Barbara, against whose apparent childishness, and real cunning, he was not sufficiently upon his guard, had often the art of drawing him into conversation about his visits. She ran into her father's parlour, but she knew, the moment she saw his face, that it was no time to ask questions; his pen was across his mouth, and his brown wig pushed oblique upon his contracted forehead—the wig was always pushed crooked, whenever he was in a brown, or rather a black study. Barbara, who did not, like Susan, bear with her father's testy humour from affection and gentleness of disposition, but who always humoured him from artifice, tried all her skill to fathom his thoughts; and when she found that *it* would not do, she went to tell her maid so, and to complain that her father was so cross, there was no bearing him.

It is true that attorney Case was not in the happiest mood possible, for he was by no means satisfied with his morning's work at the Abbey. Sir Arthur Somers, the *new man*, did not suit him, and he began to be rather apprehensive that he should not suit sir Arthur. He had sound reasons for his doubts.

Sir Arthur Somers was an excellent lawyer, and a perfectly honest man. This seemed to our attorney a contradiction in terms; in the

course of his practice the case had not occurred, and he had no precedents ready to direct his proceedings.

Sir Arthur Somers was a man of wit and eloquence, yet of plain dealing and humanity. The attorney could not persuade himself to believe that the benevolence was any thing but enlightened cunning, and the plain dealing he one minute dreaded as the master-piece of art, and the next despised as the characteristic of folly. In short, he had not yet decided whether he was an honest man or a knave. He had settled accounts with him for his late agency, he had talked about sundry matters of business, he constantly perceived that he could not impose upon sir Arthur; but that he could know all the mazes of the law, and yet prefer the straight road, was incomprehensible.

Mr. Case paid him some compliments on his great legal abilities, and his high reputation at the bar.

"I have left the bar," replied sir Arthur, coolly.

The attorney looked in unfeigned astonishment, when a man was actually making 3,000*l.* per annum at the bar, that he should leave it.

"I am come," said he, "to enjoy the kind of domestic life which I prefer to all others, in the

country, amongst people whose happiness I hope to increase."

At this speech the attorney changed his ground, flattering himself that he should find his man averse to business, and ignorant of country affairs. He talked of the value of land and of new leases.

Sir Arthur wished to enlarge his domain, to make a ride round it. A map of the domain was upon the table; farmer Price's garden came exactly across the new road for the ride. Sir Arthur looked disappointed, and the keen attorney seized the moment to inform him that "Price's whole land was at his disposal."

"At my disposal! how so?" cried sir Arthur, eagerly; "it will not be out of lease, I believe, these ten years. I'll look into the rent-roll again, perhaps I am mistaken."

"You are mistaken, my good sir, and you are not mistaken," said Mr. Case, with a shrewd smile; "the land will not be out of lease these ten years in one sense, and in another it is out of lease at this time being. To come to the point at once, the lease is *ab origine* null and void. I have detected a capital flaw in the body of it; I pledge my credit upon it, sir; it can't stand a single term in law or equity."

The attorney observed, that at these words

sir Arthur's eye was fixed with a look of earnest attention. "Now I have him!" said the cunning tempter to himself.

"Neither in law nor equity?" repeated sir Arthur, with apparent incredulity. "Are you sure of that, Mr. Case?"

"Sure! As I told you before, sir, I'd pledge my whole credit upon the thing—I'd stake my existence."

"*That's something*," said sir Arthur, as if he was pondering upon the matter.

The attorney went on with all the eagerness of a keen man, who sees a chance at one stroke of winning a rich friend, and of ruining a poor enemy; he explained with legal volubility, and technical amplification, the nature of the mistake in Mr. Price's lease. "It was, sir," said he, "a lease for the life of Peter Price, Susannah his wife, and to the survivor or survivors of them, or for the full time and term of twenty years, to be computed from the first day of May then next ensuing. Now, sir, this you see is a lease in reversion, which the late sir Benjamin Somers had not, by his settlement, a right to make. This is a curious mistake, you see, sir Arthur, and in filling up those printed leases there's always a good chance of some flaw; I

find it perpetually, but I never found a better than this in the whole course of my practice."

