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Henry Golding

with Miss Brandt's Love

June 25th. 1819.

Frontispiece.

Hewitt.

Tame Robin & Goldfinch.

THE

HISTORY

OF A

TAME ROBIN.

SUPPOSED TO BE

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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THE HISTORY

OF A

TAME ROBIN.

CHAP. I.

YOU will, perhaps, wonder, my young readers, how I attained to a sufficient knowledge of literature, to relate my adventures; but your astonishment will subside when I inform you, that the early part of my life was passed in a school-room, where, though few were taught, much was inculcated; and I, though a silent auditor, partook of the general instruction. I once heard the "Life of Carlo" read by one of the pupils;

I was greatly pleased with it, and resolved from that time to improve as much as possible the advantages I possessed, that, if any of the events of my life should be worth relating, I might be able to publish them. Of the ultimate success of my endeavours, it will be your province to judge when you have read my history, to which, without further preface, I now proceed.

I was hatched in a thick, sheltered box-tree, or bush, for it was not more than a yard from the ground. My father and mother attended on me, my brother, and sister, (for there was three of us,) with the most tender solicitude: my mother, indeed, scarcely ever left us, but when her affectionate mate, alarmed for her health, insisted on taking her place, that she might enjoy some relaxation from the arduous, though, to her, pleasing office of maternal tenderness.

My father brought us plenty of food, which, from his account, was procured

with little difficulty; for he mentioned some persons who were so kind as to strew crumbs of bread near our dwelling, on purpose for our use. I frequently felt an ardent curiosity to behold these good friends. My brother and sister expressed the same desire, and we frequently entertained ourselves with conjectures respecting them, which, however, always ended with the supposition that they resembled our good parents. Judge then of our astonishment, when, one day, we heard a rustling noise in the box-tree, and the next moment beheld three or four large objects, regarding us with apparent delight. We were all greatly terrified, not knowing whether they intended to do us good or harm: fear naturally suggested the latter. However, we were soon reassured, by their closing the branches gently, and regretting that they had disturbed my mother, who, on their approach, had flown to an adjacent paling, where,

in breathless anxiety, she waited their departure.

"Well, my poor children," said she, on her return, "you have at last seen our benefactors; they are called *human beings*, and though many of them are a terror to our race, yet I do not think those you have seen are of that number, for I have witnessed several instances of their affection towards the feathered tribe; and a young blackbird, who is our neighbour, informed me, that, during the last winter, which was uncommonly severe, he found an asylum in their dwelling, where a small apartment was allotted him, and that in the spring he was brought near this spot and set at liberty, though not without some regret on their part; which evinces that they preferred his happiness to their own gratification, and practised their duty, though in opposition to their inclination: therefore, I trust we have not much to fear from them, for they must be actu-

ated by principles of justice and humanity."

After this first visit, we generally saw our friends daily, and our fear of them daily diminished; yet we could not help observing, that our parents always flew away on their approach, and we once ventured to ask our mother the cause.

"It is not," said she, "that I apprehend any injury from them; on the contrary, we have continual proofs that they desire to increase rather than to diminish our happiness, but my own experience, and the many instances I have heard of the cruelty of some of their species towards us, have produced, in my mind, such an habitual mistrust, that I never venture within their reach; though I have observed that we Robins approach much nearer than any other birds, except, indeed, when they are impelled by famine, in an intensely cold winter."

Several days passed after this conversa-

tion without any extraordinary occurrence. Our friends came to visit us as usual; we throve very fast; and as we were nearly fledged, and the weather fine, our parents were longer and more frequently absent. One morning, when they had just quitted us, after many kind injunctions respecting our conduct during their absence, we heard the sound of voices, which we soon recognized to be those of our friends. They approached, and one, as usual, came to peep into our nest. "Pretty little creatures!" said she, "they are all safe: really they are gaping for food. How close they lie beside each other, just as if they were packed." "How I should like to see them!" exclaimed another voice. "Well, I will show you one," resumed the former; and so saying, she put her hand gently into the nest and lifted me out.

What a different scene now presented itself to my view, to any I had before imagined. I had fancied that the environs of our box-tree were the boundaries

of the world, and our nest no inconsiderable part of it. I now found myself in a pretty, circular garden, enclosed by a rustic paling, and surrounded by a delightful shrubbery, excepting on one side, where stood a green-house. My friend (though I was somewhat alarmed at this new proof of her friendship) carried me to a little distance, where I saw three young ladies, who appeared more healthy and fresh-coloured than the one who held me, whom, from their respectful manner towards her, I supposed to be their governess; for they did not call her mamma. They all agreed in admiring me very much, and I still continuing to gape, the elder lady put a bit of bread into my mouth, which I immediately swallowed; she then conveyed me back to the nest, and retired.

I began to relate what I had seen to my brother and sister, which so strongly excited the curiosity of the former, that he resolved to get out of the nest. My

sister and I endeavoured to dissuade him from so rash an attempt, but without effect, for he got on the edge of the nest, and almost instantly disappeared. Just then I heard our friends returning, and trembled for my brother, lest he should be crushed to death. The elder lady peeped into our nest, to see, as she said, whether I was hurt by her having fed me, and missing my brother, informed her pupils of it, with expressions of regret at having disturbed us at first.

"What shall I do?" exclaimed she; "the poor little thing will be killed or starved. I wish I had not touched them." She then began to search about the bush for the little truant. My poor sister now became dreadfully alarmed: the shaking of the bush, and the confusion of voices, in her idea, seemed to threaten us with immediate destruction. I too was somewhat afraid, but concealed my fear, in order to repress my sister's.

The search was continued, but my

brother was not found; and my sister's fortitude at last entirely forsaking her, she also quitted the nest. My terror increased after her departure, but still I resolved to await the event where I was, as I thought it probable that the dangers I might encounter elsewhere, were as great as those from which I should escape by flight. Our friend now looked again into the nest, and her distress was greatly increased on finding two of us gone. "Worse and worse!" said she: "how have I disturbed the happiness of this peaceful little family! I will never again venture near a nest. Poor little things, I fear they will all die!"

At this moment the gardener coming past, offered his assistance. He soon found my brother and sister, to the great joy of our friends, who immediately placing us side by side, as if nothing had happened, left us.

They were scarcely gone, when my brother and sister began to describe what they had seen, and expressed such satisfac-

tion from this first excursion, though they had been only under the box-tree, that they resolved to stay no longer in the nest. I begged them to remain where they were, at least till our parents' return; but they told me, that, instead of giving advice, I ought to take it, and accompany them in their excursion. This I could by no means consent to, so they again left me.

Our parents had now been a great while away, and I, anxiously expecting their return, sat on the edge of the nest. At length I heard the welcome sound of their voices at no great distance. But, alas! I was never again to behold them; for at the same time I heard other voices, not so agreeable, and the ladies once more approached the box-tree.

"Are they safe?" said one. "Oh dear, no!" was the answer, "they are all gone except one, which is sitting on the edge of the nest, ready to get away. How I pity the poor parents! What will be their distress, when they find their snug

little nest deserted, their pretty little ones, perhaps, destroyed. I have a great mind to preserve one, if possible. The old birds may find the others, and feed them on the ground; at least, I shall be sure that they will not *all* perish of hunger."

You may easily imagine, my young readers, that the children admired this project, and were very anxious for its execution. Accordingly, I was taken home with them, and soon ceased to regret the change; for my mistress fed and attended me with the greatest tenderness, and I soon got accustomed to her way of feeding me, and grew fond of her. I will pass over the surprise I felt at every thing I saw in the school-room, (whither I was conveyed,) lest I should fatigue my young readers by depicting sentimens of which they cannot partake: besides, I dare say they are anxious to be introduced to the family of which I am now become an inmate.

CHAP. II.

SIR CHARLES and Lady Seymour were the amiable possessors of a delightful mansion. They had, I found, seven children, five daughters and two sons: three only of the former were in the school-room, the other two, with their infant brother, occupied an adjoining room, called the nursery, and the eldest boy was at school. My chief acquaintance was with the elder girls, whom I shall consequently mention most frequently in the course of my narrative, and therefore shall now more particularly describe them.

Caroline, the eldest, was in her twelfth year, very tall, and rather pretty; but her good, sensible mother had taught her, how little personal advantages are to be

esteemed at any time; and that they should be considered rather as a misfortune, when not accompanied by corresponding charms in the heart and mind. The precepts of her mamma were always dear to Caroline; nor were they ever counteracted by any extraordinary anxiety in the former, respecting her own or her daughter's appearance. Her example always showed the possibility of obeying her precepts, and, consequently, they were never wilfully disobeyed. Few children, however, are faultless; nor was Caroline always exempt from blame. She was naturally proud, and though her excellent parents had, by reason and religion, in some degree repressed this unamiable quality, yet, in unguarded moments, it would sometimes display itself. She could not bear reproof, though, from a degree of heedlessness in her manners, she more frequently required it than many children who are not half so amiable; for she was

gentle, affectionate, and very attentive to her studies, in which she had made considerable progress. She did not like to be reminded to hold up her head, though she scarcely ever did so without being told; and I frequently observed, that, when told, her heedlessness made her almost immediately forget, and her head resumed its usual position.

Anna was the name of the second. She having less good sense than her sister, possessed a small portion of personal vanity, with some disinclination for study: yet she was good-humoured, obliging, and compassionate; always seeking some opportunity to assist or relieve her fellow-creatures.

Julia, the youngest, was nine years old, and, had she not been sometimes rather idle, would have been a charming little girl, for she united all the good qualities of her sisters, with few of their defects. In short, the failings of my young friends were such as time, and some attention on

their part, with a great deal on that of their governess, would doubtless eradicate; while their virtues were such as, matured and confirmed by their own exertions, and the example of their dear mother, could not fail to render them an ornament to society, and a source of happiness and comfort to their parents.

It is not difficult to imagine, that in this charming family I enjoyed every comfort that could be procured for me. At first I slept during a great part of the day, often in my mistress' hand, in her lap, or on her shoulder. She was delighted with me for being so tame, and made me her little companion, when her pupils, having finished their daily lessons, left the school-room to spend the evening with their parents. It was then my chief delight began; for my mistress being very fond of music, generally amused herself with it for some time every evening. On these occasions I usually lay on her knee till I fell asleep; but one night, being

more merry than usual, I hopped on her music-book, where, finding a safe and comfortable roosting place, I remained, and ever after chose to go to sleep there. When my mistress retired to her room, she always took me with her, in a little warm basket, lined with flannel and feathers.

I was not, however, always confined to the house: my dear mistress frequently took me out, and I found that the pretty garden where I was hatched, belonged to her; for as Lady Seymour esteemed her very much, she spared no proof of kindness, and this garden had been, by her desire, enclosed for my mistress, who, taking great pleasure in flowers, here cultivated them herself. When thus employed, she let me hop about the flower-beds, and I generally made a good use of my time, by catching such small insects as I could manage. This practice continued during several weeks, till one day (my wings being full grown) I took a longer flight than usual: this alarmed my mis-

tress, and induced her to keep me at home much more than before.

Having by this time become familiar to the language of the school-room, I began to feel an interest in whatever passed there. I observed, one day, that the children were in higher spirits than usual, and soon learned, from their discourse, that they were expecting the arrival of their papa, with their brother from school, where he had been six months; and as he had never before been so long absent, his return was now joyfully anticipated by his affectionate sisters. But who can express their disappointment and grief, when, instead of their brother, came a letter from their papa, informing them that the former was extremely ill, and unable to proceed, though he had already come more than half way. Poor little girls! how distressed they appeared: yet no impatient expressions escaped them on this severe disappointment. They had learned, from their dear mamma, the duty of resignation,

and now seemed to partake of her fortitude in practising it.

"Disappointments," said she, after having read the letter, "are extremely beneficial to young persons, and I trust that my dear girls will prove, by their behaviour on this occasion, that all my lessons of patience and submission have not been disregarded. Your brother's return is doubtless retarded, but I trust that is all. When he recovers and arrives, you will meet him with greater pleasure from this transient affliction, particularly if you bear it properly."

"But are you really going to leave us?" mamma, said little Julia: "papa says he wishes for you."

"I have no doubt, my love, that your papa will procure Charles every thing that is requisite, and I could do no more; however, I shall wait till after the post comes in to-morrow, before I decide that point."

"Your absence would be doubly painful

to us now," said Anna, "for we want you to comfort us."

"That is true," observed the amiable Caroline, "but our poor sick brother stands more in need of comfort than we: besides, it is so long since he saw mamma."

"Well, my dears, it will be time enough to-morrow to discuss that subject," said Lady S. "now I must go and write an answer to this letter, and you had better continue your studies."

The dear girls dried their tears, and, resuming their occupations, seemed to feel their grief alleviated, though the anxious expressions that at intervals escaped them, showed that it was not forgotten.

At length the next day arrived, and the post brought the pleasing intelligence that Charles was better; however, not being yet allowed to leave his room, he would not be with them till the following week.

