year took her to the exhibition, and to every picture gallery that was open to the public. Indeed she was deserving of their kindness, for she was very anxious to improve herself, and made it her study to do every thing which could give them pleasure.

One morning, her drawing master, from whom she no longer received lessons, and his daughter, a young



person rather older than Matilda, and equally well brought up, but with whom Matilda had formed no intimacy—*Sophia was only the daughter of an artist, and at the early age of sixteen began to exercise her talents to support herself and aid her father*—One morning, I say, this artist, with his daughter, Sophia, called to say “that they were going to town, to see a very choice collection of paintings, and that, if Miss Matilda, being very fond of seeing pictures, would like to accompany them, the chaise was large enough to hold three, and he would take that young lady with them.”

Matilda's pride rose in arms: “Accept a favor from persons whom she deemed her inferiors! Be obliged to her ancient drawing master! Be seen in a one horse chaise! Make herself the companion of his daughter! The



thought was too degrading! They were very presumptuous to imagine they had the right to confer favors on her! Their request was little better than an insult!"

Such were Matilda's thoughts: she had still sufficient grace left not to give them utterance; but her looks betrayed the offended pride of her heart; and the cold, if not haughty manner in which she declined their civility, without pleading any obstacle, or engagement, made the timid Sophia, who was a girl of feeling, blush.

Mr. Vincent, a man of sense, and with an independent strong mind, who was also perfectly well acquainted with the false pride of his pupil, which he had frequently observed, but to which he had never crouched, very coolly said,



“ I am sorry, Miss Matilda, you should mistake a simple act of civility for an obligation too great for the daughter of Mr. Mortimer to receive, from a person who has not the honor to be related to her. Another time, I will respect your nice sense of decorum. Come, Sophy! Good morning, Madam.”

Matilda almost sunk to the ground, with shame and mortification. The proper manner in which Mr. Vincent had reproved her pride and want of feeling, in despite of her endeavours to excuse herself, made her painfully sensible that she had been in the wrong ; her pretended superiority sunk, her petty pride had made *her* the inferior, and to the mortifying sense of her inferiority was added the still more painful consciousness of having wounded the feelings of a person whom her



parents esteemed, who had bestowed the greatest attention on her improvement, and who had always treated her with kindness and respect. She had beside missed seeing a fine collection, which was soon to be sent out of the kingdom, and which only artists, and those introduced by them, were permitted to view.

To complete her mortification, two young ladies, who like herself had been pupils to Mr. Vincent, called on Matilda the next day: they had understood, from that artist, that he was going to ask Miss Mortimer to accompany him and his daughter, they would themselves, gladly, have been of the party, had they not been engaged, and came to learn whether Matilda had been delighted with the pictures. When these young ladies were informed she had not been, they



naturally took it for granted that some previous engagement had prevented her, and said :

“ What, then, you were engaged !  
What a pity !”

Now mark the ill consequences of false pride. Matilda hearing the Miss Davenants, who were young ladies of fortune and fashion, would have gone with Mr. Vincent, and his daughter, whom they praised as a very clever, amiable, and meritorious young person, who deserved to be encouraged, and whom they admitted to their society, was ashamed to own her true reason for staying at home, and, to her former reprehensible conduct, added the meanness of telling a falsehood.

How contemptible is false pride !  
Into what meanness it betrays even  
good and amiable persons ! To what



cruel mortifications does it subject them! Matilda, who detested falsehood, could bring herself to tell an untruth, because she was too proud to generously acknowledge her error!

When she had said what she knew to be false, not being in the habit of deceit, she blushed deeply; as well indeed she might. This was remarked by the elder of the sisters, who was two years older than Matilda; but that young lady said nothing, though she suspected the cause.

Indeed Matilda, to her honor be it said, was not able to converse, or entertain her friends, with any cheerfulness, after having degraded herself by so mean an action: but such actions, inevitably, sooner or later, bring severe mortification with them.

Just as the Miss Davenants were going to take their leave, Mr. Vincent,



who had finished a portrait of Matilda's father, came to bring it home. At the sight of him, Matilda blushed still more deeply, and was scarcely able to look up; so guilty in every respect she felt herself. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer were not at home.

Poor Matilda! How severely was she exposed to ridicule and mortification, by her absurd and reprehensible pride! Let us hope that, before we take our leave of this young lady, we shall see her cured of this pernicious fault, and that every young person, who reads domestic anecdotes, should she feel conscious that she has the least tendency to pride, will determine to eradicate so injurious a propensity.

Mr. Vincent, who was not a stern or resentful man, and who knew the real goodness of Matilda's heart, behaved as if nothing disagreeable had



passed. Matilda however was on the rack, conscious of the falsehood she had told, and fearful every moment it should be discovered. The young ladies prolonged their visit to examine the portrait, and, entering into conversation with Mr. Vincent, soon began on the subject of the pictures he had gone to see. Matilda trembled so violently that she could scarcely stand.

“It was unlucky,” said Eugenia, the youngest of the sisters, who had not observed the confusion of Matilda, and who never once suspected that she had told a falsehood, “that you were engaged, Miss Mortimer! I dare say you felt very much disappointed that it so happened; but engagements cannot always be put off, or I have no doubt you would have deferred yours.”



Matilda could not utter a syllable, but she felt as sick as death, and was forced to sit down: her colour went and came; and Emma, the eldest Miss Davenant, who really pitied her distress, endeavoured to change the subject: but Mr. Vincent, who knew the goodness of the sisters' hearts, and was well assured that they would not make any further mention of the affair, as he saw that Matilda was ashamed of her conduct, wished, if possible, to make a lasting impression on the mind of his ancient pupil, even at the expence of giving her momentary but severe pain; and he was truly her well-wisher, and friend, as the sequel of this history will show. Mr. Vincent therefore, looking at the blushing and conscience-struck Matilda, in the tone of surprise, exclaimed,

“ Engaged? Why, Miss Mortimer,



you mentioned no engagement to me ! Your manner gave me to understand, that you did not choose to accept what you thought a favor, from such persons as I and my daughter ! If I misunderstood you I am sorry."

The young ladies delicately occupied themselves in looking at the portrait, feeling for the guilty and mortified Matilda, who, self-condemned and sinking with shame, for a moment had not the power of making a reply. At length, truly sensible of the culpability of her conduct, and that the only atonement she could make would be a sincere acknowledgment, and a proper apology to Mr. Vincent, she gathered courage, and said, while the tears trickled down her cheeks:

" Sir, I feel so truly ashamed of my rudeness yesterday, in refusing your polite invitation, and I am so



lowered in my own esteem, by the falsehood I this morning told, because I was ashamed to own to these young ladies how wrong I had been, that nothing but the desire to make some little atonement, and apologize to you, could have given me the courage to speak. You must think me mean, and ungrateful, and I shall lose the good opinion of these young ladies, all by my own fault. Suffer me to go to my own room; I feel I am not worthy to be in your company."

Matilda, not daring again to look up, was going; but Mr. Vincent stopped his penitent pupil, and taking her kindly by the hand, said:

"You certainly have been very wrong, in this affair, my dear Miss Mortimer; but you have nobly atoned for your error. You are more worthy



than ever of our esteem; and these young ladies, I am sure, think as I do."

"Yes, that we do," interrupted the eldest sister, approaching to kiss Matilda, who wept on her bosom; "and Miss Mortimer may be assured that not a word, of what has passed, shall ever escape our lips."

"Of that I am certain," continued Mr. Vincent; "but, before I go, allow me, my dear Miss Mortimer, to warn you against a defect of which you are unfortunately not aware, and which has become a confirmed habit. I mean, false pride! It was false pride which made you refuse to go with me, and Sophy, to see the pictures. It was false pride, which this morning induced you to depart from your habitual rectitude, rather than own your error. If you do not correct this pernicious



ous habit, you will be exposed to mortifications innumerable. You will be unhappy yourself, and make your parents no less so. Your heart is excellent, and you have a good understanding; you are very young; you have only to determine to conquer this pernicious defect; I am sure it is in your power. All who know the natural goodness and sweetness of your disposition, must wish to see you cured of a defect, which makes you frequently appear in a very unamiable light."

Mr. Vincent and the two sisters then took their leave; and Matilda, truly repenting her ill conduct, but not willing to own to herself that she had the fault against which Mr. Vincent so kindly warned her, dried her tears, and continued her usual occupations.



## CHAP. V.

THE reader has now to be informed of events, which will show the necessity of accustoming young persons to make themselves useful, and treat every body with affability, however poor they may be, when they are honest and industrious; and, particularly, when their manners and education place them on a level with ourselves, in every thing but fortune.

Riches are the most uncertain of dependencies; and to assume superior consequence over, and despise, those who live by the honorable exertion of their talents, is equally ungenerous and absurd.

It is no less injurious and absurd



for young women to make themselves helpless, because their parents are rich, and they expect to have a good fortune. If by no chance they are disappointed in their expectations (which however is frequently the case) they acquire an ignorance of trifles which is disgraceful, and which subjects them to the ridicule of their servants, and the pity, if not the contempt, of all persons who are admired for their activity, and excellent management, in their domestic affairs.