Sir Arthur stood in silence.

" My dear sir," said the attorney, taking him by the button, " you have no scruple of stirring in this business?"

" A little," said sir Arthur.

" Why, then, that can be done away in a moment; your name shall not appear in it at all; you have nothing to do but to make over the lease to me—I make all safe to you with my bond. Now being in possession, I come forward in my own proper person. *Shall I proceed?*"

" No; you have said enough," replied sir Arthur.

" The case, indeed, lies in a nutshell," said the attorney, who had by this time worked himself up to such a pitch of professional enthusiasm, that, intent upon his vision of a law-suit, he totally forgot to observe the impression his words made upon sir Arthur.

" There's only one thing we have forgotten all this time," said sir Arthur.

" What can that be, sir?"

" That we shall ruin this poor man."

Case was thunderstruck at these words, or rather by the look which accompanied them.

He recollected that he had laid himself open, before he was sure of sir Arthur's *real* character. He softened, and said he should have had certainly more *consideration* in the case of any but a litigious pig-headed fellow, as he knew Price to be.

" If he be litigious," said sir Arthur, " I shall certainly be glad to get him fairly out of the parish as soon as possible. When you go home you will be so good, sir, as to send me his lease, that I may satisfy myself, before we stir in this business."

The attorney, brightening up, prepared to take leave, but he would not persuade himself to take his departure, without making one push at sir Arthur about the agency.

" I will not trouble *you*, sir Arthur, with this lease of Price's," said he; " I'll leave it with your agent. Whom shall I apply to?"

" *To myself*, sir, if you please," replied sir Arthur.

The courtiers of Louis the XIVth could not have looked more astounded than our attorney, when they received from their monarch a similar answer. It was this unexpected reply of sir Arthur's which had deranged the temper of Mr. Case, which had caused his wig to stand so crooked upon his forehead, and which rendered

him impenetrably silent to his inquisitive daughter Barbara. After walking up and down his room, conversing with himself for some time, he concluded that the agency must be given to somebody, when sir Arthur should go to attend his duty in parliament; that the agency, even for the winter season, was not a thing to be neglected, and that, if he managed well, he might yet secure it for himself. He had often found that small timely presents worked wonderfully upon his own mind, and he judged of others by himself. The tenants had been in the reluctant, but constant, practice of making him continual petty offerings, and he resolved to try the same course with sir Arthur, whose resolution to be his own agent he thought argued a close, saving, avaricious disposition.

He had heard the housekeeper at the Abbey inquiring, as he passed through the servants, whether there was any lamb to be gotten? She said that sir Arthur was remarkably fond of lamb, and that she wished she could get a quarter for him.

Immediately he sallied into his kitchen, as soon as the idea struck him, and asked a shepherd, who was waiting there, whether he knew of a nice fat lamb to be had any where in the neighbourhood.

"I know of one," cried Barbara; "Susan Price has a pet lamb, that's as fat as fat can be."

The attorney eagerly caught at these words, and speedily devised a scheme for obtaining Susan's lamb for nothing.

It would be something strange if an attorney of his talents and standing was not an overmatch for Simple Susan. He prowled forth in search of his prey; he found Susan packing up her father's little wardrobe, and when she looked up as she knelt, he saw that she had been in tears.

"How is your mother to-day, Susan?"

"Worse, sir. My father goes to-morrow."

"That's a pity."

"It can't be helped," said Susan, with a sigh.

"It can't be helped—how do you know that?" said he.

"Sir! *dear* sir!" cried she, looking up at him, and a sudden ray of hope beamed in her ingenuous countenance.

"And if you could help it, Susan?"

Susan clasped her hands in silence, more expressive than words.

"You *can* help it, Susan."

She started up in ecstasy.

"What would you give now to have your father at home for a whole week longer?"

"Any thing!—but I have nothing."

"Yes, but you have a lamb," said the hard-hearted attorney.

"My poor little lamb," said Susan, "but what good can that do?"