At last the happy day arrived, and towards evening, just as the children had

finished their supper, a post-chaise stopped at the door. "Papa and Charles!" exclaimed they all at once, and flew to meet and embrace their beloved relatives. I remained quietly with my mistress, and, in about a quarter of an hour, Charles, accompanied by his sisters, came to pay his respects to her. He was a fine little boy, about the size of Julia, though somewhat younger. I observed, with pleasure, that he seemed very fond of his sisters; answering their numerous questions with affectionate attention, though it certainly required some judgment to do so; for they scarcely gave him time to reply to one, before they asked another, so eager were they to know whatever concerned him.

"Oh! Charles," said Julia, "do you know, Miss Sedley has the prettiest, tamest Robin you can imagine. But do you know whether papa has brought me a cage? I asked him for one in my letter."

"A cage? Oh yes," said Charles, "and I have brought you a goldfinch in it."

"For me?—a goldfinch!—where is it?" said she, and ran out of the room, to fetch this newly-acquired treasure."

"But where is this Robin?" asked the little boy: "may I see it?"

"Yonder on the music-book," replied Anna; "Miss Sedley will show him to you."

"That I will," said my mistress, and taking me in her hand, she introduced me to my new friend, who admired me so much, that, if Robins were susceptible of vanity, I should have been one of the vainest.

Little Julia now returned, bringing in a large cage, in which I saw a pretty-looking bird, apparently much older than myself; but as it was getting rather dark, I was too sleepy to make any further observation, so putting my head under my wing, I settled myself to sleep in my mistress's hand.

CHAP. III.

THE next day I had an opportunity of observing my new friend, and the companion he had brought me, more leisurely, and I conceived no unfavourable opinion of either. As I was not at all timid, I jumped about on the outside of the goldfinch's cage, which my mistress perceiving, she opened the door and allowed me to go in. I was by no means displeased at finding myself thus shut up, as I found such little pieces of food as I could manage, and this greatly amused me; for I had hitherto been unable to feed myself at all, except when out of doors. The goldfinch, too, seemed by no means averse to my company, though I observed that she did not like me to come too near her;

much less would she allow any of the children to touch her, for she fluttered violently if they only approached her cage. I thought this timidity very silly, and one day ventured to tell her so; representing, at the same time, that I got no harm by my familiarity, and, therefore, why should she apprehend any.

"Ah, I perceive you are a novice," said she; "you would cease to wonder at my fears, if you knew my history."

As I had never known any other birds than my father and mother, and them only a short time, I felt my curiosity very strongly excited, and requested her to gratify it by relating her adventures, which she did, in nearly the following terms.

"I, with four others, first saw the light in the delightful month of June. We were hatched in an apple-tree, which stood in the midst of a good kitchen-garden. I need not describe to you the affectionate cares of our beloved parents: you have

too recently experienced the tender solicitude of yours, to have lost the remembrance of it; and as it is a sentiment which pervades the whole of the feathered race, it is nearly the same in all the species. Let it suffice then, that their cares were more than repaid by our health and safety. We became very fine little birds, and were just fledged: our parents began to talk of teaching us to use our little wings, which as yet we had not so much as expanded, and one evening I heard my mother telling my father that it was high time we should decamp, as she had great reason to suspect that the nest had been closely observed by the gardener. My father, on hearing this suspicion, immediately concluded that it would be expedient to remove on the following day; and we, who were sufficiently awake to hear the conversation, promised ourselves much pleasure from the projected excursion of the morrow. But, alas! how often have I experienced that we deceive ourselves with the hopes of

happiness we are destined never to enjoy! These, my first hopes, were the more sanguine, as I had never known disappointment, and, consequently, I suffered more acutely from their not being realized.

"We were all asleep, my mother in the nest with us, my father on an adjoining branch, when suddenly we were aroused by a rustling noise immediately over our heads, and I felt myself, with one of my brothers, in the grasp of some unknown being. Our parents fled, they knew not whither, (for it was a dark night,) and we were conveyed by the stranger to a room which overlooked the garden, and placed in a basket, where, after having remained some time very comfortless and chilly, we at length fell asleep.

"Our clamours aroused the gardener (for he, it appeared, was the disturber of our peace) by day-break; he arose and endeavoured to feed us, but so awkwardly, that we were more fatigued than refreshed

by his kindness, for such I am sure he intended it. Finding, therefore, his efforts were of little use, he put us into a small cage, which he carried into the garden, and hung up in the tree where we were hatched. It was then I saw our once comfortable little nest entirely forsaken. I looked aroumd, in the hope of seeing our parents, but neither of them appeared: however, in a fork of the tree, I discovered my little sister lying very still, as if she had not yet recovered the panic into which we had all been thrown the preceding evening. I pointed her out to my brother, and we both called to her; but she either did not hear, or was afraid to answer us.

"The noise we made, however, had one good effect, for it brought our parents, who were just then hovering over their late peaceful abode, in order, if possible, to regain their lost family. They were much distressed at finding us in captivity; but as our present wants were on that account the more urgent, they tried to

comfort us with the assurance that they would speedily return with food, and then left us, not forgetting to take our little sister with them.

"They soon returned, and when the calls of hunger were satisfied, we made some enquiries about our two brothers, whom we had neither seen nor heard. They informed us, that they had conveyed them to a place of safety soon after day-break, and had then returned, in the hope of finding our sister and us. I will not detail the whole of our conversation, nor weary you with the relation of our complaints, and the consolations offered by our parents; but proceed to inform you, that their visits were constant, and our wants always supplied. At length, however, the weather became very hot, and we began to suffer much from thirst; for though the food our parents brought us was generally moist, it was by no means sufficiently so to supply the want of water, which, had we been at liberty, we could have procured

abundantly for ourselves. Our friend the gardener did not perceive our uneasiness, though he took us in every night, till one morning he found my poor brother just expiring, and me apparently very ill. He then tried to recover us by giving us water. With me his efforts succeeded, but my poor brother was too far gone, and, though he revived for a short time, died that day.

"I now felt my condition so forlorn, that confinement was doubly painful to me, and grief for the loss of my beloved companion was nearly effecting what pain had not accomplished, when the gardener observing that I did not thrive, resolved to set me free. Accordingly, he one day opened my prison door, and I, who did not want much persuasion to depart, immediately flew out. My first sensation was exquisite delight at finding myself at liberty. I hopped from bough to bough, on the first tree I came to, and exerted

the little voice I then had, in strains of rapture.

"When my ecstasy had somewhat subsided, I remembered my parents, and anticipated the pleasure I should have in ranging at large with them; but it being about noon, and not expecting them till the evening, I purposed hovering near the spot till the interval (which never before appeared so long) should elapse. The gardener, however, was again destined to be the destroyer of my hopes, for some time after he came into the garden, and though I thought myself quite secure from observation, he soon perceived me. He called to me, and I, seized with terror, lest, repenting his late precious gift, he had come to reclaim it and convey me back to my prison, immediately flew away.

"So fast and so far did my fright carry me, that I could not find my way back again, when the thought of my parents recurred to me; so that, with extreme an-

guish, I now found myself obliged to relinquish the hope of ever seeing them again. This, as you may suppose, was a severe stroke to me; and I began to discover that there are other evils besides captivity, scarcely less insupportable.

"Having no one now to provide food for me, and being hungry, I sought it for myself, and soon found abundance; but even in this particular I experienced fresh mortification, for whether, having been brought up in a cage, I had imbibed habits different from those of my species who were at large, or whether my being a stranger was the cause, I know not; but all the goldfinches I approached treated me with contempt and derision, and when I once attempted to expostulate with them, they proceeded to further violence, and attacking me with their beaks, drove me from their society.

"My days were now passed in solitude, but my nights were not the less peaceful; for though my situation was somewhat

forlorn, I was not conscious of having done any thing disgraceful; and surely, thought I, misfortune is no crime; nay, so far from it, that I am persuaded, were my persecutors to hear my sad adventures, they would pity and console me.

"In my rambles to seek food and amusement, I often approached a village, by which you are to understand several houses near each other. One day, being near this place, I saw a very large bird just above me, with his eyes intently fixed on me. I flew from the spot where I was, but found, to my great astonishment, that he followed me. Not knowing his intention, I continued my flight, and he his pursuit, till we came near one of the houses in the village. I had often seen the little birds pursue each other in sport, and at first imagined that to be his object; but as I was now nearly exhausted, and unable to fly so fast as before, my pursuer gained upon me; and, as he came nearer, I perceived that his feet were

large, strong, and armed with immense claws; his eyes fierce and piercing, and his whole appearance terrific.

"My fears had now nearly overcome me, and I was on the point of sinking to the ground, an easy prey to this destroyer, when one effort saved me. I perceived an open window in the habitation nearest to us, and collecting the little strength I had left, made towards it, entered, and sunk breathless on the bosom of a young lady who was sitting near it. She immediately rose, and taking me gently in her hand, shut the window. 'Poor little bird,' said she, 'something must have alarmed you; but here you are safe and sure of protection. I will take care of you.'

"She then gave me some water, which I found very refreshing, and presently after, one of her sisters coming into the room, I learnt her intentions respecting myself. 'See, Lucy,' said she, 'what a treasure I have.' 'A goldfinch! Where did you get it?' 'In a manner so extraor-

dinary, that I shall not easily be prevailed on to part with it. Though I am much averse to slavery, and should not like to keep it entirely a prisoner, yet, as it came to me for protection, I should be unwilling to expose it again to the danger it so lately escaped.'

"She then related the manner of my coming to her, and observed, that she supposed some bird of prey had pursued me. 'Well,' said Lucy, 'and what do you intend to do with it?' 'I shall keep it in a cage till it becomes familiar; I shall accustom it to eat out of my hand, and when I have tamed it a little, I shall frequently let it out.' 'I like your plan, my dear Sophy, and trust that it will be the means of assisting our endeavours to restore your health. How we shall all love the little bird, if it adds to your happiness!' 'Oh! do not think of my health,' returned Sophy, 'you know I mean to get quite well soon.' 'Do so, my beloved sister,' said Lucy, with a faint smile; but

her countenance expressed no hope that her sister's prediction would be verified. I even observed a tear trembling in her eye: to conceal it she hastily left the room, saying she would look for a cage.

"You, perhaps, think that the prospect of a cage terrified me, but I was now less satisfied with my liberty than at first, since I found that there were dangers and misfortunes attending it, of which I had not dreamt when in captivity: besides, I was shunned by my own species, and led a solitary life, which was extremely irksome to me; so that, upon the whole, I was not dissatisfied at becoming the companion of the interesting Sophia, of whom I shall now give you some account.

"Her father was an honest, intelligent tradesman, who had, by his reputation and diligence, obtained a very good business, by which he maintained his family, consisting of his wife, three daughters, and a son. The latter was very useful to his father, for, being a good accomptant, he

kept the books, and otherwise assisted him in business, though scarcely fourteen. Sophia, my mistress, was fifteen, but in such a delicate state of health, that she had few opportunities of being useful to her family, though her disposition was so amiable, that, had she possessed the power, I am sure she would not have wanted the inclination. Lucy and Mary were twins, nearly two years older than Sophia, and so active and industrious, that they not only superintended the domestic concerns of the family, and did all the needle-work, but also found time for recreations, the chief of which was making clothes for their poor distressed neighbours. When Sophia was confined to her room, one of them always contrived to be with her; and Arthur generally joined them in the evening, to amuse his sister by playing on the flute; for she was very fond of music, and he had applied himself to it so earnestly, in order to afford her a new gratification, that he had made some progress in that delight-

ful science. Sometimes the elder girls accompanied him with their voices, which were sweet and unaffected. My mistress took great pleasure in these little concerts; indeed, she frequently appeared as if beguiled of all her pain by them, and tears of delight would fill her eyes. I was no less enraptured on these occasions, and could not forbear joining my little notes in chorus, for which I was greatly admired.

"My sensible, kind-hearted protectress, as you may imagine, soon gained my affection. How, indeed, could it have been possible to know any one of this amiable family, without sentiments of esteem; but Sophia was constantly near me, and I was continually discovering something new to admire in her. The patience she displayed in suffering; the restraints she imposed on herself, in the presence of her dear relatives, lest any expression of pain should escape her, and add to the grief they already felt on her account; and, above all, the kind attention

she bestowed on me, made me not only admire, but love her so much, that, had she opened the window and offered me liberty, I should have preferred staying with her. Indeed, my ideas of liberty were now very different to those I had formerly entertained: my enlargement had been attended with so many misfortunes, that I considered my present confinement much more tolerable.

"I was not always kept in a cage, but often allowed the full range of Sophia's apartment. Besides, she taught me several diverting tricks; such as eating out of her hand, flying up to her mouth for a hemp-seed, and drawing up a little pasteboard box, which was suspended by a string to my cage, and into which she put something nice, as an inducement to my exertions. I found that these performances pleased and amused her very much, and I was, consequently, very docile and obedient.

"The amiable traits I discovered in each member of this family, led me to imagine that all human beings were equally well disposed, and I even pitied the timidity of our race, which made them mistrustful of such benevolent creatures; but I was soon undeceived, by a circumstance which is even now painful to my remembrance.