How can the mistress of a house know how to manage her family, and see that her servants do justice by her, if she be not capable of directing them? What disorder creeps into a family, the mistress of which is ignorant of household affairs! What discontent, nay, not unfrequently, what unhappiness, it creates, between the



husband and wife! How pernicious is such an example to their children!

I have informed the reader that Mr. Mortimer, Matilda's father, lived in affluence; that gentleman was a partner in one of the first banking-houses in London, and nearly his whole fortune was vested there.

There were several partners, but not all equally skilful and provident; one of them, in particular, a dissipated youth of fashion, who had been admitted greatly against the inclination of those who had the most prudence, but whose share in the concern and influence were the least, in a few years acquired a larger share, gambled in the funds, and carried his profligacy and extravagance to such lengths that the house stopped payment, and the partners, Mr. Mortimer among the rest, were entirely ruined.



This was a terrible blow to Matilda, who, from her infancy, had been accustomed to be waited upon, to keep the first company, and live in elegant profusion.

Of a large fortune, Mr. Mortimer could save only sufficient to keep his family in the strictest œconomy: he was forced to dismiss his numerous servants, sell his horses and carriage, part with his elegant mansion, and take a small house plainly furnished, in a village twenty miles out of town. He could give no more sumptuous dinners, fine routs, or elegant balls: he could keep no company, or incur any extra expences.

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer, who, though they had indulged in the fashionable follies of the times, had courage and good sense, accommodated themselves to their altered condition, and only



grieved for their daughter, who was now in her eighteenth year, and who, seeing her proud hopes thus suddenly killed, secretly repined, and had not the virtue to submit to her misfortune with dignity and common sense. Matilda could not bring herself to interfere with domestic affairs; they were *beneath* her! Yet she could suffer her mother to do things, which false pride had taught her to consider as degrading.

Matilda drew admirably well; yet false pride prevented her from exercising a talent that might, perhaps, have honorably maintained herself, and made the situation of her parents more easy. She said to herself—"I should disgrace my family, by exerting the talent I possess."—She ought to have said: "I am too proud to make my parents some trifling amends for the



care, anxiety, and unremitting tenderness they have bestowed on me. I will rather gratify my own feelings than study their ease and happiness; I prefer the approbation of the weak, and vain, to the esteem, respect, and admiration of all liberal-minded persons."

The worthy Mr. Vincent showed the most zealous desire to serve Mr. Mortimer; he aided him in his domestic difficulties, and advanced a momentary supply of money. Mr. Mortimer had several fine pictures; the friendly artist disposed of them, for him, to the best advantage. Sir George Worthy, shortly before, had gone to fill an important post in India.

The kind-hearted Sophia Vincent, whom Matilda could never persuade herself to make her friend, forgetting all cause she had of complaint, wished



to pay that young lady every attention, and, feeling for her heavy disappointment, treated her with increased respect: but Matilda was too proud to meet her advances with cordiality. She had, beside, about a year before her father's failure, formed a strict intimacy with a young lady, older than herself, equally proud, and by no means so amiable in disposition, whose romantic flights, and highly fashionable habits, had done Matilda no good. The amiable Sophia, seeing her friendly assiduities were considered as intrusive by Miss Mortimer, soon discontinued them.

Mr. Vincent, who was highly esteemed by the parents of Matilda, delicately hinted to Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer, that their daughter might exercise her talent, of drawing, with honor to herself, and advantage to her



family ; but the too indulgent parents knew the repugnance Matilda foolishly felt, and would not listen to any such proposal.

Oh, how grateful, how affectionate, ought children to be to the tender parents, who make so many painful sacrifices for their sake, who are so indulgent, so fearful of giving them even necessary pain ! How eagerly should they seize every opportunity, to prove their gratitude and affection ! How constantly bear in mind, that the most trivial proof of filial love is gratifying to the paternal heart ; and that every failure in attention or respect, however slight, inflicts a deep wound !

Nothing can exceed the affection and anxiety of a parent ; nothing can repay the tender cares a parent bestows ; and nothing can give an affec-



tionate child greater pain than the consciousness of having, even but for a moment, forgotten the duty and gratitude she owes.

Matilda, dearly as she loved her parents, had never been sufficiently aware of the sacred obligations of a child: she deceived herself by fine words, and frequent caresses, and imagined that, by those, she had fulfilled a daughter's duty. Could she have read the wounded hearts of her tender parents, who felt how little she understood of the most important duties of a child, she would have shuddered at her mistake, and detested the pride which made her ungrateful and negligent, while she flattered herself that she was the most assiduous and grateful of daughters.

Thus young persons too frequently deceive themselves, and mistake pas-



sive for active virtue. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer grieved, in silence, but forbore to reproach Matilda; they now too late perceived the defect to which they had been fatally blind, and rather accused their excess of indulgence than blamed their beloved child. They however were too anxious for the welfare of that child not to conjure her to listen to the advice of her best friends, and conquer pride, which would in the end make her miserable.

Matilda, who had hitherto been accustomed to hear her parents defend her, against the repeated accusations of their intimate friends, who had kindly interested themselves in her reformation, considered this change as the result of caprice, or of the gloomy dissatisfaction which the loss of fortune is apt to create. She unconsciously accused them of injustice,



though she listened with becoming mildness, and assured them she would do her best to give them pleasure.

The young lady, whose intercourse, as I before mentioned, had been prejudicial to Matilda, had married a rich baronet, just before Mr. Mortimer had lost his fortune, and had gone with her husband and brother to spend a few months in Ireland. Lady Grantham had professed a violent friendship for Matilda: her understanding was brilliant, but she was very vain, and her temper was fickle and naturally haughty. She affected to be superior to the rest of her acquaintance, in dignity and liberality of sentiment; but it was the ostentation without the reality.

Lady Grantham was spending the summer in Dublin when Matilda, who indulged in all the romance of youth,



and had in part caught the too general infection of false sentiment, wrote a long letter, to inform her friend of the misfortunes which had overtaken her parents, and to lament the melancholy change in her condition.



## CHAP. VI.

LADY Grantham, who piqued herself on being as sentimental as any heroine of romance, on receiving Matilda's letter, thought this an excellent opportunity to display her dignified sentiments, and impress all her acquaintance with admiration of her generosity; she resolved to take Matilda, as her companion, on her return to England, which was to be speedy, and let all the world know how *generous a friend* she could be.

She wrote back, in consequence of this resolution, a most sentimental answer to Matilda, in which she deplored her misfortune, but rejoiced that it gave her an opportunity to prove the warmth of her regard. "In



the heart of your Honoria," she said, "you shall find consolation; her house shall be the sanctuary of your sorrows: yes, Matilda, my beloved, the world shall find that *disinterested friendship* and *dignity of sentiment* still exist on earth! In a few months I shall be in London, and you will be rescued, by friendship, from a situation so little fitted to your merit, and my wishes. Prepare your worthy parents for the happy change, which soon will take place, and think of the future with cheerfulness, and hope. To doubt my friendship, oh, Matilda, would be a mortal wound to the heart of *your devoted Honoria.*"

Those young persons who have good sense, will turn with disgust from such an unmeaning rhapsody, and pity the credulity of the ardent and romantic Matilda, who, sincere herself,



thought her supposed friend equally so, in her professions of affection. She read the letter with delight, and praised the *disinterested friendship* of Lady Grantham with enthusiasm; yet, though she secretly wished to accept her invitation, she had still the virtue to refrain from expressing that wish, and very properly wrote a grateful refusal.

But this circumstance increased her inward repining, which did not escape the observation of the anxious and watchful parents, who, though grieved to think the daughter they so fondly loved could wish to quit them, would have instantly insisted on her accepting the offer of Lady Grantham, had they not foreseen the mortification, and future unhappiness, to which it must expose her.

Lady Grantham, who, when she



had the gratification of her vanity in view, was not to be diverted from or reasoned out of her purpose, though she forbore to write again on the subject, was resolved to carry her point. She worked up her mind to a paroxysm of false generosity, and persuaded herself that she must be miserable, if she could not snatch her dear Matilda from obscurity.

“Poor dear girl,” said she to her brother, Augustus Torrington, “how I pity her! Immured with an old father and mother, who may be very good sort of folks, but who are great bores! Deprived of the elegancies of life! I could not exist under it! She must, she shall, have a better fate! I will make her yield to the entreaties of disinterested friendship!”

“Indeed, Honoria,” said Augustus Torrington gravely, “I cannot hear



you speak with levity of the respectable parents of your friend, and remain silent; they are the kindest and most indulgent that daughter could desire; neither can I approve your wish to take her from friends so tender, and respectable: she is not an object of charity; she wants for nothing; and she can be no where so well or so happy as with her own family. If she could quit her excellent parents, to indulge in luxuries, or pleasures in which they cannot share, she would be greatly lowered in my esteem; and, I confess, I should grieve that a sister of mine had seduced her from filial affection and duty. Pray, Honoria, give up this whim; do not, to gratify your vanity (for you are deceived, my dear sister, if you imagine you are actuated by real friendship, or disinterested generosity) make a daughter un-



grateful to the best of parents! Do not inflict on those parents the anguish of being abandoned by their child in adversity! Do not expose your friend to merited contempt, and yourself to the censure of all thinking and feeling persons."