"What good can any lamb do? Is not lamb good to eat? Why do you look so pale, girl? Are not sheep killed every day? and don't you eat mutton? Is your lamb better than any body else's, think you?"

"I don't know, but I love it better."

"More fool you."

"It feeds out of my hand; it follows me about; I have always taken care of it; my mother gave it to me."

"Well, say no more about it then; if you love your lamb better than your father and your mother both, keep it, and good morning to you."

"Stay, oh stay!" cried Susan, catching the skirt of his coat with an eager trembling hand; —"a whole week, did you say? My mother may get better in that time. No, I do not love my lamb half so well." The struggle of her mind ceased, and with a placid countenance and calm voice, "Take the lamb," said she.

"Where is it?" said the attorney.

"Grazing in the meadow, by the river side."

"It must be brought up before night-fall for the butcher, remember."

"I shall not forget it," said Susan, steadily. But as soon as her persecutor turned his back and quitted the house, she sat down, and hid her face in her hands. She was soon roused by the sound of her mother's feeble voice, who was calling *Susan* from the inner room, where she lay. Susan went in, but did not undraw the curtain as she stood beside the bed.

"Are you there, love? Undraw the curtain, that I may see you, and tell me—I thought I heard some strange voice just now talking to my child. Something's amiss, Susan," said her mother, raising herself as well as she was able in the bed, to examine her daughter's countenance.

"Would you think it amiss, then, my dear mother," said Susan, stooping to kiss her, "would you think it amiss, if my father was to stay with us a week longer?"

"Susan! you don't say so?"

"He is indeed, a whole week;—but how burning hot your hand is still."

"Are you sure he will stay? How do you know? Who told you so? Tell me all quick."

"Attorney Case told me so; he can get him a week's longer leave of absence, and he has promised he will."

"God bless him for it for ever and ever!" said the poor woman, joining her hands. "May the blessing of Heaven be with him!"

Susan closed the curtains and was silent—she *could not say Amen.*

She was called out of the room at this moment; for a messenger was come from the Abbey for the bread bills. It was she who always made out the bills, for though she had not had a great number of lessons from the writing-master, she had taken so much pains to learn, that she could write a very neat, legible hand, and she found this very useful; she was not, to be sure, particularly inclined to draw out a long bill at this instant, but business must be done She set to work, ruled her lines for the pounds, shillings, and pence, made out the bill for the Abbey, and despatched the impatient messenger; then she resolved to make out all the bills for the neighbours, who had many of them taken a few loaves and rolls of her baking. "I had better get all my business finished," said she to herself, "before I go down to the meadow to take leave of my poor lamb." This was no sooner said than done; for she found that she had a great number of bills to write, and the slate on which she had entered the account was not immediately to be found, and when it was

found the figures were almost rubbed out; Barbara had sat down upon it; Susan pored over the number of loaves, and the names of the persons who took them, and she wrote, and cast up sums, and corrected and recorrected them, till her head grew quite puzzled.

The table was covered with little square bits of paper, on which she had been writing bills over and over again, when her father came in with a bill in his hand.

"How's this, Susan?" said he; "How can ye be so careless, child? What is your head running upon? Here, look at the bill you were sending up to the Abbey! I met the messenger, and luckily asked to see how much it was. Look at it."

Susan looked and blushed; it was written, "Sir Arthur Somers to John Price, debtor, six dozen *lambs,*" so much. She altered it, and returned it to her father; but he had taken up some of the papers which lay upon the table. "What are all these, child?"

"Some of them are wrong, and I've written them out again," said Susan.

"Some of them! all of them, I think, seem to be wrong, if I can read," said her father, rather angrily; and he pointed out to her sundry strange mistakes.

Her head indeed had been running upon her poor lamb. She corrected all the mistakes with so much patience, and bore to be blamed with so much good humour, that her father at last said, that it was impossible ever to scold Susan without being in the wrong at last.

As soon as all was set right, he took the bills, and said he would go round to the neighbours, and collect the money himself, for that he should be very proud to have it to say to them, that it was all earned by his own little daughter.