"Poor dear Sophia had with difficulty passed through the winter, but spring, which revives all nature, seemed to promise the restoration of her health. She was frequently able to quit her room, and on these occasions she sat in a neat little parlour which overlooked the garden. I, her constant companion, and more her favourite than ever, was always brought down in my cage, and placed near the window. The garden was separated on one side by a very close hedge, from that of a neighbouring gentleman, whose children often walked there. In this hedge a sparrow had constructed her little nest,

and had been sitting some time, when it was discovered by Arthur, who pointed it out to his sisters. Sophia, from the window, observed the sparrow and her mate alternately relieving each other from the confinement of the nest, and frequently fed them. By this means they became very tame, and generally sought their food at the accustomed time and place, chirping, as if to thank their benefactress, whose gentle heart rejoiced at the idea of affording pleasure or assistance to the minutest living creature.

"At length Arthur informed her that the young ones were hatched, and she pleased herself with the hope, that they would soon come to feed with their parents at the window. But three days only had elapsed, when William Stanton, son of the gentleman before mentioned, came, attended by a servant, to walk in his father's garden, and as they approached the hedge, we heard them conversing very familiarly together. 'Master W.'

said the footman, 'had you any bird-nesting at school?' 'Very little,' said the young gentleman, 'for one of the boys met with an accident, which made our master prohibit it, and we were too closely watched to disobey. But you know, John, that will not prevent my having some sport in that way now I am at home. You shall help me.'

"I was much surprised, as you may suppose, to hear a young gentleman acknowledge, that he was obedient only when he was watched; for I had always thought, that, as greater praise is due to those who perform their duty voluntarily, the inducement to do so must be stronger where confidence is reposed, at least to a generous mind. Master William, however, could not, I imagined, possess any generous sentiments, since he was so cruel as to deprive little, inoffensive animals of their beloved offspring, and that too for sport.

"He and his servant were now ap-

proaching that part of the hedge where Sophia's poor little bird's had built. She was at the window during the above conversation, and was, doubtless, greatly alarmed for the helpless nestlings. After a short pause, Master William suddenly exclaimed, 'I do think there are young birds in this hedge, for I heard some chirp.' 'Like enough,' said John, and immediately they began to search.

"Poor Sophia, on hearing the last words, left the room, in order to request her mother's interposition in behalf of *her* nest, as she called it. Her mother, therefore, went down into the garden, where she found Master William actually in possession of the nest, the little ones chirping with terror, and the parent birds fluttering about the hedge in visible distress. 'Dear Master Stanton,' said she, 'I am sure you cannot be sensible of the pain you are inflicting on those poor little birds, by disturbing their nest, for I am persuaded that you do not intend de-

priving them of it.' 'Yes, but I do, though,' said he. 'And what do you propose to do with them?' 'Oh, I shall play with them, and give them to my little sisters to amuse them.' 'But can you find amusement while giving pain to any animal?' 'Why, as to that, I shall not hurt them; and then, you know, they will not feel any pain.' 'But is hunger no pain?' 'Oh, I shall feed them.' 'That I am not sure you will be able to do; and even if you were, do you think the old birds will suffer nothing from the loss of them? See how distressed they now appear.' 'Oh, the boys at school say that is all nonsense; they will soon forget their grief.' 'Well, I see you are not to be prevailed on, for the sake of the poor little birds, perhaps you will replace them when I tell you, that they have been for some time a source of amusement to one of my daughters, who is deprived of many comforts by an illness which confines her entirely to the house, and from which we have indeed every thing to apprehend.'

On this account, Master William seemed somewhat inclined to yield his prize, but as he was entirely guided by his servant, he sought in his countenance the approbation of his half-formed resolve. But alas! for the poor little ones, John had once taken offence at some trifling circumstance relating to this excellent family, and now, glad of an opportunity of showing his consequence, he smiled sarcastically at Master William. The latter seemingly understood that this smile taxed him with weakness, for he immediately said, 'Excuse me, Ma'am, I cannot give up this nest, so good morning to you. John,' continued he, 'do not you see a carriage going up the avenue? Let us make haste; there are certainly some visitors going to mamma?'

"I heard no more of this bad boy's conversation, for he was soon at a distance. When poor Sophia learned from her mother the failure of her mission, she was very much grieved; the latter, however,

endeavoured to console her by all the arguments she could adduce. 'My dear mother,' said the amiable girl, 'how kind you are to console me! How can I grieve at any trifling loss, while you are so good to me! Yet I feel that I shall not easily forget this occurrence. The poor little ones will doubtless all perish! The old birds, too, what they will suffer! All their fond hopes destroyed in one moment, by the cruelty of that naughty boy! But, indeed, I ought rather to pity than condemn him, for it appears that false indulgence and improper company are leading him from the only path in which true happiness can be found—that of rectitude and humanity.'

"Here the entrance of Arthur and his father put an end to the conversation. The family shortly after sat down to dinner, and the sad fate of the nestlings seemed to be forgotten by all but Sophia, whose accustomed cheerfulness was somewhat abated during the rest of the day.

I partook of her sensations at this time, for the event of the morning had greatly distressed me, and I was by no means sorry when the close of day invited me to repose.

"A few days after this memorable occurrence, one of a more serious nature happened. My dear young mistress, whose flattering appearance had lately induced her parents to hope that she would recover, suddenly became so ill, that their too sanguine expectations were converted into the most distressing apprehensions. She could not even bear my presence, as I unconsciously disturbed her by my artless song, which had always hitherto diverted her. I was, in consequence, removed from her chamber, and I now passed my time very sorrowfully. Little notice was taken of me, for all the family were too much occupied with my dear mistress. They did not, however, neglect to feed me and clean my cage, to which I was constantly confined. I should have

suffered from this restraint, had not the thoughts of my dear mistress rendered me melancholy, and, consequently, unfit for any amusement. The place I was removed to, was the little parlour I mentioned to you before. Here the doctors who attended poor Sophia frequently came, to inform her anxious parents how they found her. One day the benevolent physician, who had been most constant in his attendance, came in, and seeing Sophia's mother, he appeared greatly agitated. She fearfully enquired after her daughter, when the good man, with tears in his eyes, begged her to be composed and prepare for the worst. 'Your child, dear madam,' said he, 'has but a short time to suffer; she will then be as happy as she deserves to be!' He could add no more, and abruptly quitted the room, leaving the unhappy mother in such distress, as can hardly be imagined, much less described.

"I will pass over the mournful scenes that ensued, and briefly inform you, that

poor Sophia died that night! I was, as you may imagine, deeply impressed by this sad event, and being still closely confined, and deprived of my accustomed indulgences, I sat mournfully in my cage, without uttering a note. At last, however, the fine weather and my natural cheerfulness prevailed, and I ventured to sing a little; but the sound of my voice seemed to revive the grief of this afflicted family. The mother, in particular, was so much affected, that her children proposed conveying me to some place where I might be more welcome. They consulted together in my presence, (little thinking that I understood them,) and decided that I should be presented to Miss Stanton, the eldest sister of that cruel boy I told you of. I was struck with terror at the name; but as some alleviation of my sorrow and dread, I afterwards heard them expatiate on the amiable qualities of the young lady to whose care they meant to consign me.

"The same evening the sisters sent a

polite note to Miss Stanton, (to whom they were not entirely unknown,) explaining their motive for requesting her acceptance of the 'little favourite,' as they called me. Arthur was the messenger on this occasion. He soon returned with an answer, in which Miss Stanton, after condoling with them on the loss they had sustained, expressed her willingness to receive me; at the same time promising that every attention should be paid to my comfort; for she justly imagined that they had some regard for me, and well knew how to appreciate the motive which induced them to part with an object that had been so dear to their lamented sister.

"On the following morning, Arthur was again deputed to convey me to my new residence. The distance was very trifling, and on our arrival a woman-servant ushered us into a little room, where there was a neat book-case, a piano-forte, and other things which gave it the appearance of a study. Here Miss Stanton

soon joined us, and receiving me kindly from Arthur, heard, with apparent delight, the catalogue of my various accomplishments. She then dismissed my young conductor, with a present of some handsomely bound books for himself and his sisters, requesting, that whenever they read them they would remember their goldfinch, and feel assured that it would be carefully attended, for their sake as well as its own.

"I was greatly pleased with my reception, and the agreeable manners of my new mistress; but still I could not divest myself of the grief I felt for my beloved Sophia, nor of a degree of apprehension on the score of Master William; and I was, in consequence, a prey to melancholy reflections, which rendered me almost insensible to the caresses Miss Stanton lavished on me. My spirits were still more depressed by an event which occurred on the following day. Master William, it

seems, had heard of my arrival, and he now sent a little girl to request that his sister would bring me to the drawing-room, as he was not allowed to stir from the sofa. She complied, and was ascending the staircase with me in my cage, when I beheld from a window a sight that made me shudder: it was nothing less than the whole brood of little sparrows, lying dead on the top of a portico. I afterwards learned, that Master William, in his haste to get home, had slipped down and sprained his ancle. The pain this accident caused him, and the bustle it occasioned in the family, united in banishing from his remembrance, and that of his attendant, the wants of his little captives: they were found dead on the following morning, and John carelessly tossed them out of the window.

"You may judge then what was my terror, when I found myself in the actual presence of the obdurate boy, who had so wantonly exposed these little innocents to

a painful death, by taking them from their parents. Happily for me, my mistress did not quit the room, or allow him to touch me. I really think I should have expired through fear, if he had.

"After this unpleasant visit, I remained some time without any material interruption to my comfort. My new protectress was very fond of me, and treated me with the greatest kindness. The room I inhabited was, as I had supposed, her study; and as she was there occupied several hours in the day, I was not without company, nor often shut up in my cage. I had, indeed, abundant reason to be satisfied, as far as she was concerned; yet I was not without apprehension on account of the younger children of the family, who were all spoiled by indulgence. You, perhaps, wonder how it happened that Miss Stanton was so amiable; but I have yet to inform you, that the present Mrs. Stanton was not her own mother. She was so unfortunate as to lose the latter, when

about seven years old, and her father had shortly after married a good-hearted but weak woman, who rendered her children miserable, by the very means she employed in order to promote their happiness. They were incessantly wishing for something they had not, and never satisfied with what they had; and their mother, instead of endeavouring to repress this unreasonable propensity, encouraged it, by attending, with the utmost anxiety, to their most trivial or capricious wishes, which were no sooner gratified, than new desires arose in endless succession. I could here enumerate several instances of their whims and humours, which fell under my notice, but such details of folly would rather fatigue than amuse you. I must, however, observe, that Miss Stanton was so amiable, that she conciliated the affection of the children (though she never indulged their caprices) and that of her mother-in-law, to whom she always behaved with the greatest tenderness and respect.

"You must now prepare for a more eventful period of my history, for I am about to enter on a new mode of life. I had not been two months with Miss Stanton, when she and Mrs. Stanton were invited to spend a few weeks, with a friend who lived at a considerable distance. On hearing of this, I was extremely anxious to learn how I was to be disposed of during their absence, and finding that I was to be entrusted to the servants, all of whom were entirely controlled by the children, I thought it high time to provide for my safety by flight: determining to risk any thing, rather than remain exposed to the malice and mischief of these spoiled children, or, at least, to continual apprehension from them.

"I found no difficulty in effecting my escape, for I was considered so tame, that I was sometimes allowed to be about the room when the door was open. On one of these occasions (Miss Stanton being busily occupied in finishing a drawing,

which she intended as a present to the lady she was going to visit) I dexterously slipped out.

"I now found myself in the hall by which I at first entered. My heart palpitated with terror, lest I should be perceived by any one, and I anxiously sought for some opening by which I might get into the garden; fortunately, I perceived that the staircase-window was open. My joy on this discovery is indescribable. It almost deprived me of the power of flight: but making, at last, one vigorous effort, I darted into the garden, where I remained no longer than was absolutely necessary to recover myself, lest I should be pursued, and conveyed back to a place which I now considered as a prison.

"My freedom at this time was less irksome to me than formerly, for I felt a degree of courage to which I was before a stranger; and that, I imagine, preserved me from the attacks of the other birds, for they now treated me very courteously.

One of them in particular, by his kindness, so engaged my affection and gratitude, that we became inseparable companions, and shortly after the commencement of our friendship, we mutually agreed to build a nest together. Ah! then it was that I first knew the delights of liberty and society. Our labours, sweetened by affection, were converted into pleasures; while hope, displaying to our imagination the little brood nourished by our mutual toils, and reared by our mutual cares, imparted a new relish to every enjoyment.

"Time thus happily spent passed quickly, and the blissful period at length arrived, when our little ones, bursting their brittle enclosure, greeted our delighted ears with their chirping, sweeter to us than the most melodious warblings. Oh, what were my feelings then! To you they must be inconceivable, for it is not in the power of language to describe them. Of the cares and anxieties of a mother, you may form some idea, by recurring to

the solicitude of your own; but the sensations of delight she experiences, can be appreciated only by one in a similar situation. For some time we tended our offspring with unremitted care: they throve amazingly, and becoming strong enough to sustain a longer absence on our part, my mate and I ventured to fly abroad together. Our first excursion was short, for I was all anxiety; but finding our little ones safe and well on our return, we were, by degrees, emboldened to quit them during a longer period.