"I shall act as I think proper," answered Lady Grantham, haughtily. "Sir Felix does not make any objection, and I am not obliged to follow your advice; so pray, Augustus, mind your own affairs."

With this speech, which did no credit to her heart or understanding, Lady Grantham flounced out of the room, and Mr. Torrington, who was by some years her elder, and a man of excellent sense and feeling, sought his brother-in-law, to induce him, if possible, to exert his influence with Lady Grantham to renounce her project.



Sir Felix, however, was too indolent of mind to give himself the least trouble: he would rather tacitly consent to what his judgment disapproved, than contest the point; so that his lady had only her own whims to consult. The baronet, beside, had little feeling; and toward every body, but his wife, of whom he stood a little in awe, maintained a forbidding arrogance.

Lady Grantham, eager to put her plan into execution, had shortened her intended stay, and came over to England a month sooner than she had proposed. She had made the misfortunes of her young friend, and her own *disinterested generosity*, the topic of conversation to all her acquaintance, and from her flatterers she had already heard praise enough to satiate any person, whose vanity was not insatiable; but that was not sufficient, her triumph must



every way be complete: she must conquer the scruples of Matilda, and make her acknowledge, to the world, that she owed her obligations, which she could never repay: in short, though unconsciously to herself, she wished to see Matilda humbled; and make her, not her *friend*, but, the slave of her caprices. Thus weak and narrow-minded persons are self deceived!

Matilda, in the mean while, who compared the situation of her affluent friend with her own, daily sighed for pleasures it was not in her power to obtain. She became more and more discontented; her drawing and music were neglected; she lost her cheerfulness, and her only pleasure was in reading over the letters of her friend, or rather her worst enemy, which filled her mind with wrong ideas, and



false sentiment, and in writing answers scarcely less inflated and foolish.

Matilda was too much absorbed in her own imaginary sorrows, and the dangerous romance of an enthusiastic mind, to perceive the affliction her conduct gave her excellent parents, who passed many sleepless nights, bewailing her delusion, and vainly endeavouring to discover some means of bringing her back to reason.

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer at length decided, that the only efficacious lesson she could receive, would be that of experience ; and they resolved, if Lady Grantham should renew her offer, which they thought probable, to persuade Matilda to accept it.

“ When she feels the difference of living with people, who will consider her as a dependent, and residing with parents, who would sacrifice their lives



for her happiness, she will see her folly, and be happy to return to us! And with what joy shall we again take her to our arms! She is ignorant of the anguish of our hearts; she is young, and can form no idea of what anxiety and tender affection a parent feels. She will be taught better by experience!”

Thus the indulgent father and mother sought excuses for, while they deplored, the folly, not to say ingratitude, of their beloved daughter. Oh, that she had overheard their tender solicitude, and heart-rending regrets! She would have detested the false pride, which, aided by absurd romance, destroyed, for a time, her own and their happiness.



## CHAP. VII.

AS soon as Lady Grantham arrived in town, she waited on the parents of Matilda, and, with that grace and cordiality she could so well assume, entreated them to permit their charming, interesting daughter to be *the select friend of her heart*: her sister and companion.

“ You know, my dear Madam,” said she, addressing Mrs. Mortimer, “ Matilda will always be near enough to profit by your advice ; let her enjoy the pleasures natural to her age, and her *late* expectations ; if she have lost her fortune, she still has in me a friend, whose *disinterested* affection will in part compensate for that loss. I shall make a point of introducing your amiable daughter to my fashion-



able friends, who all know how devotedly I am attached to her, and for *my* sake they will treat her with respect and attention; her amiable qualities, indeed, would alone ensure their regard."

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer, contrary to the expectation of Lady Grantham, made not the least objection; while Matilda, wishing to accept the invitation, yet conscious that she could no do so consistently with duty and affection, still hesitated; but her manner and countenance betrayed her secret inclination to say yes. However, Mr. Mortimer and his wife, who had taken their resolution, silenced her feeble objections, and Lady Grantham quitted the house, disappointed at the facility with which she had obtained her wish. She almost regretted having invited Matilda, till she recollected



the fresh adulation her presence would draw, from the weak and the servile. Such are the folly and inconsistency of persons, who pretend to monopolize all generosity, and feeling.

Matilda, herself, did not feel the pleasure she expected, at being forced as it were to follow her own inclinations. Her heart, naturally dutiful and affectionate, reproached her for having even formed a wish to quit parents so tender, and indulgent. She regretted she was going to leave them, but false pride again prevented her from candidly owning her fault, and entreating her parents to forget the past, and let her remain, where every young person should, in her own family.

She shed many bitter tears, in secret; for, though Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer treated their daughter with equal



affection, and forbore to reproach her; she could not but feel that they had read her heart, and must be hurt by her wish to leave them.

The parting, between Matilda and her parents, was affecting; tears flowed on all sides; but it was not grief, alone, it was remorse, which made the tears of Matilda the bitterest she had ever shed.

Lady Grantham, who was present, affected to be greatly moved; but she was inwardly offended, at the sensibility Matilda displayed on the occasion, because it was not lavished on her. She inwardly accused Matilda of ingratitude, because that young lady was justly grieved at quitting parents, to whom she owed all the affection and duty a child can give.

The *disinterested* friend of Matilda already felt her *devoted attachment*



cool; and, when they were in the carriage, instead of endeavouring to sooth her mournful companion, she sat in sullen silence. When, after a ride tedious to both parties, they reached the house of Sir Felix in Grosvenor-street, they found the baronet and Mr. Torrington in the drawing room. Matilda began to feel, though comparatively slightly, the mortifications, to which her false pride had exposed her: Sir Felix scarcely deigned to bow, looking upon her as the humble companion of his lady; and Mr. Torrington, who felt mingled pity and indignation, addressed her with a gravity which made her painfully feel how much she was lowered in his esteem.

Lady Grantham, however, who had a part to play, as soon as she was in company with her husband and brother, lavished the most studied ca-



resses and attentions on Matilda; but they could not atone for the loss of self-esteem, the conscious contempt of the virtuous, and, more than all, the bitter reproaches of her own heart. She passed the day in dejection. Lady Grantham had invited a large party, in the evening, of her fashionable friends, whom she had prepared to examine Matilda with scrutinizing curiosity, overwhelm her ladyship with the most fulsome adulation, and mortify her *protégée* whom they considered as a humble companion, with studied condescension, which but thinly veiled supercilious contempt. Poor Matilda retired to rest, with a painful sense of her dependent situation, and an involuntary feeling that Lady Grantham, while she professed a warm and disinterested



regard, had only sought the gratification of her egotism and vanity.

Several days elapsed, with little satisfaction to either party; the fickle temper of Lady Grantham soon made her weary of Matilda, whom she had, for a few days, persuaded herself that she loved. She began to treat her with indifference and neglect, in private; though, before company, and strangers, especially, she still kept up the farce of dignified sentiment, and disinterested friendship. But her ladyship was gradually inclining to the haughtiness and despotism with which such persons make no scruple to treat their dependents in public. Sir Felix, a man selfish and unfeeling of character, who was not much pleased at Matilda's *intrusion*, as he deemed it, into his family, was barely civil to Matilda, and Mr. Torrington



behaved with a distant gravity, which showed how reprehensible he thought her conduct. These mortifications, added to the regret of having quitted her tender parents, and the consciousness that she deserved the contempt to which she was daily exposed, made Matilda very unhappy.

One day, after dinner, Matilda had a violent head-ach, was more than usual depressed in spirits, and begged to be allowed to spend the evening in her own chamber, as a large party, most of whom were strangers, was expected. Her request, however, was the last thing her ladyship would have complied with, and Matilda was obliged, with a heavy heart, to dress herself.

When her toilet was finished, her patroness (it would be an abuse of the word to call her *friend*) came into her



room, and, seeing that she looked uncommonly handsome, felt a rising jealousy. The face of Lady Grantham was beautiful, but her figure was diminutive. Matilda, though not so handsome in the face, was tall, finely formed, and had great taste and simplicity in her dress. Affecting to think she was dressed too simply, Lady Grantham insisted upon her maids adding ornaments to her dress, which the girl did according to the direction of her lady, who soon had the satisfaction of seeing Matilda, on whom finery looked hideous, appear as ill as before she was becomingly dressed.

This was a trifling mortification. When Matilda descended into the drawing-room, while Lady Grantham gave some orders to her maid, she found Sir Felix alone. Seeing her



enter, he turned his head, took up the glass, which fashionably dangled at his button-hole, and, staring at her with unfeeling rudeness, said, in an abrupt manner:

“Where is my wife? I want her.”

Shocked and abashed, Matilda answered, in a tremulous voice:

“She is coming down, Sir, almost immediately.”

“You are very ill dressed, child,” continued the baronet, still staring at her through his glass, and speaking in a tone of contemptuous indifference. “Those frills and beads and feathers do not sit well on you: I declare I never saw any thing so formal and old fashioned. I thought you had more taste. I wish you would call Lady Grantham. Pray, how old may you be?”

Matilda, overcome by the unfeel-



ing impertinence of these speeches, and painfully conscious that she had brought merited mortification on herself, burst into tears.