Susan resolved to keep the pleasure of telling him of his week's reprieve till he should come home to sup, as he had promised to do in her mother's room. She was not sorry to hear him sigh as he passed the knapsack, which she had been packing up for his journey.

"How delighted he will be when he hears the good news!" said she to herself; "but I know he will be a little sorry too for my poor lamb."

As she had now settled all her business, she thought she could have time to go down to the meadow by the river-side to see her favourite; but, just as she had tied on her straw hat, the village clock struck four, and this was the hour at which she always went to fetch her little brothers home from a dame-school near the village. She knew that they would be disappointed if she was later than usual, and she did not like to keep them waiting, because they were very patient good boys; so she put off the visit to her lamb, and went immediately for her brothers.

SIMPLE SUSAN.

CHAPTER II.

"Ev'n in the spring and play-time of the year,
"That calls th' unwonted villager abroad,
"With all her little ones a sportive train,
"To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
"And prink their heads with daisies." COWPER.

THE dame-school, which was about a mile from the hamlet, was not a splendid mansion, but it was reverenced as much by the young race of village scholars, as if it had been the most stately edifice in the land; it was a low-roofed, long, thatched tenement, sheltered by a few reverend oaks, under which many generations of hopeful children had in their turn gambolled. The close shaven green, which sloped down from the hatch-door of the school-room, was paled round with a rude paling, which, though decayed in some parts by time, was not in any place broken by violence. The place bespoke order and peace. The dame who governed here was well obeyed, because she was just; and well beloved, because she was ever glad to give well-earned praise and pleasure to her little subjects.

Susan had once been under her gentle dominion, and had been deservedly her favourite scholar; the dame often cited her as the best example to the succeeding tribe of emulous youngsters.

Susan had scarcely opened the wicket which separated the green before the school-room door from the lane, when she heard the merry voices of the children, and saw the little troop issuing from the hatchway, and spreading over the green.

"Oh, there's our Susan!" cried her two little brothers, running, leaping, and bounding up to her; and many of the other rosy girls and boys crowded round her to talk of their plays, for Susan was easily interested in all that made others happy; but she could not make them comprehend, that, if they all spoke at once, it was not possible that she could hear what was said. The voices were still raised one above another, all eager to establish some important observation about nine-pins, or marbles, or tops, or bows and arrows, when suddenly music was heard, unusual music, and the crowd was silenced. The music seemed to be near the spot where the children were standing, and they looked round to see whence it could come.

Susan pointed to the great oak tree, and they

beheld, seated under its shade, an old man playing upon his harp.

The children all approached—at first timidly, for the sounds were solemn, but as the harper heard their little footsteps coming towards him, he changed his hand, and played one of his most lively tunes. The circle closed, and pressed nearer and nearer to him; some who were in the foremost row whispered to each other: "He is blind! What a pity!" and "He looks very poor; what a ragged coat he wears!" said others: "He must be very old, for all his hair is white, and he must have travelled a great way, for his shoes are quite worn out," observed another.

All these remarks were made whilst he was tuning his harp, for when he once more began to play, not a word was uttered. He seemed pleased by their simple exclamations of wonder and delight, and, eager to amuse his young audience, he played now a gay and now a pathetic air, to suit their several humours.

Susan's voice, which was soft and sweet, expressive of gentleness and good-nature, caught his ear the moment she spoke; he turned his face eagerly to the place where she stood, and it was observed, that whenever she said that she liked any tune particularly, he played it over again.

"I am blind," said the old man, "and cannot

see your faces, but I know you all asunder by your voices, and I can guess pretty well at all your humours and characters by your voices."

"Can you so, indeed?" cried Susan's little brother William, who had stationed himself between the old man's knees: "Then you heard *my* sister Susan speak just now. Can you tell us what sort of a person she is?"

"That I can, I think, without being a conjuror," said the old man, lifting the boy up on his knee; "*your* sister Susan is good-natured."

The boy clapped his hands.

"And good-tempered."

"*Right*," said little William, with a louder clap of applause.

"And very fond of the little boy who sits upon my knee."