"One delightful morning, after having supplied the wants of our family, we set out together. We were allured by the charms of the weather, further than we intended. I being the soonest tired, wished to rest on an adjacent hedge: my mate followed, and had nearly overtaken me, when my cries warned him not to approach the fatal spot; for, to my utter astonishment and dismay, I found myself held, as it were by magic, and unable to

raise my feet. When my first surprise was abated, I discovered that it was owing to a glutinous substance which was spread on the branch I had sought to rest upon, and from which I vainly strove to disengage myself. My poor mate, finding that he could not effect my release from this cruel snare, (for such in reality it was,) wished to remain with me and share my fate; but I besought him, in the most earnest and pathetic terms, to consider our helpless little ones, who must certainly perish, if he, their only protector, abandoned them. My entreaties had the desired effect; for, after some hesitation, he consented to go and feed them, promising to fly back quickly, in order, if possible, to ascertain my fate.

"Ah! what a dreadful moment was that of our separation. It seemed as if we were never to meet again; and the event but too well justified the forebodings of my despair, for, shortly after, two boys came to the hedge, and gently extricated

me from the spray, rejoicing at the success of their plan, and reckoning the amount of what they expected to gain by disposing of me. I was a little consoled at finding they did not intend keeping me themselves; for what could I have expected from such cruel boys, or how could I have borne the sight of those, who, in a single moment, had destroyed all my happiness.

"They walked on together till we came to a large town, where entering a shop, in which were birds of various kinds in cages, they offered me for sale. The dealer's proposals, however, came very far short of their expectations; for being a hen bird, my song was held in little estimation. The boys were almost inclined to keep me, but the shopkeeper making a trifling advance in his offer, the bargain was closed, and I established in a situation entirely new to me, but which proved more tolerable than I had imagined it could have done. Comforts I had none but food and cleanliness. Indeed, such was my dejection

when I remembered my late happiness, that I should not have been susceptible of any enjoyment short of restoration to my family.

"I remained a long time with the bird-fancier, for, though frequently offered for sale, I was as often refused, for the reason I before mentioned. At length, that Providence which deigns to watch over the meanest of our species, conducted Master Charles to deliver me from my prison. He purchased me for his little sister, and, from his attention to me during our journey, and from the apparent kindness of the whole family towards our species, I have some hopes of comfort here. Yet, such is my aversion to confinement, under any circumstances, that I shall certainly seize the first opportunity to regain my liberty."

CHAP. IV.

WHEN the goldfinch had thus ended her interesting narrative, with which I was at once affected and delighted, I no longer wondered at her timidity. Indeed, the relation of her numerous misfortunes inspired me with a degree of respect towards her, which I had not before felt: our intimacy strengthened daily, and at last ripened into sincere friendship. I had, too, frequent opportunities of observing some new trait in my young friends, which excited my esteem and admiration; so that I considered myself extremely fortunate, in having an agreeable companion and worthy protectors.

My happiness, however, met with a transient interruption, from a severe fit of

illness, which attacked me about this time. I shall never forget the kindness of my dear mistress on this occasion. She nursed me with the greatest tenderness, and administered such things as were likely to conduce to my restoration, with so much judgment, that I happily recovered.

As my illness had given my mistress great uneasiness, you may suppose that my recovery afforded her proportionate pleasure; and in order to confirm my re-establishment, she ventured to take me again to her garden, when she went to work there. I kept so close to her, and showed so little inclination to fly away, that she left me alone on one of the borders, while she went to the greenhouse. On her return she found me near the place where she had left me, and offered me something to eat, which I refused, for my attention was otherwise engaged. A sudden gloom seemed to pervade all nature! The sun was concealed

by thick clouds, the birds were entirely silent, and a slight rustling among the trees indicated an approaching storm. I looked up anxiously at my mistress, but she seemed quite insensible to the terror that had seized me, and merely urged me to eat. Finding that she did not understand me, and that no time was to be lost, I flew for shelter to a neighbouring tree. My mistress called to me, and I answered; but the pattering of the rain, which began to descend in torrents, prevented her hearing me, and obliged her to enter the green-house. I was sadly frightened when I found myself alone; but I hoped, when the storm was over, to rejoin my best friend. I heard her calling me at intervals, but I durst not as yet quit my retreat.

At length the rain ceased, and the sun shone more brightly than before, at least, so it appeared to me after the storm. I hastened to the green-house, but what was my astonishment on perceiving that

my mistress had left it. I now gave myself up as lost, for I knew that I was unable either to provide for or defend myself. All the dangers the goldfinch had encountered, rushed on my imagination, and all seemed to threaten me, young and defenceless as I was.

Time, though it passed heavily with me, passed on. The sun, fast sinking in the west, indicated the decline of day, and I contemplated, with extreme terror, the approach of night. I frequently thought of my father and mother, and our comfortable little nest. I had once some idea of retiring to it for the night; but how could I be sure of safety there? My parents were no longer in it to protect me: besides, though I had never slept out alone, I had reason to think that the night air must be very chilly, as our parents always took such care to keep us warm; and I already felt cold and comfortless, for every leaf was wet, and I so tired of hopping about, that

I could no longer keep myself warm by exercise.

Amidst this assemblage of misfortunes, I had just sense enough to keep near the green-house. The surrounding shrubbery was very beautiful, but to me, at present, its charms were all lost. The birds, too, that inhabited it, sung very sweetly; but the voice of my mistress, or the sound of her approaching footsteps, would have been much sweeter to me.

At length, when I had nearly lost all hope, I was aroused by the shutting of the green-house door, and the following instant I heard my beloved mistress calling me, as she was accustomed to do, by imitating the chirping of a bird. I answered, in accents half joyful, half mournful, for I was nearly starved with cold and hunger, and overjoyed at meeting with her again. She followed the sound of my voice, and I, as soon as I saw her, flew into a little tuft of ivy, close to where she stood, that she might see me; and there I remained

quietly, till she took me gently in her hand to convey me home. I was glad enough to see the school-room again, and well contented, after a plentiful feeding, to retire to rest on my accustomed music-book.

On the following morning, my companion, the goldfinch, informed me of what had passed in my absence. My mistress returning without me excited no surprise, as she frequently shut me up in her own room, that I might be at liberty, without interrupting her business in the school-room; but one of the children happening to enquire where I was, my flight was proclaimed.

All the young people evinced great regret, but my mistress told them she had no doubt that I should be much happier out of doors; adding, "You know I never intended keeping him a prisoner, and have, therefore, frequently taken him out, that he might learn to provide for himself."

"I fear he cannot do that yet," said Clara.

"Beware, my love," returned her governess, "lest, under that fond concern for the little favourite, there should lurk a degree of self-love. I must acknowledge, that, for my own gratification, I should have preferred keeping him; but I love the little creature well enough to consider his happiness, and that I think must consist, in a great measure, in freedom. The very make of birds indicates that they ought to be as free as the element in which they range."

These arguments seemed to satisfy the children. "But," enquired Anna, "how will you be able to ascertain that he is happy? Do you expect ever to see him again?"

"I intend," said my mistress, "to go out a little before sun-set; if when I call him he comes to me, I will receive him again under my protection; but if, on the contrary, he shuns me, I shall conclude that he no longer stands in need of it."

The dear girls were much pleased with this arrangement, and still more so with the result, of which my young readers are already informed. The forlorn state in which my mistress had found me, induced her to believe that I was yet too young to be set at liberty; and I was by no means sorry on that account, for my late ramble had given me no exalted idea of the happiness I should enjoy out of doors. Besides, I was perfectly happy in my present situation, for I had every comfort that could be procured for me; and I have observed that birds are not, like human beings, apt to grow tired, even of good things, after having enjoyed them some time.

No one, however, grew tired of me: I was daily more admired and caressed by my young friends in the school-room, by their dear mamma, and by the visitors who sometimes came to hear my little friends play on the piano-forte. And here I cannot omit one remark, which I think

extremely creditable to them, because I have since seen many young persons very deficient in that respect. When requested to play, though their execution was by no means superior, they complied so readily, and acquitted themselves with such modest good-humour, as could not fail to enhance the merit of their performance, and create in the minds of their auditors, that admiration which is never excited by talents alone. I also got my share of praise on these occasions, for I contrived sometimes to settle on the music-book, and at others on Lady Seymour's arm or shoulder, where I frequently fell asleep, though not till I had heard many expressions of surprise at my familiarity. I cannot say that I felt much vanity arise in my mind, from the admiration lavished on me; for I did not think it at all surprising, that extreme kindness on the part of my friends, should excite a similar degree of confidencé in me. I am, indeed, convinced, that were there more such persons

as the goldfinch's Sophia and my protectors, few little birds would be kept, as I have seen many, in small cages, hung up in a corner, and scarcely noticed except when fed. But as it is time to return to my history, after this long digression, it shall be resumed in the succeeding chapter.

CHAP. V.

THE wet weather, of which we had had abundance, at length disappeared, and summer, in her gayest apparel, rapidly advanced. I greatly enjoyed the genial warmth of the sun, and frequently basked on the window-frames, where it was transmitted, with increased ardour, through the glass.

My young readers may remember, that when I was out for two or three hours, the ground was wet and the air chilly, and I was consequently unwilling to remain in so uncomfortable a state; but now that the weather was warm and settled, the trees covered with beautiful foliage, and I able to provide for myself, I must confess that I frequently viewed the pleasing landscape

before me, with something like a wish that I were at liberty to roam at large in it, and I began to calculate the happiness I should enjoy, when, according to the avowed intention of my mistress, I was to be at my own disposal. I indulged myself the more freely in these anticipations, as I was not guilty of any ingratitude in so doing, for I knew that she rather wished to encourage than repress my desire of liberty.

One morning my mistress rose much later than usual, on account of a slight indisposition, and I finding the time rather long, amused myself by looking out at the window. There was before the house an extensive lawn, in which were a few trees. I saw a multitude of little birds alternately flying about, and resting on the waving branches, and sporting with that active gaiety which a delightful summer morning inspires. Suddenly there appeared among them a much larger bird, who seemed to terrify them all, for they flew with great

precipitation towards the shrubbery. One of them, however, was closely pursued by the large bird, and though he made every effort to escape, was overtaken and caught by him. If this is play, thought I, it is very rough play. But how shall I describe the horror I felt, when I saw the monster begin to devour the inoffensive little bird! I uttered a scream, and flew to hide myself behind my mistress's pillow, scarcely knowing what I did or where I was; though, had I reflected for a moment, I should have known that I was entirely out of danger.

When I recovered myself, I remembered the goldfinch's narrow escape on a similar occasion, and I felt my ardour for liberty somewhat abated; for I began to consider that there might be other dangers, of which I was entirely ignorant, and this one was sufficiently appalling.

When my mistress had been up some time, she took me with her to the schoolroom. I was fully intent on relating what

I had witnessed to my companion, so flew immediately towards her cage. She was not there; but this did not surprise me, for neither she nor I was much confined. I expected to find her about the room, but she was not to be found; and the entrance of Lady Seymour put an end to my doubts and my search at the same time, for little Julia met her with tears in her eyes, and deplored the loss of her bird, which had, she said, flown out at the window.

"But why, my love," said her mamma, "did you let her out when the window was open?"

"It was I, dear mamma," interrupted Anna, "who was so unfortunate; I did not know the window was open."

"You mean careless, not unfortunate," returned Lady Seymour: "you ought to have been sure it was shut."

"Dear mamma," said Julia, "poor Anna is very sorry: if I had let out her

bird, I should not have needed one reproach; and I did not intend to cry, for fear of vexing her more, but, indeed, I could not help it."

"I am pleased with your affectionate conduct on this trying occasion, my little Julia," said Lady S. "particularly as it is founded on the noblest of all principles—that of doing as you would be done to. A hundred little birds are not to me so valuable, as one instance of goodness in my children. I will soon procure you another little pet."

"I shall not soon like another so well as my own poor little Goldey," said Julia: and I thought just as she did. I had become much attached to my companion, and felt her loss very severely, especially when my friends went out, for I was then quite solitary. Besides, I knew not what might be her fate; nor was I certain that she was not the unhappy victim I had seen in the morning."

CHAP. VI.

My readers may remember, that little Charles came home merely for the holidays, which being now over, his papa proposed taking him back to school; at the same time expressing a wish that Lady Seymour would be of the party, as she might then visit some relations, whom she had not seen for several years. The excellent mother did not like to leave her home, where she was always usefully occupied, for the benefit of her family or her poor neighbours; or agreeably entertained by the innocent gaiety of her children, during their hours of relaxation, which they always passed with her. No society was so delightful to her as theirs, nor could any more pleasing indulgence be

granted them, than permission to go to their dear mamma. However, she now yielded to Sir Charles's earnest solicitation to accompany him, well knowing that she could place implicit confidence in Miss Sedley, during her absence.