“Hey-day!” said the baronet, with a yawn, “what is the matter? I suppose you are as great a bore as my wife, with her fine sentiments and romantic flights; and that neither you nor she must be spoken to. Harkye, child, I indulge my wife’s folly, because I hate disputes; but I am not obliged to have that complaisance for every sentimental Miss. Affectation may be excused in *her*; but, upon my soul, child, it is very ridiculous in *you*.”

Matilda was obliged to quit the room, to give free vent to her tears. Oh, how she regretted the happy peaceful home she had quitted!

As she was going for a few minutes into the parlour, to recover herself



she was met by Mr. Torrington: she blushed, deeply, and, in her own despite, the tears trickled down her cheeks. That gentleman, whose just displeasure was forgotten in compassion, stopped, and said, in a softened voice, "he hoped she was not indisposed?"

"Oh, Sir," answered the humbled Matilda, "I only suffer the consequences of my own folly, and ingratitude. I have quitted the best of parents, to meet just contempt."

"My dear Miss Mortimer," continued Mr. Torrington, happy to find she was so sensible of her error, "I sincerely pity you; but have a little patience! I am going out of town, for a few months, almost immediately; on my return, we will renew the subject: I am your sincere well wisher, and will not flatter you, now, to contribute



to make you miserable hereafter. You have done very wrong, indeed, to quit your excellent parents, and you must for some time bear the disagreeable consequences of your error; because you cannot, with propriety, immediately return to your friends. I am sincerely grieved that it is not in my power to secure you from mortification; but take courage, and above all things, my dear young lady, conquer that false pride which has exposed you to so hard a trial."

Mr. Torrington then went up stairs, and Matilda felt a momentary relief: she had acknowledged her error, and had met with generous sympathy, and true friendship, where she had only looked for contempt.

Having recovered herself, she went to Lady Grantham, forbearing however, out of delicacy, to mention what



had passed between the baronet and herself. They went down together; and Sir Felix, whose indolence of mind was extreme, did not take the trouble to put any more rude questions, or make remarks on Matilda.

Lady Grantham, who was in eager expectation of fresh admiration and praise from her guests, who were for the greatest part strangers, and ignorant of Matilda's story, and before whom she intended to display all the practised affectation of dignified sentiment and sensibility, was in excellent humor, and loaded Matilda with caresses, as a prelude to the sentimental farce it was her custom to act, on such occasions. When her company arrived, she made a formal introduction of Matilda to each person, with a long eulogium on her amiable qualities; and then, in an audible



whisper, she related her misfortunes with the well-acted grimace of sensibility, and boasted of the *exquisite* delight it afforded her, to have it in her power to snatch her from *obscurity*, and bring her into the world under her *protection*.

Matilda, who could scarcely help hearing this, and who saw the eyes of every body turned on her with curiosity unrestrained, and scrutiny undisguised, was ready to sink. Mr. Torrington, whose generous feelings did honor to his heart, sat by her, and treated her with that respect which forced the most unfeeling to behave with civility.

Matilda, however, was most happy, when the company was gone, to retire to her apartment. The affected sensibility, and officious kindness, of Lady Grantham were accompanied by



an air of protection, and patronage, that wounded the quick and delicate feelings of Matilda: she more than ever felt that she was made the tool of that lady's vanity, and that she was considered as a dependent on her bounty. Her heart sickened at the reflection, and yearned with increased regret toward her peaceful home, where tenderness and indulgence had always smiled upon her.



## CHAP. VIII.

AFTER a few weeks, spent in reiterated mortification and regret, Matilda, having fortified her mind, one morning early took the stage, and repaired to the village where her parents lived, to spend some days with them. The morning was raw, and cold, but Matilda, eager to make every atonement for the deep wound she had inflicted on her tender parents, heeded not cold.

“At least,” thought she, “my beloved father and mother will see that their daughter, though she has quitted their dear protection to go with strangers, still loves them, and wishes to atone for her crime. Oh, let me but once again be received, and my



conduct shall prove how truly I repent my former culpable desertion of my duty."

These reflections lightened the oppression of Matilda, and, when she knocked at the paternal door, tears of sensibility and joy gushed from her eyes.

The door was opened; she rushed into the parlour, where she found her parents taking a melancholy breakfast. She sprang to their arms, and felt her cheeks watered by their tears.

"Dear child, is it you!" said the delighted pair. Matilda wept in reply, and imprinted rapturous kisses on the hands of her honored parents. To agreeably surprise them, she had forborne in her letters to announce her intended visit.

When their mutual emotion was a little subsided, they took a cheerful



breakfast. Matilda was all attention; she watched every look and motion, and seemed to prevent every wish of her beloved parents. Her mind was now completely roused to a sense of her duty; she saw and shuddered at the false pride, which had exposed herself and her beloved parents to unhappiness. Mr. Mortimer and his wife were delighted, at the favorable change in their daughter, and bestowed the most endearing caresses on her.

Matilda, in pursuance of the plan she had formed, and the advice of Mr. Torrington, had not in her letters made any complaints of the mortifications she experienced, or mentioned her desire to quit the house of Lady Grantham, as soon as propriety would permit her: she wished to give her tender parents the most exquisite sur-



prise: beside, she knew the grief they would feel, to hear that she was subjected to impertinence, and neglect.

They, out of delicacy and tenderness to her feelings, had equally forbore to question her; nor did they on this occasion; but, in her anxious attentions and desire to please, they foresaw that their daughter was not lost to them, and with delight looked forward to the happy time when she should be entirely restored to their arms.

Matilda spent the happiest week she had ever known, and could scarcely tear herself away.

On her return to Lady Grantham's house, she met a cold reception from that lady, and Sir Felix did not condescend to take the least notice of her. Matilda began to think it was almost time to make it her request to be re-



stored to her parents ; but Lady Grantham, during her absence, had formed other plans, at the instigation of her *prudent* friends. The little friendship she still felt was on the wane ; she now considered Matilda as a dependent, and resolved, if she found that young lady's pride sufficiently humbled, to make her useful. She discovered that Matilda had more taste than her maid, and could never dress without her assistance. If she had any message to send to her milliner, or mantua-maker, Matilda must take it, because she could explain her meaning better than any body else. Matilda must embroider her muslin sleeves, mend her Brussels lace, or net her silver card purses.

At first, it is true, these requests were made with diffidence and delicacy ; and Matilda, who was seriously



determined to conquer her pride, however repugnant it might be to her feelings, and who was really of an obliging disposition, complied without showing any reluctance: but Lady Grantham, mistaking a praise-worthy command of her feelings for an abject sense of dependence and inferiority, soon changed her manner, and treated Matilda by turns with a revolting haughtiness, and that offensive condescension which implies superiority the most revolting to the feelings. She now totally neglected her in company, from which she would not suffer her to retire, because she wanted a person at her elbow to wait on her, never invited her to partake in her amusements, and took every opportunity to mortify her.

Matilda, whose virtuous determina-



tion could not be shaken, however her feelings were hurt, and who considered the contemptuous treatment she hourly experienced as a just expiation of her faults, bore all with uncomplaining dignity, and consoled herself by writing daily to her beloved parents, expressing the affection she felt, and her firm resolution to conquer the defect against which they had so tenderly but ineffectually warned her. The affectionate answers she received enabled her cheerfully to support mortification and concealed insult.

Matilda again assiduously cultivated her drawing, and, as Lady Grantham took care to employ her in one trifling thing or other the greater part of the day, and, when she had company, obliged her to sit and make tea in the evening, she rose very early of



a morning, and applied herself to her studies.

That young persons may be well aware of the mortifications and contempt to which they expose themselves, by quitting their friends to live in splendid dependence, instead of exerting their talents to make themselves independent, under the respectable and dear protection of their parents, I will relate an instance or two of the still more bitter mortifications Matilda experienced, during her abode with Lady Grantham.

One evening, when two or three gentlemen had been dining with Sir Felix and Lady Grantham, after the ladies had retired, as Matilda was busied in arranging some drawings in the library of Sir Felix, which joined the parlour, she overheard the following dialogue, as the gentlemen spoke very



loud, not dreaming the person of whom they spoke was so near.

“Pray, Sir Felix,” said one of the guests, “who is that young lady, who sat near the bottom of the table? I think I have seen her, somewhere; but where I cannot recollect. Is she any relation of yours?”

“A relation!” exclaimed the baronet, in a tone of contempt: “Heaven forbid! She is my wife’s sentimental dependent. Honoria took her out of charity. She is the daughter of Mortimer, lately the rich banker, who failed some months since. Before her father’s ruin, you might see her every where. She was always a proud conceited thing; I never liked her.”

“And has she left her parents, because they could no longer indulge her in extravagance and luxury, to lead an idle life, and be dependent on



the bounty of strangers?" said an elderly gentleman, whose voice betrayed great indignation.

"Oh, yes! She did not care for them: she was always too proud to be a good daughter," replied Sir Felix, who had conceived an illiberal dislike to Matilda, and took every opportunity of speaking with levity and disrespect of her, to all who thought it worth their while to question him concerning that young lady.

"Shame on her," exclaimed the old gentleman, with increased indignation: "an unnatural child is a monster, that only deserves odium and contempt."