"O right! right! quite right!" exclaimed the child, and "Quite right!" echoed on all sides.

"But how came you to know so much, when you are blind?" said William, examining the old man attentively.

"Hush," said John, who was a year older than his brother, and very sage, "you should not put him in mind of his being blind."

"Though I am blind," said the harper, "I can hear, you know, and I heard from your sister herself all that I told you of her, that she was

good-tempered and good-natured, and fond of you."

"Oh, that's wrong—you did not hear all that from herself I'm sure," said John, "for nobody ever hears her praising herself."

"Did not I hear her tell you, when you first came round me, that she was in a great hurry to go home, but that she would stay a little while, since you wished it so much—was not that good-natured? and when you said you did not like the tune she liked best, she was not angry with you, but said, 'Then, play William's first, if you please.' Was not that good-tempered?"

"Oh," interrupted William," "it's all true; but how did you find out that she was fond of me?"

"That is such a difficult question," said the harper, "that I must take time to consider." He tuned his harp as he pondered, or seemed to ponder; and at this instant two boys, who had been searching for birds'-nests in the hedges, and who had heard the sound of the harp, came blustering up, and, pushing their way through the circle, one of them exclaimed,

"What's going on here? Who are you, my old fellow? A blind harper; well, play us a tune, if you can play ever a good one—play me —let's see, what shall he play, Bob?" added he,

turning to his companion. "Bumper Squire Jones."

The old man, though he did not seem quite pleased with the peremptory manner of the request, played, as he was desired, "Bumper Squire Jones;" and several other tunes were afterward bespoke by the same rough and tyrannical voice.

The little children shrunk back in timid silence, and eyed the great brutal boy with dislike.

This boy was the son of attorney Case, and, as his father had neglected to correct his temper when he was a child, as he grew up it became insufferable: all who were younger and weaker than himself dreaded his approach, and detested him as a tyrant.

When the old harper was so tired that he could play no more, a lad who usually carried his harp for him, and who was within call, came up, and held his master's hat to the company, saying, "Will you be pleased to remember us?" The children readily produced their halfpence, and thought their wealth well bestowed upon this poor good-natured man, who had taken so much pains to entertain them, better even than upon the ginger-bread-woman, whose stall they loved to frequent. The hat was held some time to the attorney's son before he chose to see it; at last he put his hand surlily into his waistcoat pocket, and

pulled out a shilling; there were six-penny-worth of half-pence in the hat. "I'll take these half-pence," said he, "and here's a shilling for you."

"Bless you, sir!" said the lad; but as he took the shilling, which the young gentleman had slily put *into the blind man's hand,* he saw that it was not worth one farthing.

"I am afraid it is not good, sir," said the lad, whose business it was to examine the money for his master.

"I am afraid, then, you'll get no other," said young Case, with an insulting laugh.

"It will never do, sir," persisted the lad; "look at it yourself, the edges are all yellow; you can see the copper through it quite plain; sir, nobody will take it from us."

"That's your affair," said the brutal boy, pushing away his hand; "you may pass it, you know, as well as I do, if you look sharp—you have taken it from me, and I sha'n't take it back again, I promise you."

A whisper of "That's very unjust," was heard. —The little assembly, though under evident constraint, could no longer suppress their indignation.

"Who says it's unjust?" cried the tyrant sternly, looking down upon his judges.

Susan's little brothers had held her gown fast to prevent her from moving at the beginning of

this contest, and she was now so much interested to see the end of it, that she stood still, without making any resistance.

"Is any one here amongst yourselves a judge of silver?" said the old man.

"Yes, here's the butcher's boy," said the attorney's son; "show it to him."

He was a sickly-looking boy, and of a remarkably peaceable disposition.

Young Case fancied that he would be afraid to give judgment against him; however, after some moments' hesitation, and after turning the shilling round several times, he pronounced, "that, as far as his judgment went, but he did not pretend to be downright *certain sure* of it, the shilling was not over and above good." Then turning to Susan, to screen himself from manifest danger, for the attorney's son looked upon him with a vengeful mien, "But here's Susan here, who understands silver a great deal better than I do, she takes a power of it for bread you know."