My young friends behaved very sensibly on this occasion; for though they felt great uneasiness at parting with their beloved mother, they forbore all expressions of regret in her presence, lest they should diminish the pleasure she was likely to enjoy in visiting her relations. The two little girls who were in the nursery accompanied their mamma; for she observed, that it would be no loss of time to them, as they had not yet commenced their studies.

I shall pass over the parting scene, which was, indeed, a mournful one, and introduce my readers to my young friends in the school-room, where they assembled soon after the departure of their parents. They were evidently dejected,

but no impatient expressions escaped them. Their kind governess insensibly diverted them from the contemplation of their grief, by various amusements, all contributing to their health or improvement. She at length succeeded in tranquillizing their minds, and they, sensible of her kindness, evinced towards her affection and gratitude.

I had now an opportunity of seeing them at all times, and my esteem for them was by no means diminished. Indeed, I never beheld a happier little society: they were obedient and attentive during the hours allotted to study, and so united in all their sentiments, that it seemed as if one mind animated the three. Their governess was indulgent, because she found that indulgence was not injurious to them; and they were happy, because they deserved to be so. Even their motives and incitements to virtue were of the noblest kind. They were early taught to believe, that happiness

is derived from conferring benefits, rather than from receiving them. Their excellent mother knew this truth from experience, and was anxious that her daughters should learn it by the same means. She had established a school for poor children, on Sir Charles's estate, to which she allowed each of the young ladies to send a little girl; and in order to enable them to pay for their *protegées*, she allowed a weekly stipend to those who, by their amiable conduct, deserved it. My young readers may easily suppose, that they always endeavoured to merit this reward; for it would have been at once vexatious and disgraceful, not to have had a child in the school. They were allowed to visit the poor children occasionally, to inspect their progress; and I observed that they always came home more cheerful and happy, from their favourite walk to the hill, on the summit of which stood the little school-house; so that I did not

doubt that they already felt the good effects of their mother's sensible plan.

Several weeks passed without any material occurrence in my history, and my young friends were beginning to anticipate the return of their beloved parents, when my mistress remarked, one day, that I was not so merry as usual, (for I was not quite well.) "Poor little fellow," said she, "he perhaps regrets being kept in doors this fine weather: I must let him out."

The children looked as if they did not wish me to go, but said nothing. I should not have been so silent, could I have made myself understood; for I really wished to stay where I was so comfortable.

Not long after this they went out, and I was rejoicing at being left behind, when my dear mistress returned, and taking me in my cage, conveyed me to the shrubbery, where she rejoined her pupils. They, remembering what had passed on a former occasion, offered no remonstrance on this. We arrived at the little garden where I

had so often been before; my cage was set down, and the doors placed open. I was still irresolute: I chirped to my mistress, came on the outside of my cage, and then went in again, to show that I was willing to remain with her. At length I ventured out again, and hopped on one of the flower-beds. My friends watched me for some time, and I, still anxious to show my affection and gratitude, flew on to my mistress's shoulder.

"Dear little bird!" said she, "I trust you will be happy, and I shall then congratulate myself on having been the means of making you so."

These words seemed to assure me, that my liberty was a desirable object, and, encouraged by the manner in which they were uttered, I ventured a short flight to an adjacent syringa. My friends followed me, and having scattered food near the spot, left me, in order to continue their walk. I felt rather timid when left alone, but my sensations were very different to

those I experienced when I was out before. I soon acquired sufficient courage to explore my new place of abode, which I found so delightful, that I regretted when the approach of night put an end to my rambles. I met with many other little birds, but felt no terror on their approach; for they seemed by no means inclined to molest me, and I was now strong enough to defend myself, if they had. I found plenty of food, for the trees abounded in insects; and my friends did not fail to strew about the paths, such seeds as they knew I liked. I frequently saw them pass along, and wished to show myself to them; but there was a little dog which generally accompanied them, and I was afraid of getting too near him. Once, however, I heard them talking very earnestly about me, and wishing to know whether I was still alive. This made me resolve to watch for an opportunity of assuring them of my safety.

It was not long before I fulfilled my

intention, for my mistress and little Julia came out one afternoon without the dog. I was on a laburnum-tree near the house, and immediately flew from it to a grass-plot before them.

"There is my bird!" exclaimed my mistress, in an accent of delight.

"Where?" said Julia.

"There, on the grass. Do not you see him? Now he has flown towards the kitchen-window."

"Now I see him, indeed," said Julia: "are you not glad to find him alive and well?"

"And in good company too," added my mistress; for just then I was taking a little flight with some young birds, who were very friendly to me, and with whom I made many pleasant excursions about the shrubbery, though we seldom passed its boundaries: for my young readers are, perhaps, to be informed, that Robins do not assemble in large companies, and take long flights, as larks, thrushes, linnets,

and many other birds do, but content themselves with a less extensive range, about the hedges, woods, or gardens, where they are brought up.

After the first interview, I saw my friends almost every day, and as the dog seldom came with them, I took care that they should see me; for I knew that it gave them pleasure, and I was anxious to prove myself grateful for their kindness.

I was now extremely happy, much more so than I had ever been, enjoying, at once, liberty, society, and the affectionate notice of those to whom I owed all my enjoyments. But an unforeseen event deprived me of all my felicity. My mistress, in her extreme solicitude lest I should be unable to find food, or should be deprived of it by the other birds, who sometimes attack those who have been brought up tame, left my cage fixed to the enclosure of her garden, and constantly replenished the troughs with food and water. I frequently fed there, and found it extremely conve-

nient; but it seems that I was observed by one of the little boys who weeded in the garden, and swept the gravel-walks of the shrubbery. He watched for an opportunity, and when I was feeding one evening, he suddenly shut the door of the cage. Soon after this he left off work, and taking me gently out of the cage, carried me home with him.

He lived in a little cottage, at some distance from my late residence. I had never seen any poor person's house, therefore was greatly surprised at the appearance of this. While I was looking at the outside of it, a neat-looking little girl came to the door. "Ah, Willy! is it you," said she: "I am glad you are come, for I wanted to show you my pretty kitten."

"Oh! I am afraid I shall not wish you joy of it," said the boy, "for I have something here worth twenty kittens, and both must not be together."

"Then that must be a mouse," said the child.

"Not a mouse. Guess again."

"Perhaps a young rabbit, or a squirrel—but do show it me, pray do."

"Yes, if you will promise to give me the kitten, that I may take it to aunt Patty, or give it to somebody; for see, you would not like this pretty little bird to be killed."

"Oh dear, no! my good Willy. Did you bring it for me? Pray let me have it in my own hand."

"Be patient," said the boy; "first go and shut up your kitten in the shed, till I can take it away."

"Aunt Patty gave it me," said the little girl, "and she will take it back again. I should have been glad to have kept it, but I shall like a little bird much better."

"Peggy, Peggy, where are you?" said a voice from the interior of the cottage: "I want you, child."

"Coming, mother," replied Peggy;

"only I am looking at a pretty Robin, Willy has brought me."

"A Robin!" returned her mother; "then mind the cat you have been nursing all the afternoon. The bird would not like her so well as she would like him."

"So Willy says, mother; and I am going to put puss in the shed, till he can take her back. May I, mother?"

"Yes, child, and make haste, for I want you here."

Peggy made great haste, and when her mother had done with her, she returned to her brother, who had now entered the cottage, and requested to have me in her hand.

"Gently, then," said Willy: "do not pinch it: it is not like a cat."

"Oh! I will take great care," said she, and she took me very tenderly from the boy, greatly surprised that I did not flutter, or struggle to get from her; and still more so, when, gently disengaging myself from her feeble grasp, I perched

on her shoulder. "Oh! you dear little creature," said she, "why you know me already. But how did you contrive to make him so tame, Willy?"

"I did nothing to him," said the boy; "I got him only this evening." And then he related what my readers already know, about his finding me in the cage.

"Come, William," said the boy's mother, "get your supper, for I am sure you must be hungry; but, stop a moment, first take off your coat, that I may put a patch on the elbow. I cannot bear to see you in rags; no more could your poor father, he was always so tidy."

"And so will I be, mother, when I am a man: and so shall you and Peggy be too, for I will buy you comfortable clothes."

"What! will you buy me a new frock?" said Peggy: "when will you get it? I can make some of it myself. Cannot I, mother?"

"Not so fast, Peggy," interrupted her

brother; "I am not rich enough yet, nor shall not be neither, till I am bigger, and able to earn more money."

"I hope that will be soon, then, for both my frocks are very old: mother has patched them so often. And see, I put in these two pieces," added she, showing her frock; which I then first observed to be of various pieces and colours. "But," continued the talkative little girl, "I know what I had rather have now than a new frock:—dear Willy, if you could get me a little cage for my bird!"

"That will not cost much," replied her brother, "for I can make you one myself, and so I will, when I have done my supper."

"Thank you, thank you, dear Willy! You are always so good-natured," said Peggy, "and that makes me feel so happy, that I never want a new frock, or any thing else, when I think of it."

This interesting dialogue did not pass unnoticed by the poor mother. She had

let fall her boy's coat, and was gazing intently on her children, her eyes filled with tears of joy.

"Dear mother, you are crying!" said Willy: "what is the matter? Are you unhappy? Can I do any thing for you?"

"I am not unhappy, my dear boy," replied she, "it was joy that overcame me, and, like Peggy, I seem to want nothing, while I am blest with two children so dutiful to me, and so fond of each other."

"That, I hope, we shall always be," said Willy, and he rose hastily, to get, as he said, the twigs for the cage; but I saw him brush off a tear from his cheek, with the back of his hand.

Willy was, indeed, a good-natured boy, and that in a different degree to what the common acceptation of the term implies; for I have known many children who thought themselves good-natured, because they gave away what they did not want, or deprived themselves of some superfluity,

to relieve the wants of others. This boy, however, had no superfluities, but he gave up what he really wanted to his mother and sister, seeming never to consider himself; and his coat had not now been so ragged, if he had not expended the money which was to have bought a new one, on his little sister, the preceding winter. His poor mother had hoped to make it up to him, by the little she could earn at needlework or spinning, but in this she had been disappointed. Her little girl had been ill of the measles in the spring, and all her resources had been then exhausted, in procuring proper nourishment and remedies for the little sufferer. Nor was this the only privation to which Willy submitted; for I am sure he frequently refused his share of their scanty provisions, that there might be more for his mother and sister.

CHAP. VII.

I WAS treated very well by this poor family, and, by degrees, got acquainted with their history. They had known better days. The father, when living, had been an honest, industrious, and thriving farmer; but a fire had, in one night, consumed all his stock, and thus reduced him and his poor children to a state little superior to beggary. He had lost all but his industry, and that he exerted for some time with indefatigable ardour; but the anxiety of his mind, and the continual fatigue he underwent, at length brought on a fever, which terminated his distresses and his life together.

He had now been dead a twelvemonth, having left four children, (the two I have

mentioned, and two much younger,) who must have gone to the workhouse, had it not been for Willy's industry. He not only worked all day in the garden, but frequently went on errands to a neighbouring town in the evening; and such were his diligence and honesty, that all the neighbours were glad to employ him on these occasions.

I must confess, that, though I greatly admired the conduct of this worthy family, I was not so happy in it, as I had heretofore been. Little Peggy had not much time to bestow on me; for, though only six years old, her mother thought it right to habituate her to domestic employments and the use of her needle, in both of which she was already very handy. I was, of course, confined much more than I liked; but my poor little mistress seemed so delighted to possess me, that I was not very anxious to leave her. However, my opinion was not consulted, for I soon after

left her, owing to the following circumstances.

As Peggy was one day standing at the cottage-door, with one of her patched frocks on, two young ladies came past. One of them accosting Peggy, said, "Who mended your frock so nicely, little girl?"

"My mother, Miss," answered the child; "but the other is done the best, because I did some of this."

"Should you like to have a new one?" said the other young lady. "I think, dear Amelia," added she, addressing her companion, "this little creature would do very well for one of them."

"But do you think she could learn the verses?" said Amelia.

"I dare say she could: I would try to teach her myself."

"You, Louisa! What would your mamma say?"

"My mamma would have no objection, I am sure; for she often takes me with her to the Sunday-school, and then

I sometimes hear the children say their hymns."

"Willy goes to the Sunday-school," interrupted the little girl; "and he taught me a hymn; and when he gets a new frock for me, I am to go too."

"Come," said Miss Amelia, "we must not stay here; my mamma does not allow me to visit the cottagers, she has such a terror of infection. You know I am an only child, and much depends on my life," added she, with a mixture of importance and affected languor.

"That is true," said Louisa, "but you know my mamma has plenty of us, and she says we must all be useful, for that is the only good of living at all. However, what do you decide? Shall I prepare the poor child or not?"

"Just as you like—with all my heart," returned Amelia, in a tone that indicated her heart had nothing to do with it.

"Well, then, I will ask mamma," said

Louisa; and away they both went, without saying any thing more to Peggy.