"I have heard the girl had a taste for drawing," said another of the guests; "why does she not exert it, to make herself independent, and respected?"



“Why, she is too proud, as I before said,” replied Sir Felix. “Though a beggar, she has the pride of a dutchess. Honoria, however, has at last listened to good advice, and intends to bring down her airs, and make her useful in the house. For my part, as I said, I always despised the girl; but you know Lady Grantham’s foible! She is easily taken in by every artful flatterer!”

Matilda stood aghast, and motionless; she had not the power to move from the spot; she could not weep; her heart was oppressed almost to bursting; she at length sunk in a chair, and a violent flood of tears gave her momentary relief.

How cruel was her position! Every instant she expected to be called to make tea: how could she appear before persons, who held her in con-



tempt, conscious, as she felt, that her folly and false pride had justly subjected her to mortification and insult?

Her first impulse was to quit the house, immediately; but a moment's reflection convinced her of the impropriety and imprudence of such a step. Lady Grantham had given her work, which it would take several weeks to finish, and which could not be done out of that lady's house. If she were to quit her, before the work was finished, she might be accused of ingratitude; beside, to suddenly break off the connection would give room for ill-natured and censorious remarks in society. Matilda, though very young, was no longer a child: she had an opportunity of seeing the world, and she was well aware how delicate a thing female reputation is.

After a violent struggle, she con-



quired her feelings, and went into the drawing-room. Nobody was there, but the elderly gentleman, who had so warmly expressed his indignation. Matilda, pale and trembling, was stepping back; but he begged her to allow him a few moments' conversation, and she came in.

“Young lady,” said he, in a serious but benevolent tone, “I understand you have left your parents, in the hour of adversity, to become—— what I will not name, for I see, by your countenance, that you are ashamed of living in splendid dependence, while your family is reduced from affluence to poverty. I am a father myself; I have a daughter, about your own age; it would break my heart if she were thus to desert me, and expose herself to insult, and contempt. I feel for your unfortu-



nate parents, and, for their sake, I take the liberty to speak openly to you. It is acknowledged you have talents, exert them! Surmount that false pride, which makes you rather submit to be dependent on strangers, who insult and despise you, than gain an honorable independence. Recollect what your parents have done for you! Do not think it a disgrace to exercise your talents, for their comfort and your own support. Nothing is disgraceful but meanness and ingratitude."

Matilda, who felt the truth of the worthy gentleman's remarks, and was truly grateful for the concern he showed for her dear parents, in a modest, but dignified manner, acknowledged her former errors, bestowed just censure on the false pride in which they had originated, and, thanking him sincerely for his friendly advice, explain-



ed to him her future plans, and the motives which induced her to keep them secret, and remain with Lady Grantham some time longer. She candidly owned that she had heard what had passed in the dining-room, and expressed her sorrow to have given occasion for people to form so unfavorable an opinion of her heart.

Mr. Elliot, so the gentleman was called, who was a man of excellent intentions, and by no means stern or harsh of character, listened to Matilda with benevolent interest, confessed himself happy to have been mistaken in the judgment he had passed on her, and, exhorting her to persevere in her laudable resolution, promised not to betray the confidence she had placed in him, and assured her that, through life, he would remain her friend.

The entrance of Lady Grantham



put an end to the conversation, but Matilda felt greatly relieved; and, though the unfeeling stare and half suppressed sneers of the other guests gave her great pain, she supported it with fortitude. Having brought ourselves merited misfortune, the only way to regain the esteem of the virtuous is to bear it with dignified patience, and, by every laudable exertion, to make honorable atonement.



## CHAP. IX.

I SHALL give another instance of the cruel mortification, to which the situation of Matilda exposed her.

Lady Grantham gave a ball and supper, to which half the town was invited. Matilda, who, in pursuance of her laudable resolution to conquer false pride, was active in assisting not only Lady Grantham in her dress, but, in making preparations for the entertainment of the guests, was unwilling to make her appearance among the company, conscious of the unfavorable opinion that was entertained of her. She therefore particularly requested Lady Grantham to suffer her to keep in her chamber, as her presence was not necessary. Lady Grantham be-



ing in a good humor, graciously complied with her request; and Matilda, delighted to have an evening to herself, a thing which rarely happened, sat down quietly to her drawing.

Her satisfaction however was of short duration. Half an hour after the company had arrived, a message came from Lady Grantham, to beg she would dress herself, and come down, as that lady could not possibly do without her. Matilda, hurt and disappointed as she felt, thought she could not with propriety refuse. Lady Grantham would hardly, after the earnest request Matilda had made to be allowed to spend the evening in her own room, send for her, unless her assistance had become absolutely necessary: perhaps, there were not enough ladies, and she might be wanted to make one in the dance. It must be



remembered that Matilda was very fond of dancing, so that the supposition was not unnatural; for, as she never wished wilfully to disoblige or mortify any one, she could not habitually recollect there were persons thus void of feeling and good nature.

Lady Grantham, however, had sent for her merely to gratify her own caprice, and selfish vanity; she felt awkward at not having Matilda at her elbow, to hold her fan, her smelling-bottle, or pin up her train, should it fall, in dancing.

Poor Matilda, deceived by her own wishes, was greatly mistaken in supposing Lady Grantham wanted her to dance. Matilda danced uncommonly well, and her ladyship had no intention of letting the company see she was surpassed by her dependent.



In consequence of her mistaken idea, Matilda put on a ball dress, and hurried into the ball room, where the dancing was not yet begun. Her dress was extremely simple, and pretty, and displayed her figure to great advantage; every body looked at her to admire, and those, who had never seen Matilda before, imagined her to be a visitor, just arrived. Her pleasing intelligent countenance inspired the unprejudiced spectators with no less interest, and they were eager to show her every attention.

Lady Grantham, whose selfish vanity was mortally offended, unable to restrain her indignation, walked across the room up to Matilda, who was seated between a gentleman and his wife, and, addressing her in a tone of haughty coldness, said,

“ I am sorry the servant did not



deliver my message properly, Miss Mortimer. I did not send for you to dance; you know the set is complete. I wonder you should imagine I could suffer any of my guests to sit still while *you* usurped their place! I want you to assist me, if it be not too great a favor," added Lady Grantham, with a malicious stress on the last word.

The lady and gentleman looked with pity and surprise at Matilda, who, blushing deeper than scarlet, and scarcely able to restrain the starting tear, rose and followed Lady Grantham in silence. "Poor thing!" whispered the lady to her husband; "I suppose she is some indigent relation."

"No," answered the gentleman, "she, no doubt, is the daughter of Mortimer, the banker, who has lately lost his whole fortune. I slightly knew him, and have heard that he had a daugh-



ter who was companion to a lady of fashion."

"I sincerely pity her," continued the lady; "she seems an amiable interesting girl."

"Yes; she appears so, it is true: but her leaving her ruined parents, to live in splendid dependence, gives me, I confess, no favorable opinion of the qualities of her heart."

This was not the only mortification Matilda was to suffer, that evening: among the numerous visitors were the two sisters, Emma and Eugenia Davenant, who had detected Matilda in a falsehood, on the occasion of the pictures, which Mr. Vincent had invited that young lady to go and see, with himself and daughter. Soon after that, the sisters had gone into Wales, on a visit to their aunt, who was in a declining state of health, and had not



seen either Matilda or her parents, with whom their family had no intimacy, since their return. It must, indeed, be owned, that, though they were at the time reconciled to Matilda, for the candor of her acknowledgment, they afterward discovered so many instances of the false pride by which that young lady was actuated, that they had no desire to cultivate her friendship. They had heard, with real concern, of her worthy father's ruin, but Matilda's proud avoidance of the amiable Sophia Vincent, whose kind attentions she had rejected, and with whom they still continued to be intimate, made the liberal-minded sisters justly indignant, and prevented them from showing Matilda the kindness and respect they otherwise would have done.

They were strangers to Lady Grantham; but, as she had invited her



intimate friends to bring two or three, or more, young people, a lady had brought the sisters. Ignorant that they should meet Matilda, who they knew had left her parents, but with whose place of abode they were unacquainted, their surprise was great, on entering the room, to see her. Matilda recollected them, and blushed, while she curtsied: the young ladies, unacquainted with her true situation, and the reform that had taken place in her habits and manner of thinking, returned her salute with great coldness, and poor Matilda, who unfortunately was seated next to an ill-natured and scrutinizing old lady, the aunt of Sir Felix Grantham, was ready to sink. Mrs. Taunton, so the relation of Sir Felix was called, who watched her youthful neighbour with a confusing and un-



feeling freedom of curiosity, observed the distant manner of the young ladies, and the mortification of Matilda.

“Who are those girls,” said Mrs. Taunton, abruptly turning to her young companion; “they seem to *know* you!” added the old lady, with a sneer of ill nature; “why don’t you speak to them?”

Matilda, scarcely able to endure such unfeeling contempt, yet unwilling to show how much she was affected by it, replied:

“We were slightly acquainted, Madam; I have not seen them lately.”

“Not since your father’s failure, I suppose,” continued Mrs. Taunton, eyeing Matilda with contemptuous pity.