"I'll leave it to her," said the old harper; "if she says the shilling is good, keep it, Jack."

The shilling was handed to Susan, who, though she had with becoming modesty foreborne all interference, did not hesitate, when she was called upon, to speak the truth: "I think that this shilling is a bad one," said she; and the gentle

but firm tone in which she pronounced the words, for a moment awed and silenced the angry and brutal boy.

"There's another then," cried he, "I have sixpences and shillings too, in plenty, thank my stars."

Susan now walked away with her two little brothers, and all the other children separated to go to their several homes.

The old harper called to Susan, and begged, that, if she was going towards the village, she would be so kind as to show him the way.

His lad took up his harp, and little William took the old man by the hand: "I'll lead him, I can lead him," said he, and John ran on before them, to gather king-cups in the meadow.

There was a small rivulet, which they had to cross, and as the plank which served for a bridge over it was rather narrow, Susan was afraid to trust the old blind man to his little conductor; she therefore went on the tottering plank first herself, and then led the old harper carefully over: they were now come to a gate, which opened upon the high road to the village.

"There is the high road straight before you," said Susan to the lad, who was carrying his master's harp, "you can't miss it; now I must bid you a good evening, for I'm in a great hurry to

get home, and must go the short way across the fields here, which would not be so pleasant for you, because of the stiles. Good bye."

The old harper thanked her, and went along the high road, whilst she and her brothers tripped on as fast as they could by the short way across the fields.

"Miss Somers, I am afraid, will be waiting for us," said Susan: "you know she said she would call at six, and by the length of our shadows I'm sure it is late."

When they came to their own cottage door, they heard many voices, and they saw, when they entered, several ladies, standing in the kitchen.

"Come in, Susan, we thought you had quite forsaken us," said miss Somers to Susan, who advanced timidly. "I fancy you forgot, that we promised to pay you a visit this evening; but you need not blush so much about the matter, there is no great harm done, we have only been here about five minutes, and we have been well employed in admiring your neat garden, and your orderly shelves. Is it you, Susan, who keep these things in such nice order?" continued miss Somers, looking round the kitchen.

Before Susan could reply, little William pushed forward, and answered, "Yes, ma'am; it

is *my* sister Susan that keeps every thing neat, and she always comes to school for us too, which was what caused her to be so late." "Because as how," continued John, "she was loath to refuse us hearing a blind man play on the harp—it was we kept her, and we hopes, ma'am, as you *are*—as you seem so good, you won't take it amiss."

Miss Somers and her sister smiled at the affectionate simplicity with which Susan's little brothers undertook her defence, and they were, from this slight circumstance, disposed to think yet more favourably of a family which seemed so well united.

They took Susan along with them through the village; many came to their doors, and, far from envying, all secretly wished Susan well as she passed.

"I fancy we shall find what we want here," said miss Somers, stopping before a shop, where unfolded sheets of pins and glass buttons glistened in the window, and where rolls of many-coloured ribands appeared ranged in tempting order. She went in, and was rejoiced to see the shelves at the back of the counter well furnished with glossy tires of stuffs, and gay, neat printed linens and calicoes.

"Now, Susan, choose yourself a gown," said

miss Somers; "you set an example of industry and good conduct, of which we wish to take public notice, for the benefit of others."

The shop-keeper, who was father to Susan's friend, Rose, looked much satisfied by this speech, and, as if a compliment had been paid to himself, bowed low to miss Somers, and then with alertness, which a London linen-draper might have admired, produced piece after piece of his best goods to his young customer—unrolled, unfolded, held the bright stuffs and callendered calicoes in various lights. Now stretched his arm to the highest shelves, and brought down in a trice what seemed to be beyond the reach of any but a giant's arm: now dived into some hidden recess beneath the counter, and brought to light fresh beauties and fresh temptations.

Susan looked on with more indifference than most of the spectators. She was thinking much of her lamb, and more of her father.

Miss Somers had put a bright guinea into her hand, and had bid her pay for her own gown; but Susan, as she looked at the guinea, thought it was a great deal of money to lay out upon herself, and she wished, but did not know how to ask, that she might keep it for a better purpose.