I must here beg leave to anticipate some part of my history, for the purpose of informing my readers, what I afterwards learned respecting these two young ladies. Amelia Wyndham was, as she said, an only child, and heiress to immense property. Her father had died when she was an infant, and her mother, on whom the entire management of her had devolved, indulged her to excess. Misguided affection had some share in producing such unwise conduct, but pride had a still greater. She imagined, that because her daughter would possess ample means to gratify all her fancies, she need not be denied any thing; and because riches and noble descent confer importance, and induce submission, she need not be taught obedience or humility, therefore, was never to be contradicted. It seems, however, that Amelia's mother forgot that there are enjoyments which neither rank nor wealth

can confer; for I have observed, that, though rich or proud people may excite fear, they cannot command esteem or respect—tributes which belong to the virtuous only. I thought Willy and his little sister much more to be admired than this young lady. Besides, they appeared much happier than she, which I supposed was the consequence of their being more useful. However, lest I appear tedious, I will return to Miss Amelia.

Such sentiments as Mrs. Wyndham's were not calculated to produce any salutary effects on the mind of her child, who, though naturally active and well-disposed, was rendered helpless, indolent, and perverse. When little, she had not been allowed to walk out, like other children, lest she should be tired; nor to romp with her little playfellows, because they were too robust, and might overpower her tender frame. Her mind, too, was neglected, because study was irksome to her. Her natural activity had, indeed, induced

her to begin many things, but her habitual indolence had inclined her to relinquish them as soon as any difficulty arose; so that at twelve years of age she had merely acquired an imperfect idea of those studies and accomplishments, in which most young ladies of the same age have made some proficiency.

Such was Amelia Wyndham, to whom Louisa Carleton was a striking contrast. She was the eldest of a numerous family, and about six months older than her companion. She possessed sensible parents, who had accustomed her to habits of obedience and industry from her infancy. She had been taught, that the best use of riches is to assist the needy; the best use of knowledge, to instruct the ignorant; and the best use of time, to employ it in improving her own mind, or in benefiting her fellow-creatures. An education founded on such principles seldom fails of success, and in the present instance it had

produced the most happy effects. Louisa was well-informed, obedient, gentle, and humane; the admiration of all who knew her, the delight of her parents, and her mother's principal assistant in the domestic economy of her family, and in her plans for relieving the poor.

I shall now return to the cottage, and inform my readers what passed there. On the day after the two young ladies spoke to little Peggy, Louisa Carleton came again, accompanied by her mamma: the latter enquired into the circumstances of the family, and finding that the poor woman had no employment but spinning, desired her to come to her house the ensuing week, when she should be at home, and would give her some work, which would be more profitable than her present occupation. Mrs. Carleton then proceeded to explain the purport of her visit, by informing Peggy's mother, that Mrs. Wyndham intended to invite a large party to a splendid breakfast on her daughter's birth-

day, and that Miss Amelia wished to surprise her mamma and the visitors, by procuring a group of little girls, who were to recite some verses she had selected for the occasion. They are all to have new clothes given to them," added she: "Miss Wyndham has fixed on your little girl as one of them, so, if you choose her to earn a new dress by this means, my Louisa will teach her what she is to do."

"Most willingly, Ma'am, and a thousand thanks to you," said the poor woman; "but Peggy cannot read, and if there be much to learn, I am afraid Miss will find her troublesome."

"But I will try, mother, indeed I will," said Peggy.

"Do not be afraid," said Louisa, "there is but little to learn, and I have plenty of time to teach you."

Very little more passed during this visit: the ladies took leave, Louisa promising to come again shortly. She kept her word, and came regularly for several days, to

instruct little Peggy in her part. Finding her very docile, she taught her to spell, and heard her read. The child's mother was delighted, and Miss Louisa was no less so, with the progress of her pupil; for she hoped to surprise and please her dear mamma, by letting Peggy read to her at some future time.

My readers may suppose, that I was not unnoticed by Miss Louisa. Peggy displayed all my accomplishments to her young benefactress, who was very much pleased with me, and who did not fail to expatiate on my tameness, &c. to her friend Amelia. The latter no sooner heard that I was something uncommon, than she wished to possess me; for Amelia estimated the value of things from their scarcity, rather than any other quality they possessed.

CHAP. VIII.

MRS. CARLETON'S visit to Mrs. Wyndham was protracted longer than she at first intended. At length the great fête-day arrived. Every thing went on in the best manner possible. Miss Wyndham's generosity in clothing the poor children, and her taste in the judicious arrangement of her part of the entertainment, were talked of throughout the neighbourhood; yet, for my part, I discovered nothing so meritorious in the young lady's conduct, nor could I forbear thinking Louisa Carleton much more entitled to admiration, even on this occasion; for she bestowed her time and attention in teaching little Peggy. And I afterwards learned

that it was she, who, with the assistance of one of her sisters, had entirely made the children's dresses; for Amelia was neither able nor willing to work for any one, so that all the praises bestowed on her, were, in reality, due to Louisa. However, I am sure each was rewarded according to her own taste:—Amelia with the applause of the multitude, Louisa with the more grateful, though less pompous testimony of her own heart.

The grand business of the *fête* was no sooner over, than Amelia's thoughts recurred to me, and she accompanied Louisa, on the following evening, to the cottage. I shall pass over the poor woman's expressions of gratitude, (which Miss Amelia did not receive with that openness and affability I had so often observed in Louisa on similar occasions,) and continue my narrative.

Amelia asked to see me. "It is a Robin," said she: "does it sing?"

"Yes, Miss," said Peggy; "perhaps, if you stay a little while, you will hear him."

I was not willing to disappoint my little mistress, so I presently after began to sing.

"That is not the song of a Robin," said Amelia.

"So I have often observed," returned Louisa; "but it is a very sweet song, and he is a very nice little bird, I think."

"So do I," said Amelia: "I wish I had one like him. Could not you get me one, child?" enquired she, addressing Peggy.

"I don't know, Miss, but I'll try—I mean, I'll ask our Willy to try."

"Do so," said Amelia; "but I suppose there are few like this: I never saw one so tame. Besides, I thought Robins could not be kept in a cage."

The object of the visit being thus far attained, the young ladies departed. Louisa, however, ran back to tell Peggy's mother, that though she was now about to return home with her mamma, the little

girl should not be forgotten; for that she would come, though perhaps not so often, to teach her. "After Christmas," added she, "I shall be able to send her to the village school; and in the mean time, you can send her every Sunday with her brother, to learn her Catechism, and then I can teach her; for mamma has promised to take me always with her to the Sunday-school."

When Louisa was gone, Peggy's mother said: "Child, you must give that little bird to Miss Wyndham, for I am sure she wants it."

"Must I, dear mother," said Peggy: "why, I did not wish to part with it; yet, if I did, I thought I should like to give it to Miss Louisa."

"She does not wish for it, and Miss Amelia does," replied the mother: "you know she gave you clothes, and you must not be ungrateful."

"Well, if I must, I must," said the child, with a sigh; "but may I not wait

till Sunday, to ask Miss Louisa what she thinks?"

"That you may, with all my heart," returned her mother; "she is sure to tell you what is best."

Peggy appeared pleased with this short respite. Perhaps, indeed, she hoped, as I did, that her benefactress would advise her not to part with her favourite. It happened, however, quite otherwise. Louisa contrived to visit the cottage once more before her departure, and when little Peggy, with artless simplicity, told her all that was in her mind, the excellent girl refused to deprive her of her *pet*, (as she called me,) but advised my being sent to her friend Amelia.

I was much distressed at this decision; yet I could not help admiring the disinterestedness and prudence displayed in Louisa, who well knew that the child would gain more than an equivalent by the sacrifice; and for herself, though I am sure she would have liked to possess

me, she was too generous to deprive Amelia of an object she so ardently desired.

In pursuance, therefore, of her advice, Willy took me on the following morning to Wyndham Hall. His poor little sister shed some tears on parting with me. "My poor little Bob!" said she, "you may get a finer house and better food, but you will not find a mistress who loves you better than I do."

I felt as much grieved as herself, and had I been able to speak, would have told her that I did not desire any thing better than she had provided me; but as my language was unintelligible to her, I could not afford her even this consolation.

On our arrival at the hall, Miss Amelia received me with apparent delight, and having put me safely in a very handsome cage, ran to show me to her mamma, and to request that she would give the child something in return. Mrs. Wyndham, who could not bear that her daughter should

be under an obligation, particularly to a poor person, made now a very judicious return for the favour, far, indeed, exceeding its value. She ordered a good milch-cow to be sent back with the boy. This was, indeed, a valuable present to the poor woman, as it not only supplied her family with milk, &c., but enabled her to sell some to the neighbours, which, with the promised assistance of Mrs. Carleton, no doubt made her circumstances tolerably easy. And I must acknowledge, that these considerations consoled me for the separation. Besides, I felt myself of more consequence than heretofore, as I had been the means of affording relief to an amiable family, who stood much in need of it.

The first fortnight I spent at Wyndham Hall, passed very agreeably; for Miss Amelia was continually seeking something new to please me. I cannot say, however, that my esteem for her was equal to the kindness she lavished on me, for she

was not so assiduous in striving to please every body; and not only the servants, but even her too-indulgent mother, sometimes felt the effects of her peevish humours. Besides, not having been accustomed to occupy her time steadily and usefully, she was perpetually changing the objects of her attention. This fickle disposition made me conclude, that novelty was my chief recommendation, and that, consequently, some new favourite would soon supplant me. My conclusions were but too well founded, for her attention to me gradually diminished, and was shortly after engrossed by a new object.

By the time I had been with her a month, I found myself little noticed. However, as Amelia minded appearances very much, she thought proper to order me a new cage, not thinking the one I had, sufficiently ornamental to the drawing-room. A bird-fancier, with whom she had formerly dealt, was accordingly sent for, to receive her directions about it. He came, and I

observed that he regarded me with particular attention, and listened earnestly to my song. He soon after asked my mistress, in an apparently careless manner, where she got that bird. "It is a Robin," added he, "but it has not the right song."

Had Miss Amelia read some of the nice books which remained untouched in her library, she would, perhaps, have known, that the circumstance he mentioned greatly enhanced my value; but, though surrounded with the means of obtaining knowledge, she was very ignorant. Guided, therefore, by the man's manner of speaking, she seemed suddenly to lose all regard for me, and by her answer convinced him that he might get me at a very easy rate.

"Ah, Miss," said he, "as to song, you should hear a bird I have at home!"

"What bird?" demanded Amelia, eagerly.

"A piping-bullfinch, Miss: he has learned *Rule Britannia* and the *College Hornpipe*, and"——

"Do you mean to sell him?" interrupted Amelia.

"Why, as to that, Miss, I could get more by keeping him to teach others; yet I would not much object selling him to some particular customer, like you, Miss, for example."

"What do you ask for him?" said Amelia, to whom the idea of one bird teaching another was quite novel, and who was also flattered by being termed *a particular customer*.

"Why, to you, Miss," answered the man, "I could sell him for five guineas; though that is too little, for there is not another bird like him in the kingdom."

This last observation of the cunning bird-fancier, decided Amelia; she produced her purse, but, alas! the contents did not amount to four guineas. "What shall I do!" exclaimed she, "mamma is out, and will not return till just before dinner, and I did so wish to surprise her with my piping bullfinch."

"Why, Miss," said the man, "as you seem to have no great fancy for that silly bird yonder, if you like, I will take him and his cage for what is wanting, and send home Piping Tom in the new cage you have ordered, and all in time before your dinner."

Amelia readily acceded to this proposal, and I was taken by the bird-fancier, to supply the place of Piping Tom, whose removal I considered no more enviable than my own, unpleasant as it was.

My new situation was extremely uncomfortable, for I had always been more or less accustomed to liberty. Here I was closely confined, and what was to me worse than all, my cage was seldom cleaned, and my food and water remained so long unchanged, that I frequently found it almost impossible to touch either.

This sad condition would, I think, soon have delivered me from the possibility of any other misfortune; and here, gentle reader, my history would have terminated,

had not my master, who was not ignorant of my talents, now thought proper to turn them to some account. When he told Miss Amelia that my song was not that of a Robin, he spoke truth, but not the whole truth. He affected to depreciate my value, that he might get possession of me. I was separated so early from my parents, that I did not learn their song, but being naturally disposed to music, and hearing no other than that of the pianoforte, when with my first dear mistress, I had contrived to pick up a few notes here and there, and put them together at my leisure; thus forming a kind of wild melody, not resembling the song of any other bird. Had Miss Amelia been aware of this circumstance, she certainly would not have parted with me; for, as I observed before, she valued things in proportion as they were difficult of attainment. Well had it been for her if this disposition had extended to her studies: in this instance they might have been subservient

to her darling propensity. But such is the lot of those who are wilfully ignorant; they are continually duped by the artful, and not unfrequently defeat their own plans of enjoyment, by not knowing how to pursue them.

But to return to myself. I was now to assume a new character—no less than that of preceptor. My master procured some very young birds, so young that several of them died for want of that delicate attention which the parent alone can bestow. Two or three survived, and these were placed in small cages near mine, that they might hear my song and adopt it. I sincerely pitied the early misfortunes and captivity of these poor little creatures, and sang rather to sooth and cheer than to instruct them. As they grew older, however, they tried to imitate my note, and soon acquired it so exactly, that my master sold them to great advantage.