Matilda, greatly hurt, made no answer: her silence was considered by



Mrs. Taunton as impertinent; and that lady, looking at her with angry contempt, said, with a sneer :

“ Upon my word, Miss, this pride becomes you vastly ! It shows a *proper spirit*, and suits your *present condition*.”

“ Indeed, Madam,” answered Matilda, in a mild voice, but the tears starting in her eyes, “ you misinterpret my silence ; it did not proceed from pride, but I am not sufficiently inured to contempt, to meet it unmoved.”

“ Oh, Miss, your pride has long been notorious, and it has met its just punishment,” continued Mrs. Taunton, who thought Matilda’s presuming to justify herself an additional offence. “ As to contempt, when children are so unnatural as to leave their parents, in poverty, to run after finery and pleasures to which they have no longer any right, they must expect



to be despised. I blame my niece for encouraging such conduct: you must excuse, Miss, my speaking plainly to you; I have a right so to do, since you are dependent on my nephew and his wife, who are to inherit my fortune. At least, if you made yourself useful in the family, that would be something; but you are too fine a lady for that: you must be treated as an equal, and nobody must say a word to you, as my nephew informs me. My niece spoils you: people allow that you have sense, and can be as clever as any body, when you please; you have therefore no excuse for being so proud, and idle. When I was your age, though I never, thank God, was driven by necessity to be active and industrious, I was allowed to be the most clever girl in the county. In my youth,



young women [of fashion and fortune were taught to know themselves, and to be active in their families; but now every upstart Miss is too fine a lady to attend to any thing but the decoration of her pretty person; or do any thing but run after her pleasures.”

The censure of this speech, unfeeling as it was, in part was just; Matilda therefore felt it most severely, but without having the courage to attempt a partial justification of herself: the manners of Mrs. Taunton were too outrageously repulsive and haughty, to encourage her to make the trial: that lady had not that benevolence, which is frequently seen through the most severe censure: her reproof did not proceed from a desire to serve Matilda, but to gratify her own peevish rude and crabbed humor. Her mind was selfish and narrow, her pre-



judices were strong, her education had been vulgar, and her conviction of her own superior penetration and wisdom was not to be shaken.

To endeavour to convince such a woman of her injustice would be vain; Matilda, therefore, remained silent; but, as soon as she could, with propriety, she changed her seat. The change however proved to be for the worse, for the impertinent familiarity of a young fop is even more mortifying than the ill-natured severity of a crabbed ill bred old lady. Matilda had found a vacant seat next some ladies who, whatever their thoughts might be, were too well bred to behave with incivility, and she enjoyed a temporary relief, from the cruel mortification she had experienced; but it was of short duration.

The ladies were called to dance; a



gentleman, weary of the exercise, sat himself beside Matilda, and, giving her by his manner to understand he thought he did her great honor, addressed his conversation, which at first was studiously foppish, to her, for a considerable time.

Matilda, more hurt by the impertinent familiarity of his manner, and the air of condescension he assumed, than she had felt even at the haughty rudeness she had before experienced, vainly endeavoured to change her seat. Sir Felix, to complete her embarrassment, had come on the other side of her, and, whenever she attempted to rise, would not suffer her to move, affecting a politeness, which bordered on irony, and which only proceeded from whim, or the wish to amuse himself at her expence.

It is true, the unaffected modesty



and mild forbearance of Matilda latterly checked the impertinence of the other gentleman, and made him ashamed of having behaved with levity to a young person, who, though a dependent and treated with unfeeling disrespect, conducted herself with dignified propriety. Before the ball broke up, he had changed his tone and manner, and showed, evidently, a desire to atone for his impertinence. He conversed on various topics, and, finding Matilda as well informed as she was modest and unaffected, he conceived a just respect for her understanding, and was sorry when the company dispersed.

Before Mr. Leighton, so the gentleman was called, quitted Matilda, he apologized for his former levity, and assured her that, had he known to whom he was speaking, he should have



conducted himself very differently. This apology was some alleviation to the wounded feelings of Matilda, especially as she afterward learned that he was a distant relation to Sir George Worthy, who, before he went to India, had been intimate with her father.

Matilda, however, retired to rest, with a painful sense of her dependent situation, and strongly regretting it was not in her power immediately to return to her beloved and lamented home. The daughter who has never been separated from her tender parents, can scarcely conceive how cruel, on both sides, such a separation must be !



## CHAP. X.

THE heart and wishes of Matilda were incessantly with her parents, but writing was almost the only consolation allowed her: whenever she expressed a desire to visit her home, Lady Grantham had always some plausible excuse, to keep her away. In five months, Matilda had only twice seen her beloved parents.

And how had she spent those months? In reiterated mortifications, and almost slavish bondage; for Matilda, who thought the restraint and mortification she experienced were merited, by the former culpable desertion of her duty, bore them with fortitude and patience. Matilda now regretted the haughtiness with which



she had treated the amiable Sophia Vincent, who lived with her father, in London, and whose society would have greatly relieved her sorrows. With her, she could have spoken of her dear parents, of her future plans, and of her determination to make ample atonement for her past errors! To court her acquaintance, now, would have a mean and selfish appearance. Beside, could Sophia forgive her former illiberal pride, and rejection of her kind attentions? Or, if she had that generous oblivion of personal neglect, would not the father resent the proud avoidance Matilda had shown to an amiable and industrious daughter? Sophia was rising in the world; her talents, proper conduct, and sweet disposition, had gained her the respect and friendship of several persons, who were her superiors, in rank and for-



tune. She did not court their notice, or secure their patronage, by mean flattery; she always knew how to maintain her independence, without being rude, or forward.

Beside drawing, she had many agreeable accomplishments, which rendered her society desirable, and made her every where a welcome guest. But Sophia did not neglect her studies, to run after pleasure; she was most assiduous to improve herself, and was never so satisfied with her efforts as to imagine they might not be still much more efficacious. That is the true, indeed the only, way to attain excellence; as, no doubt, the reader has more or less experienced.

Matilda, forbearing to indulge in unavailing regret, which only weakens the mind, resolved, by emulating the laudable exertions of Sophia, to make



herself worthy of her esteem, and then candidly to take shame on herself, for her past neglect, and solicit the friendship of that amiable young lady. She applied to her drawing with redoubled ardor; she studied the best books of instruction, in that art, to make herself capable of teaching others that which she so well understood herself: but she wished to surprise her tender parents, and therefore would not mention the praise-worthy plan she had formed, till she could return to their protection, and bring it into effect.

She felt certain that the friendly Mr. Vincent, out of respect to her parents, would put her in the proper way of obtaining scholars.

“Then,” thought Matilda, weeping with mingled love and contrition, “I shall be happy. I shall atone for my culpable conduct, and add to the



comforts of my dear parents: they will no longer blush for their child: she will be worthy of their tenderness."

These consoling thoughts enabled Matilda, for some time, to support the laborious efforts she made; but, as she sat up late at night and rose early again in the morning, to apply to close and sedentary study, the exertion at length became too great for her strength, and she fell ill of a fever.

Lady Grantham, who had almost a terror of being near the sick, though she was sorry for Matilda (that is to say, as far as persons who only think of their own gratification can feel sorrow) wrote to beg Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer would immediately come to her house, and remain with Matilda, while she went with her husband into the country, till their daughter should be entirely free from fever. "She was



cruelly mortified that her own weak state of health" (this alleged weakness was purely in imagination) "prevented her from devoting herself to the exquisite duties of friendship; but her heart cherished the *alleviating hope* of seeing her *dear Matilda* soon restored to health, by the skill of the physician, whose attendance she had solicited, added to the tender cares her idolizing parents, in whose *trembling anxiety* she *feelingly sympathized*, would not fail to bestow."

I give the reader a specimen of that lady's inflated style, that young persons may see how ridiculous such an affectation of sentiment would make them in the eyes of people of sense and true feeling. The reader will perhaps ask:

"But how could Lady Grantham, who had no regard for Matilda, nay,



who treated her with such haughtiness and neglect, call Miss Mortimer *her dear Matilda*, and talk of the *exquisite duties of friendship?*”

The question is very natural; but young persons are not aware that the human mind strangely deceives itself, and that persons who have learned to parrot the most virtuous, dignified, and generous sentiments, as children repeat their alphabet, do it almost unconsciously to themselves, and, when it happens that they are aware of what they write, or say, they persuade themselves they are very sincere. Beside that vanity, which demands incessant food, always seeks to make a strong impression, no matter by what means. A vain person never stops to consider the consequences of her words, or actions, or to scrutinize her own heart; every thing she says or



does *must be right* ; so at least her vanity will persuade her.

Such a person was Lady Grantham. She persuaded herself that she was the most generous, sincere, and compassionate, of human beings ; and so at moments could persuade all who did not well know her, unless they had more than common penetration.

She sent for her own physician, and had a nurse to attend Matilda ; for, though not generous in the true sense of the word, she was not selfish, in money matters, and, having a large independent fortune of her own, she was not restrained by the narrowness of her husband, who was, as far as his situation in life would permit, very parsimonious. Before their departure from town, she called on all her acquaintance, to repeat the farce of sensibility, and lament over “ *a poor*



*young creature, who had no friend in the world, but herself, to whom she could look up, for protection and sympathy ;”* and to profess herself “*inexpressibly grieved, that the delicacy of her health forced her to tear herself from the interesting object of her anxious solicitude.*”

Those who had witnessed her treatment of the *poor young creature*, of whom it was now her whim to speak with affected tenderness and pity, could scarcely suppress a smile, at hearing Lady Grantham say things so inconsistent with her conduct, and the truth. They would not have been greatly surprised, had they known that her ladyship would not even look into Matilda’s room to see that *the interesting object of her anxious solicitude* had every thing that was proper, that her comfort was attended to, and



that, before *the poor young creature's* parents could have time to come, Lady Grantham's selfish precaution for her own health, which the physician assured her ladyship was in no danger, made her hurry from the house, and leave Matilda in the hands of an ignorant nurse, who, like most nurses, would do as she pleased, unless she were watched.

Poor Matilda! She suffered greatly, but she bore her sufferings with patient fortitude: she wished even that her parents might not be informed of her illness, fearing their anxiety and attendance on her might impair their health; but Lady Grantham, who cared little for any body's health but her own, would not listen to her.

Two days elapsed, Sir Felix and his wife were gone, the parents of Matilda did not come, and she grew worse;



the nurse was frightened, lest the blame should be laid to her management, which certainly was not calculated to hasten the recovery of the patient. Matilda was at times delirious, and, in her delirium, spoke of her past errors, the efforts she had made to atone for them, and her future plans. The physician, a man of great humanity, as well as of acknowledged eminence in his profession, resolved to write himself to Mr. Mortimer, whose direction by good fortune Lady Grantham had left, and told the nurse, that, if she did not strictly follow his orders, she must expect to be called to severe account, as the life perhaps of his patient depended on her good or ill management.

The woman, terrified by this salutary menace, promised faithfully to obey his directions, and the benevo-



lent physician went away, first to write to the parents of Matilda, and next to try if he could not, among his female friends, find some lady of humanity and good sense on whom he could prevail to superintend the treatment of Matilda, till her parents should arrive.

He fortunately recollected a young person, whose good sense, active humanity, and tenderness to the sick, he often had found occasion to admire, during the tedious illness of an infirm relation, whom she had nursed with unwearied patience.

Though slightly acquainted with herself and father, he knew them both sufficiently well not to fear a refusal on their part, when it was in their power to do good. He therefore hastened to their house, found them at home, and, without making any unseasonable compliments of apology, ac-



quainted them with the motive of his visit. Both the father and daughter were eager to assure the worthy physician that they were happy in having it in their power to oblige him, by doing an act of duty. They asked the young lady's name, and, on being told, exclaimed with surprise, mingled with concern :

“ What, the daughter of Mr. Mortimer, the banker, who failed ? ”

“ So I understand, ” answered the physician.

“ Good Heavens ! ” said the gentleman, “ is it Matilda Mortimer, whom you attend, who is confined to a bed of sickness, without any person to see that she is properly treated ? Her parents would break their hearts, if they knew her so deserted. I know they are on a visit, in Devonshire, and the letter cannot have been sent to them. I will go down to them immediately,



myself," continued the father; "and my daughter shall return with you to your sick patient: you could not have chosen a more tender or cautious nurse. No time must be lost; I will set off this very day."

"Poor Matilda!" said the young lady, wiping away the tears, which involuntarily gushed from her eyes; "had I before known she was ill, she should not have been without a friend to console and properly attend her."

The reader, no doubt, will be glad to recognize, in these benevolent persons, the worthy Mr. Vincent and his amiable daughter, whose goodness of heart was never dormant, though they did not, like Lady Grantham, and those persons who affect the jargon of sensibility and elevated sentiment, boast of their *disinterested friendship* and *exquisite feeling*.



## CHAP. XI.

SOPHIA, whose activity equalled her obliging disposition, was soon ready to accompany Doctor Hartly, so the humane physician was called, to the house of Lady Grantham. It was in the afternoon; Matilda, whose delirium came on toward night, was very bad in her head. Doctor Hartly thought it best to prepare that young lady, for the unexpected visit of Sophia, by telling her that he had brought a young friend, to keep her company, who would see that she was properly attended, and show her every kindness.

“She did not, till this afternoon, hear of your illness,” said Doctor Hartly, or she would have been with



you before. Come, my dear young lady," continued the benevolent physician, "you must take courage; with proper care you will soon be well, and Miss Vincent is the best nurse in the world. Do not be uneasy about your parents; they are on a visit in Devonshire, and have not yet received intelligence of your indisposition. You must not give way to lowness of spirits, for it is not only injurious to your health, but quite unnecessary. Will you see your friend, Sophia, who is anxious to be near you?"

Matilda, who was too ill and weak to give utterance to her feelings, could only move her lips to say, yes; and Sophia was led by Doctor Hartly to the bed side of the poor invalid, who on seeing her burst into tears.

Sophia read her thoughts, affectionately kissed her, and begged she



would not agitate herself; which request was enforced by the worthy physician.

Matilda, whose own good sense pointed out the necessity of keeping her mind calm, followed the advice her friends gave: Mr. Hartly, who knew, from her manner of speaking, and the peculiar beat of her pulse, that the delirium would probably come on at night, left proper instructions, with Sophia, before he went, and promised to call early in the morning.

Sophia immediately employed herself, and the nurse, in preparing the necessary things for her friend; she sat up with Matilda the whole night, and, by following the directions she had received, gave ease to the head of the patient, and abated the violence of the delirium.



The next morning, Mr. Hartly found Matilda, though weak, much better; and he pronounced her recovery to be certain, and speedy, if his directions were implicitly followed: “which I am certain they will be,” added the worthy physician, looking at Sophia. “I have before had experience of this young lady’s good sense and proper treatment of the sick. I only wish I could leave all my patients in such excellent hands.”

Matilda pressed the hand of Sophia, and her looks said more than language could have done.

Mr. Hartly wrote to Lady Grantham, to inform her ladyship that a friend of Matilda’s attended her, in the absence of her parents, and to apologize for the liberty he had taken, but which the safety of his patient seemed to require. Lady Grantham



returned an answer in her usual sentimental style, in which she desired Miss Vincent would consider herself at home.

While the amiable Sophia is paying every gentle office of friendship and humanity to Matilda, let us return to the tender parents, to whom Mr. Vincent so kindly hastened, to inform them of Matilda's illness. He found them at the expected place, but took care to convey the afflicting intelligence he brought with caution.

What was the grief of the anxiously affectionate parents! But how lively was the gratitude they felt, toward Mr. Vincent, his amiable daughter, and the humane physician! Their indignation, at the want of feeling Lady Grantham had shown, was no less great; and they determined no longer to leave their beloved child with stran-



gers, but, on her recovery, to take her home.

Mr. Vincent informed them of the praise-worthy exertions of Matilda, her sincere repentance, and her ardent wish again to live with her dear parents; of all of which, in her delirium, she had frequently spoken. It was Mr. Hartly from whom that gentleman had received this information, and the doctor had declared that her illness had certainly originated in over exertion, added to anxiety of mind. The character of Lady Grantham was known to him, and he sincerely pitied those who were subjected to her haughty and capricious humours.

“ Dear child,” said the tender parents, shedding tears of affection and grief; “ she has indeed made severe



atonement for her past errors! She is more than ever worthy of our love! Oh, should we lose her!"

The thought was agony! Mr. Vincent conjured his respectable friends not to alarm themselves, for Doctor Hartly, whose medical talents were of the first order, did not think his patient in danger, unless she were improperly treated, which Sophia would take care should not be the case. The parents listened to Mr. Vincent with anxious hope, but they lost not a moment in preparing for their journey, and they took the swiftest mode of conveyance.

On their arrival, in London, Mr. Vincent took his friends to his own house, for the physician had particularly desired that gentleman not to let the parents of Matilda come sud-



denly upon her, but first to call himself in Grosvenor-street, and see if she had sufficient strength to bear the interview.

How anxiously the tender parents waited his return! The distance was short, yet every minute appeared an hour! At length, Mr. Vincent returned, with a smiling countenance; the friendly physician, whom that gentleman had found with his patient, accompanied him.

“ We bring you good news,” said Mr. Vincent; “ your daughter is much better, and in a fair way of recovery; but Doctor Hartly, whom you now see, says, she is still very weak, and is of opinion that you should defer the meeting for a few days, for fear of a relapse. I have assured him of your submission to his mandate.”



The delighted parents could not find words to express their gratitude to the worthy physician, whose skill and humanity had perhaps saved their daughter's life. Much as they wished to see their beloved Matilda, they did not attempt to dispute his better judgment. The health of their child was at stake, and what personal sacrifice will not the tender parent make! Oh, that children were as willing to sacrifice the unreasonable wishes of youth, to the experience of their affectionate and judicious parents! That they were sufficiently aware of the sacred claim paternal tenderness has on the gratitude and compliance of a child! But, till children themselves become parents, they but inadequately feel the labor, affliction, and anxiety, a parent undergoes in rearing the infancy, in-



structing the childhood, and guiding the youth of their offspring. It is then only that they are fully aware of all they owe to the dear authors of their being! It is then they truly feel the sacred nature and extent of filial duty! It is then they experience the anxiety, the fatigue, the tenderness, and the bitter grief of heart, their parents so often have felt, and recollect, with shame and sorrow, the inadequate return they have made, while supposing themselves the most grateful and affectionate of children.