I must say I regretted losing my little

pupils, particularly one, a linnet, who had evinced great affection towards me; but I consoled myself with the assurance, that they must be better off any where than with the mercenary bird-fancier, who valued them only as a means of getting money.

CHAP. IX.

MY business for the year was now finished, and I mournfully resigned myself to my fate, expecting no release from prison, nor any amusement in it, till the following spring, when my mind would be at least relieved by a similar occupation. My deliverance was, however, much nearer than I expected, for the lady who had purchased my pretty linnet, came to enquire particularly of my master about its song, with which she was much pleased.

"I suppose he learned it of some foreign bird," said she, "for I never heard any wild note like it."

This lady was very rich, and a good customer to my master, so he thought it best to satisfy her entirely; he therefore

produced me as the instructor of her bird, relating all he knew of my history, at least, all that was creditable to himself. The lady admired me very much, and offered to purchase me.

Oh! how my heart beat while I heard my master enumerating my services to enhance my value, that he might obtain a high price for me, or deter the lady from becoming a purchaser; for he did not like to sell me, though he could not well refuse her the favour.

At length my anxiety was relieved by the lady's saying: "Come, come, do not hesitate; I will give you the price you ask, and what is more, I will lend him or the linnet to you, for a month or two next spring, if you wish either of them to be your singing-master."

An offer so advantageous could not be refused; the bargain was concluded, and I, exulting in the hope of happier days, was placed in the carriage, and conveyed to the lady's house.

I cannot express the joy I felt on seeing my dear little pupil the linnet, nor describe his demonstrations of pleasure on our meeting. Here we were, indeed, comfortable! What an alteration we found! I almost rejoiced that we had been at the bird-fancier's, for privation had given a greater value even to common enjoyments: cleanliness, comfort, and occasional liberty, were now luxuries.

Our good mistress had many other birds, to all of which, as well as to ourselves, she was extremely indulgent; but I was particularly noticed by her, not only for my song, but for my familiarity also, for I took every opportunity of showing her how happy I was, and how grateful I could be. I had, to be sure, no way of expressing my gratitude, but by flying to meet her, perching on her shoulder or her arm; but I found that she understood my caresses, and valued me for them.

I had been some time with this good lady, having every thing I could desire,

and regretting only that there were no children in her house, (for I have always been extremely fond of children,) when I one day heard her giving directions about beds and other things, that were preparing for her two grand-children, who were coming to spend a few weeks with her. I was greatly delighted at the prospect of again having it in my power to observe the manners and behaviour of young persons. Besides, I had a presentiment that my mistress's grandchildren were well-disposed and amiable; supposing she would not otherwise be so anxious as she appeared to be to give them pleasure. I am happy to assure you, my young readers, that I was not at all disappointed in my expectations, for when they came, every favourable prepossession was realized. But, perhaps, you will like better to judge for yourselves, so I will describe them as well as I can.

Now it is probably expected that I should mention the colour of their hair,

their eyes, and enumerate all the charms of their persons. But as we do not contribute any thing either to our personal graces or defects, and consequently cannot derive any merit from the former, or disgrace from the latter, I consider those points of no importance, therefore, shall pass them over in silence. Mary, the eldest, was about nine years of age, her brother Henry about seven: the former, I understood, had been some time at school: it was now her vacation. Both of these children seemed to have been well brought up, for they were never at a loss for employment or amusement; were never lounging about on the chairs or sofas, or leaning listlessly against the fire-place. But what I particularly admired in them was the affection they evinced towards each other, and the attention they paid to every wish of their parents, though absent from them. In short, all their conduct seemed to proceed from some principle superior to self-gratification, or, in other words, they

sought *true* gratification, where only it was to be found—in the performance of their duty.

As I was naturally fond of all children, it is easy to imagine that I became particularly attached to these, amiable as they were. I do not, however, mean to represent them to my young readers as models of perfection, for such would be as far beyond their imitation as they are from resembling nature. I have observed that all children have their faults; but those who are most patient of reproof, and most open to conviction, are also most likely to amend their trivial failings; for great defects such cannot have. Henry and Mary were certainly every thing their parents could wish, and their sensible grandmamma was greatly delighted with them, yet she never extolled them when present: a single word of approbation, or an affectionate smile, repaid all their endeavours to please her. And, indeed, so sweet was her smile, so judicious her approbation,

that the dear children seemed to desire nothing more.

Though my good mistress did not indulge her young visitors in an unlimited manner, or teach them to be selfish by making their recreations the price of their good behaviour, yet she found means to amuse and improve them at the same time, by taking them to museums, manufactories, &c. where they saw a profusion of the works of nature and art. These morning excursions furnished subjects for conversation in the evening, which, with a magic-lantern, representing some of the most remarkable occurrences in history, a geographical game, and other similar recreations, filled up their time so agreeably, that the hour of rest always seemed to arrive too early; yet they did not on that account repine or loiter when the maid came for them, but went off immediately and cheerfully.

In this manner three weeks elapsed. I

grew very fond of these interesting children, and they were no less so of me: all the family had been so cheerful since they came, that I anticipated their departure with great regret. One day, when Henry and his sister had accompanied their grand-mamma to a menagerie, where they had seen a fine collection of birds, the former said, on his return: "Well, dear grand-mamma, of all the birds I have seen to-day, not one pleased me so well as your little Robin. Some of them, to be sure, were beautiful, but they had not that docility and tameness which I admire in him."

"The difference, my dear boy," replied my mistress, "proceeds from education. You may observe that children who are well brought up, are generally docile and intelligent, while those who are neglected or spoiled, are usually destitute of those amiable qualities. But," continued she, "my dear Henry, I think you seem to respect the old tutor, so I

will make you a present of him; and may you, my dear boy, improve your talents for the benefit of your fellow-creatures, as he has done."

I felt much gratified by this encomium, and I could perceive that Henry was no less delighted with the thought of possessing me, though he modestly declined the offer, saying, he did not like to deprive his grand-mamma of her favourite, and observing, that, perhaps, his sister might like to have me.

"Your sister," said my mistress, "shall have her choice among my Canary-birds, but you, Henry, shall have the Robin: you shall keep him for my sake. Come, Mary, my love," continued she, "and choose your bird."

Mary had been present during the whole of this conversation, her countenance expressing the greatest pleasure at her brother's acquisition, and beaming with tenderness when he offered to resign it to her. She had not spoken, but all she felt

was fully expressed in her mild and ingenuous features. Now summoned by her grand-mamma, she said: "Indeed, Ma'am, I should like a Canary-bird very much; so much that I could not bear any one to feed or attend it but myself, and as I am mostly at school, I could not do that; so I think I am better without one. You know I have the little pug you gave me last Midsummer. Henry feeds him while I am away, yet, whenever I return home, he knows me again and loves me as well as ever: but birds are not so sagacious."

"Your reasons are so good, my dear," said my mistress, "that I feel as much pleased as if you had accepted my offer; and that is saying a great deal, for I have real pleasure in bestowing my little pets on good children."

The entrance of a servant with letters, here interrupted the conversation. One of these was from Henry's papa, requesting that his little ones might be sent home

early in the ensuing week, as Mary's vacation had nearly expired, and an elder brother of Henry's was expected from college, whose instructions were likely to be useful to the little boy.

Nothing material occurred before the day of separation. Great regret was evinced, both on the part of the children and that of their dear grandmamma; but her promise to visit them the following summer, and the prospect of meeting their parents, soon consoled the former, and they set out for their paternal dwelling, about twenty miles distant, taking me with them.

CHAP. X.

IT was not till I had been some time with my little master that I could fully appreciate his amiable character: nor do I, indeed, think that I was ever acquainted with the whole extent of his goodness; but so many admirable traits fell under my immediate notice, that I became daily more attached to him. He was extremely kind to me, procuring me every comfort and indulgence in his power, and giving me liberty whenever he was at home. I might frequently have taken advantage of his confidence in me, had I wished to escape; but I loved him too well to think of leaving him, and had also experienced such vicissitudes, that I had no desire to go in quest of new adventures. Here I had every thing I could wish for,

and I felt happy under the protection of a master whom I could at once admire and esteem.

Henry was by no means insensible of my regard. "Dear mamma," he would frequently say, "I am sure my bird knows me, and loves me too, for he is always so much rejoiced when I return home, if I have been absent ever so short a time."

His dear mother always seized the occasion, when he made these observations, to inculcate some amiable impression, or draw some useful inference. "You see, my dear boy," she would observe, "what pleasure there is in pleasing. You are kind to your little bird, he is, in return, affectionate and grateful; his caresses, though of no real value, are delightful to you. In them you experience what I have so often represented to you, that trifling acts of kindness and gratitude, though in themselves unimportant, are of inestimable value to the receiver You in

some measure resemble your little bird, when you display affection and gratitude towards your parents, and I trust that the pleasure you now feel from his acknowledgement of your kindness, is but an earnest of that you will enjoy when you are able to be useful to your fellow-creatures. I have to add, though, that you are not always to expect gratitude for your kindness; that is not the reward I would wish you to seek, but rather that recompence of which no one can deprive you—the approbation of your own heart."

Perhaps my young readers will not admire this long digression, but I cannot forbear repeating, occasionally, some of the excellent advice I so frequently heard; and I hope there are some children whose hearts will (as Henry's did on similar occasions) expand with a noble emulation to approve themselves every thing their parents' most sanguine hopes can anticipate. Henry's father was no less sensible than his mother, nor was he less indulgent. His time was much occupied in a professional

employment, but he still found leisure to improve, and frequently to amuse, his little boy. Henry's favourite amusement was riding. Hitherto he had ridden only a donkey, but his kind papa had promised to purchase a poney for him the ensuing spring, provided he profited by his brother's instructions.

The little boy was usually diligent and attentive, but on this occasion he displayed so much assiduity, and so entirely satisfied his papa, that the promised reward was already earned; and Henry, in idea, mounted his poney and rode beside his dear papa, though the winter had yet to elapse before his idea could be realized.

The season was peculiarly severe, and I had great reason to rejoice that I was not exposed to its inclemency; for I frequently observed from the windows multitudes of little birds flying in every direction, in search of that sustenance the snow-covered earth refused them. I pitied them very much, and would gladly have shared my

food with them, but as I could not express my benevolent wishes, they were, of course, fruitless, and compassion was all I could bestow. Happily, however, Henry observed their distress, and soon found means to relieve them. He obtained his mamma's permission to have the window-sash taken out from a small empty room, and there he put abundance of food every evening, but never went in during the day. The plan succeeded according to his wish, for the birds meeting with no interruption, came there every day to feed, and the dear boy had frequently the pleasure of seeing his numerous little pensioners busily employed about the window of his aviary.

The snow continued very long on the ground, but as Henry was a robust boy, that did not prevent his walking out. One morning he came home, and ran hastily into the room where his mamma was sitting.

"How now, my Henry," said she,

"why you have been up to your knees in the snow. That is not like your usual obedience."

"Dear mamma," said Henry, "I am sure you will excuse me when you know the cause. Look at this poor little fellow," added he, producing a redbreast of the preceding spring; "he flew a few paces before me on the path where I was walking, and then stopped, as if unable to proceed: when I advanced he made another effort, and reached the foot of a tree, where he sat quite still for some time, and I, fearing that he was dying, ventured across the snow and brought him home. I think we may, perhaps, recover him, mamma."

"We will hope so, at least, my dear," said his mother; "but do not bring him near the fire, rather place him on the window-frame, the warmth of the sun through the glass will be sufficient for him at first."

Henry, in pursuance of his mother's

advice, placed his little nurseling on the window-frame, where, finding some comfort from the warmth, he fell asleep. Henry was delighted at the idea of having saved the bird's life, but I, who understood the nature of birds better than he could, saw only the torpor of approaching death in his apparently tranquil slumber, and pitied my poor little master, for I knew what his tender heart would feel when he was undeceived.

My fears were not groundless, for the poor little bird appearing very uneasy soon after, Henry took him in his hand, and begged his mamma to get something to feed him. She complied, and was preparing some of my food to give him, when he expired in that hand which had been vainly extended to save him. Poor Henry, who seldom wept, now burst into tears, and his mamma had some difficulty in consoling him.

"My dear boy," said she, "your grief will not recal the poor little fellow to life:

he is released from pain, and placed beyond the possibility of future suffering. I am sorry for your disappointment, but you must be consoled with the reflection of having intended to do good, though you have not succeeded. One advantage, however, may be derived from this circumstance, that of learning to bear a disappointment with fortitude. Remember how much you admired the conduct of Porus when brought before Alexander, and that of Caractacus when led in triumph through Rome, and endeavour to imitate the firmness with which they sustained misfortune."

I did not understand the whole of this speech, being unacquainted with the persons alluded to; however, I dare say my young readers are better informed on the subject. Henry seemed so deeply impressed with it, that he immediately dried his tears, and endeavoured to resume his accustomed cheerfulness.

CHAP. XI.