When Matilda and the amiable Sophia were left alone, the former expressed the shame and regret she had long felt, in recollecting her neglect of that young lady, and the desire she had to become worthy of her friendship, and atone for her past errors.



Sophia listened to her friend with unfeigned pleasure, and assured Matilda that the past had long been forgotten.

“ Had I known your favorable sentiments of me,” continued the amiable girl, “ I should have solicited your friendship, as eagerly as you have accepted mine. I always did justice to the qualities of your heart, which I know is excellent, while I regretted your indulging in false pride, which only made you enemies, and exposed you to ill-natured criticism. How happy I am,” continued Sophia, affectionately taking her hand, “ to find you, dear Matilda, cured of a fault which would have made you very unhappy.”

“ It *has* made me very unhappy, indeed,” replied Matilda! “ But the just mortification I have suffered has



been the means of recalling me to common sense, and my duty. I therefore consider my sufferings as fortunate, especially as they have gained me a friend like you."

Sophia, delighted as she was to hear her friend speak so rationally, and with so much affection, would not suffer Matilda to fatigue herself by too much talking; she imposed silence on her charge, and made her compose herself to rest. Sophia rested herself in the day, that she might be able properly to attend and watch the invalid by night. She was beside too careful of her father's peace of mind, to be negligent of her health; her actions were regulated by sound understanding and common sense, which do not exclude generous and refined feeling, as some persons, who have the latter, but who are defective



in the former, mistakenly suppose. Without common sense, the finest talents and the most elevated feelings are rendered, instead of a benefit to society, of comparative inutility to the world, and dangerous to their possessor: to women particularly. Let every young person keep this in mind. *Common sense*, however simple in itself, is a virtue we cannot too assiduously acquire, and is absolutely necessary to our domestic happiness.

When Matilda was informed that her parents were arrived, and in good health, her joy was almost too much for her strength, and she earnestly entreated to be permitted to see them. She did not however murmur, when Mr. Hartly very gravely told her that such an indulgence must be refused, in her present weak state. She certainly felt greatly disappointed at this prohi-



bition, and sick persons, generally speaking, are impatient under privation; but Matilda was so gentle of disposition that she bore the disappointment with perfect good humor. Gentleness is a delightful quality, especially when it is combined with fortitude; and Matilda, as we have seen, had courage, or she could not have conquered a defect, which long indulgence had made it so difficult to eradicate. Perseverance and fortitude will overcome difficulties, which at first appear insurmountable.



## CHAP. XII.

IN a few days Matilda was so far recovered, that Mr. Hartly no longer objected to; the wished-for happy re-union. She was able to sit up, though not entirely free from fever, and Sophia administered strengthening and reviving food.

How can I describe the tender meeting, between Matilda and her excellent parents? The heart of the reader will suggest all that such a daughter and such parents, under similar circumstances, could say, or feel. The worthy physician and Mr. Vincent were present, and sympathized in the happiness of the united little family. The amiable Sophia was tenderly caressed, by the grateful



parents, and received the praise she so highly deserved: but the approbation of her dear father was the most flattering to her heart; she would not have bartered his good opinion for the homage of a world! To see him happy was the greatest blessing she could desire, and that blessing was Sophia's! The sweet reward of her filial duty and affectionate efforts to make some small atonement for the anxious cares and excellent education the best of fathers had bestowed!

Matilda, when her strength increased, consulted with Mr. Vincent on the plan she had formed of making her talent of drawing the source of honorable independence. That gentleman warmly applauded her resolution, and promised to interest all his friends in her success, and exert his influence to obtain pupils for her, as soon as he



had given her some necessary instructions, in the art of teaching. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer, who saw that their daughter had effectually conquered that false pride, which formerly had made her consider the exerting of her talents as degrading, were delighted with the virtuous ardor she displayed, and bestowed that heartfelt praise which, in the mouth of a beloved and honored parent, is so gratifying. Sophia offered her assistance with sincere cordiality, which was gratefully received by her young friend.

Mr. Mortimer, and his wife, as their daughter grew better, wrote to inform Lady Grantham "that they could no longer bear the absence of Matilda, who was equally anxious to return home," and to pay the customary civilities which, on such occa-



sions, good breeding requires. Lady Grantham, who perceived, from the firm though polite tone of the letter, that it would be in vain to make them alter their resolution, vexed as she now was to part with Matilda, whom she had made very useful to her, and whose loss she hourly felt, wrote back, as usual, a most sentimental and professing answer, stating—“ *the inexpressible regret she felt, at being called upon to relinquish the charming society of her beloved friend;*” and the “ *violence she did her feelings, in not exerting her whole powers of persuasion, to prevail on Matilda’s respected parents to trust their amiable daughter to her friendship. Her mortification was excessive, her disappointment cruel, but, as she could not seek personal gratification at the expence of her friends, she submitted, without murmuring, to their decision.*”



She concluded her letter with congratulations on Matilda's returning health, unmeaning professions of *everlasting* regard, and inflated compliments, which that lady had at her finger's end.

The day before Matilda went home with her parents, Mr. Torrington, the brother of Lady Grantham, returned from the country, where he had been detained much longer than he had expected. That gentleman was very glad to hear that Matilda was going home with her parents, whom he highly respected, and no less delighted to find her cured of a defect, against which he had so seriously warned her. He gave just praise to the resolution she had formed to exert her talents, and make herself independent, and assured Matilda that he would aid her efforts to the utmost of his ability.



He also promised to introduce her to an amiable lady, with whom he was on the point of marriage, and whom Matilda had never seen, as she resided in the country. Matilda, thus encouraged by her friends, and restored to her own esteem, became the happiest of human beings: her health and strength returned, with proper exercise and care, and, in a few weeks, she was able to renew her studies with equal ardor, though with greater prudence.

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer removed to London, because it was necessary that Matilda should live in the metropolis, both for her improvement and for the connections she had to form; beside, the generous friendship Mr. Vincent and his daughter had shown, made Matilda, and her parents, anxious to reside near and pay them every



attention. Sophia and her father were no less desirous of aiding Matilda, and the most perfect harmony subsisted between these amiable families.

Mr. Vincent, after giving Matilda a sufficient number of lessons in the art of instructing others, procured that young lady pupils, and Mr. Torrington, whose connections, though not numerous, were of the first respectability, recommended Matilda to his friends, who were happy to encourage her virtuous exertions, and were no less pleased with her amiable manners and disposition. The wife of Mr. Torrington, who was totally opposite in mind and manner to the *sentimental* Lady Grantham, conceived a sincere regard for Matilda, and showed her every attention. Those persons, who before had judged unfavorably of her heart and



understanding, seeing Matilda honorably exercise her talents, and make her excellent parents happy, changed their opinion, and treated her with as much respect as they had formerly done with distant neglect.

How different, now, were the feelings of Matilda! She lived retired, had no superfluous servants to wait on her, did every thing for herself, and relieved her mother from the burden of domestic management, which in no way interfered with her professional duties, for she knew how properly to parcel out her time; and she now lived infinitely happier than when she had numerous domestics at her command, and indulged in the dissipation of a fine lady.

Her amusements acquired a double charm, for they were taken in mode-



ration, and were always preceded or followed by study.

She had few acquaintance, but she had friends, on whose sincerity and stability she could depend.

She no longer treated her inferiors with that revolting pride, which, in despite of her humane and generous disposition, had made her generally disliked; but she equally avoided the contrary extreme, which is even more injurious in its consequences to ourselves, and those who depend on us, and she was no less respected than beloved.

If she had any charitable donation to make, she was not too proud to go, herself, and see that it was properly delivered, while she bestowed that sympathy which the wounded feelings of the unfortunate demand. She did not make a parade of benevolence,



and she was anxious that her charity should be worthily administered; but her ear was always open to the unaffected tale of distress, and her heart never denied relief.

If Matilda had committed an error, as the wisest and best intentioned persons are liable to do, she no longer persisted in or attempted to defend it.

Her affectionate attentions to her parents were unremitting; she forestalled every wish, watched every look, and studied every means of giving them pleasure, and adding to their comforts. She was cited, by all who knew her, as the model of daughters; and her tender parents wept, with delight, while they listened to the praise bestowed on their dear Matilda.



The Miss Davenants, who had before avoided Matilda, on account of her false pride, and her unpardonable neglect of their favorite, Sophia Vincent, now courted her society. Mr. Elliot, the benevolent gentleman, who had so kindly interested himself in her welfare, was no less eager to give her encouragement: his daughter, a most amiable young lady, solicited her friendship, and became her pupil.

In a few years, after unwearied perseverance, Matilda acquired a sufficient knowledge of her profession to gain a good moderate income. The propriety of her conduct made her universally respected; her manners were so pleasing, and her disposition so gentle and obliging, that it was impossible not to like her. She still lives with her dear parents, whose declining



years she renders happy, and, in the society of the amiable Sophia and her other kind friends, enjoys the respect and happiness she so well deserves.

THE END.



*Sona*