SOME time after the event just related in the preceding chapter, the snow disappeared, the poor birds became more lively, and winter at length yielded to the mild influence of spring: all nature seemed to rejoice at the change, which appeared more delightful from the late severity of the season. With the return of spring Henry's desire of riding returned also, my young readers may therefore suppose, that he was greatly delighted when his papa informed him, one evening, that, if he would rise an hour earlier than usual on the following morning, he would take him to a neighbouring town, where there was to be a fair, and procure a poney for him.

The morning came—it was a delightful one! Henry was ready in time, and set out with his father to make the long-expected purchase. They had arrived within a mile of the fair, when a most distressing scene was presented to their view—a cottage in flames, which the villagers were vainly endeavouring to extinguish, and the wretched inhabitants of the heretofore peaceful and comfortable dwelling, deploring, with fruitless tears, the loss of their little all. The family consisted of a man, his wife, and six children, the eldest of whom was not more than eight years old, the youngest scarcely eight months.

I not having been present, cannot be expected to describe the agony of these unfortunate people, thus suddenly reduced to poverty, and destitute even of a resting-place for the night; indeed, I imagine that such misery surpasses description, and cannot even be conceived, except by those who have witnessed it. Henry for some time surveyed the sad scene in silent dis-

may. His father at length roused him by saying, "Come, my boy, we shall be too late, and I fear we can do no good here."

"Dear papa," said the amiable child, I am in no hurry, and I think, if you would agree to my proposal, we might do some good here."

"Indeed!" said his father: "pray what is your plan?"

"Why, you know, papa, that I can ride a donkey as well as a poney, but these poor people cannot do without a lodging and food; now, papa, if you would spend the money on them instead of the poney, I should be very glad."

"But are you quite sure, Henry," said his father, "that you will not regret this surrender? You cannot go to see Mary on your donkey, and you might frequently go on your poney, besides riding out with me:—consider well before you decide."

"I have considered so well, dear papa," returned the child, "that I am sure, were I to wait a whole week, I should not

change my mind; and I know Mary would advise me to do so too, even though she did not see me so often."

"Well, then, my dear boy, I had intended giving ten pounds for your poney, you may, therefore, bestow that sum on the poor family."

Henry was overjoyed at obtaining his father's permission to relieve the unhappy sufferers, and begged his assistance and advice as to the manner of doing so. These the delighted father readily afforded, and so judicious were his arrangements, that, before night, Henry had the satisfaction of seeing the whole family settled in a snug little habitation, not far from his father's house. His mamma kindly lent her assistance, sending provisions sufficient for their immediate wants, with some clothes for the poor woman and her children, all their own having been consumed in the flames.

It may easily be imagined, that this

event was much talked of; indeed, many ladies and gentlemen called on Henry's parents, in order to be more particularly informed on the subject; and by this means it was that I became acquainted with the facts I have just detailed. Numerous were the comments and compliments of the visitors, but happily for my little master, he heard very few of them. One lady in particular, after she had for some time extolled the child's generosity, said (addressing his father,) "but surely, Sir, you still intend to get him a poney: I wish you would allow me to send him one."

"Madam," replied the sensible father, "I am greatly obliged to you, but I cannot allow Henry to have a poney till he has earned it: if he has done a good action, that must be his reward at present. Were I to reward him for it, two bad consequences would ensue; he might hereafter pretend to be generous from self-interest or vanity, for it would not be diffi-

cult to make a show of resigning what he was sure to obtain afterwards; and he might be taught to expect a reward for his good actions here, whereas, experience shows that kindness is frequently not only unrequited, but is even returned by ingratitude and enmity."

"Indeed, that is too true," returned the lady, "but I should have thought your observations more applicable to a grown person than to a child."

"That," said the father, "is, I know, a very general idea; but it is precisely because I expect Henry to become a *grown person*, and because I should wish him then to have such sentiments, that I now endeavour to inculcate them. The human heart cannot be too early formed to virtue: good principles cannot be impressed too soon."

This and many similar arguments used by Henry's father, convinced me of the propriety of his conduct with regard to his children: his prudence was amply reward-

ed by their improvement, for they daily became such as he desired they should be. My dear little master's sister, the amiable Mary, came home shortly after this time for the Midsummer vacation, and it was then settled that she should not return to school, but that her mamma, (whose health had been delicate for some time, but was now considerably amended,) should, with some assistance, superintend her education.

This arrangement was highly pleasing to all parties, and I partook of the general joy; for Mary was a charming girl, and her presence added to my happiness as well as to that of my young master.

The summer of this year passed delightfully with me, for I had one great enjoyment, to which I had long been a stranger. Henry one day conversing with his sister about me, at the open window, before which was a balcony, regretted keeping me confined to the house. "Do you know, said he, I have a great mind to let him out; if I lose him by the experiment,

I must console myself by thinking that he will be happier in the possession of his liberty: but I really think he will not go away, so let us try."

Mary concurring in his opinion, he came and opened the door of my cage, then walking to the balcony, he called me to follow him. I joyfully complied, and flew to his shoulder, from thence I hopped to the rails of the balcony, and at last perched on a tree close to it, where I repaid his indulgence with a song. I saw Henry's colour change when I flew towards the tree, therefore, to assure him that I had no intention of leaving him, I shortly after returned to my cage, and went out no more that day.

My behaviour on this occasion was so satisfactory to my young master, that he repeated the indulgence every fine day, and allowed me to bathe on the balcony, where he placed water for that purpose. However, towards the end of autumn he thought it prudent to discontinue this

practice, on account of the following circumstance, which has something interesting in it, more than relates to myself.

From having been brought up more tenderly than other birds, I was not so hardy as they, and not having had the same necessity for exerting my limbs, I was not so expert in the use of them; so that one day, when I was perched on my accustomed tree, a sudden gust of wind blew me down. Had I been wise, I should have reascended the tree, but finding some amusement on the ground, I continued hopping about till I got so far into the shrubbery, that I could not distinguish one tree from another, nor get a glimpse of the house through the foliage, so that I was fearful of getting further from home in my endeavours to return. In the mean time, Henry, who soon missed me, came himself in search of me, but not finding me near the spot, he returned to the house, to beg assistance from the domestics, promising a guinea (his

whole stock at that time) to any one who should discover me, well knowing that I would return to him at his call. The search was continued some time in vain; for the noise of their approach terrified me so much, that I crept into the fork of a tree, where I remained in a state of great perplexity. At last, however, I was descried by a little boy, who helped my young master in his garden, and attended his donkey.

"Here, Master Henry, here he is!" exclaimed the boy, his countenance glowing with delight.

Henry, to my great joy, now appeared. I flew to him immediately, before he had time to call me, and testified my joy as well as I was able.

"Well, Frank," said Henry, addressing the boy, "the guinea is yours; I am glad of it, and hope you will make a good use of it."

CHAP. XII.

I MUST now beg leave to introduce my young readers to Frank, for his amiable and grateful conduct deserves to be recorded, as an example to those who may have the power of imitating it. He was an orphan, about two years older than Henry. His father, who was a sailor, had been lost at sea, and his poor mother, overcome with grief at this melancholy event, survived him only a few months, leaving her little boy to the care of her sister. The latter was a kind, good-hearted woman, who, though she had five children of her own, received the boy (then only two years old) and reared him with the greatest tenderness. She, however, was unfortunate also, for when Frank was

about six years old, she lost her husband, on whose industrious exertions the family chiefly depended for support. Her own children were yet too young to go to service, and it was with the greatest difficulty that she procured them a scanty supply of the coarsest provisions. Her neighbours, knowing her distressed condition, advised her to send Frank to the workhouse, and thus rid herself of one incumbrance. This, however, she strenuously refused to do, saying, that while they had a morsel of bread, he should share it with them.

Her kindness was not lost on the grateful heart of Frank: it made so deep an impression, that he strove, on all occasions, to evince his affection to her and his cousins, all of whom, except the youngest, were girls.

For nearly two years the poor widow had to contend with all the hardships of poverty, when Providence, as if to reward her kindness to the little boy, made him

the instrument of future comfort to her. Frank's quiet and obliging conduct had attracted the notice of Henry's father, who, finding that his morals corresponded with the idea he had formed of them, fixed on him, as a proper assistant to his little boy in the before-mentioned employments. Frank was a diligent and good-natured boy, and Henry proved an indulgent and generous master to him; so that the poor little boy was enabled to assist his aunt a little with his weekly earnings, which Henry paid out of his own pocket-money. Nor was this all, for Frank's good behaviour induced Henry's mother to enquire into the circumstances of the family, which she greatly ameliorated, by affording the poor woman employment suited to her abilities. My little friend Mary, also, contributed to the comforts of the poor children, by making for them, in the holidays, such little articles of dress as she could afford to purchase. Yet the greatest benefit conferred on this poor family, was re-

served to my young master. He contrived, every evening, to devote a small portion of time in teaching Frank to read, write, and cipher; and the poor boy took so much pains to learn, that it was rather a pleasure than a trouble to teach him. But what most of all delighted Henry was, that Frank never failed teaching his cousins the lesson he had learned the preceding day; so that six children, instead of one, profited by Henry's instructions. My young master did not discover this for some time, but when he did, he procured the good boy books, and other things necessary for this laudable undertaking, in which he succeeded so well, that the three eldest girls were able to read fluently, and to repeat and understand their catechism. And now Frank's only ambition was to see them neatly dressed, and fit to appear at church, whither they constantly went, though in very mean attire; for their mother was sensible that the want of good clothes was

not a sufficient excuse for the neglect of any part of their duty.

The poor woman's circumstances were so much improved since she had been employed by Henry's mother, that she had refused to receive Frank's wages, desiring him to lay them by, to procure decent apparel for himself. Frank did not urge her to use his little stock, but he did not reserve it for himself: he now saw, in idea, the accomplishment of his favourite project. Think then, my young readers, how delighted he must have been, when he had, for many weeks, saved his wages, without making known the purpose to which he intended applying them, to receive, at once, the means of gratifying a wish so dear to his heart. This, then, was the use Frank made of his guinea. His cousins appeared the following Sunday, in neat, plain clothes of his purchasing, while he accompanied them in habiliments no otherwise distinguished than by the industry which had been displayed in

patching them: a garb, however, in which, under these circumstances, he certainly appeared to greater advantage than he could have done in the richest clothing.

Henry's father, who was informed of Frank's generous conduct, did not fail to reward it. Perhaps it may be imagined that he gave him new clothes: no, he rewarded him in a manner more congenial to his own sentiments and the boy's disposition, by taking the widow's eldest daughter into his family; where, under the superintendance of his housekeeper, she was likely to become a good servant, and consequently a useful member of society.

CONCLUSION.

AUTUMN was now past, and winter set in with some severity. My prospects at this time became very gloomy, for Henry's father was appointed to a lucrative situation abroad, which he accepted the more willingly, as he knew that a residence in a warm climate would be beneficial to the health of his amiable partner. I cannot describe the regret of my young friends at leaving their comfortable home, nor the grief of their poor neighbours at losing their kind benefactors. Frank's aunt, however, was taken care of, she had the charge of the house during the absence of the family, and Frank was retained about the farm. Mary was to accompany her parents; but my poor little

master was to be sent to school, as his father did not approve of a foreign education for him.

Amidst all these arrangements, I dare say my young readers are anxious to learn how I was to be disposed of; and, indeed, this was a subject of frequent discussion between Henry and Mary, till the latter fortunately remembered that the lady with whom she was at school was very fond of birds. When this circumstance recurred to her, she immediately communicated it to her brother, who, as he was obliged to part with me, was happy to procure me a safe and comfortable asylum. It was therefore decided that I should be sent on the following day, and Frank was accordingly deputed to take me, with a letter from Mary to her late instructress, begging her to accept me, and recommending me to her favour by a recital of my various qualifications.

Ah! with what a heavy heart I went on this journey. My young conductor, too,

seemed no less grieved than I was: but how great was my surprise, and how much my uneasincss was abated, when I was conveyed into the presence of a lady whom I instantly recognized to be my first kind mistress, Miss Sedley, who it seems had quitted the charming family in which I left her, to watch over the declining years of an affectionate mother, and had established a school, in order to reside near this beloved object. She received me very kindly, observing, when she had read Mary's letter, that my accomplishments greatly resembled those of a little bird she once possessed. Oh, how I then wished to speak! Action, however, is eloquent where language fails: she opened the cage door, and I immediately flew on to her shoulder.

"This is surprising," said she: "it must be my bird; but I will make one more trial."

She then walked to the piano-forte and began to play. I immediately understood

her motive, and, anxious to convince her of my identity, perched on her music-book. This was the proof she wanted: therefore she now rose, and returning to the table, wrote a kind answer to Mary, thanking her for her present, and relating the curious coincidences above mentioned.

Now, my dear young readers, I have been some time happily settled with my kind mistress, and with her I hope to spend the remainder of my days. I have frequently seen Henry and Mary, who continue as amiable as they always were, and are the delight and comfort of their parents. My life is no longer chequered by variety, but flows on in one uninterrupted stream of happiness. Here then I shall close my memoirs, though, if any new vicissitudes happen to me, (which I trust will not be the case,) I may again appear before you as an author.

THE END.

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