Some people are wholly inattentive to the lesser feelings and incapable of reading the coun-

tenances of those on whom they bestow their bounty. Miss Somers and her sister were not of this roughly charitable class.

"She does not like any of these things," whispered miss Somers to her sister.

Her sister observed, that Susan looked as if her thoughts were far distant from gowns.

"If you don't fancy any of these things," said the civil shopkeeper to Susan, "we shall have a new assortment of calicoes for the spring season soon from town."

"Oh," interrupted Susan, with a smile and a blush, "these are all pretty and too good for me, but——"

"*But* what, Susan?" said miss Somers. "Tell us what is passing in your little mind."

Susan hesitated.

"Well then, we will not press you; you are scarcely acquainted with us yet; when you are, you will not be afraid, I hope, to speak your mind. Put this shining yellow counter," continued she, pointing to the guinea, "in your pocket, and make what use of it you please. From what we know, and from what we have heard of you, we are persuaded that you will make a good use of it."

"I think, madam," said the master of the shop, with a shrewd good-natured look, "I could give

a pretty good guess myself what will become of that guinea—but I say nothing."

"No, that is right," said miss Somers; "we leave Susan entirely at liberty, and now we will not detain her any longer. Good night, Susan, we shall soon come again to your neat cottage."

Susan curtsied with an expressive look of gratitude, and with a modest frankness in her countenance, which seemed to say, "I would tell you and welcome what I want to do with the guinea—but I am not used to speak before so many people; when you come to our cottage again you shall know all."

When Susan had departed, miss Somers turned to the obliging shopkeeper, who was folding up all the things he had opened. "You have had a great deal of trouble with us, sir," said she; "and since Susan will not choose a gown for herself, I must." She selected the prettiest, and whilst the man was rolling it in paper, she asked him several questions about Susan and her family, which he was delighted to answer, because he had now an opportunity of saying as much as he wished in her praise.

"No later back, ma'am, than last May morning," said he, "as my daughter Rose was telling us, Susan did a turn, in her quiet way, by her mother, that would not displease you if you were

to hear it. She was to have been queen of the May, ladies, which, in our little village, amongst the younger tribe, is a thing, ladies, that is thought of a good deal—but Susan's mother was ill, and Susan, after sitting up with her all night, would not leave her in the morning, even when they brought the crown to her. She put the crown upon my daughter Rose's head with her own hands, and to be sure Rose loves her as well as if she was her own sister; but I don't speak from partiality, for I am no relation whatever to the Prices, only a well-wisher, as every one, I believe, who knows them, is—I'll send the parcel up to the Abbey, shall I, ma'am?"

"If you please," said miss Somers, "and let us know as soon as you receive your new things from town. You will, I hope, find us good customers, and well-wishers," added she, with a smile; "for those who wish well to their neighbours surely deserve to have well-wishers themselves."

A few words may encourage the benevolent passions, and may dispose people to live in peace and happiness;—a few words may set them at variance, and may lead to misery and lawsuits. Attorney Case and miss Somers were both equally convinced of this, and their practice was uniformly consistent with their principles.

But now to return to Susan.—She put the bright guinea carefully into the glove, with the twelve shillings which she had received from her companions on May-day. Besides this treasure, she calculated, that the amount of the bills for bread could not be less than eight or nine and thirty shillings, and as her father was now sure of a week's reprieve, she had great hopes that, by some means or other, it should be possible to make up the whole sum necessary to pay for a substitute. "If that could be done," said she to herself, "how happy would my mother be! She would be quite stout again, for she certainly is a great deal better since morning, since I told her that father would stay a week longer! Ah! but she would not have blessed attorney Case though, if she had known about my poor Daisy."

Susan took the path that led to the meadow by the water-side, resolved to go by herself, and take leave of her innocent favourite. But she did not pass by unperceived; her little brothers were watching for her return, and as soon as they saw her, they ran after her, and overtook her as she reached the meadow.

"What did that good lady want with you?" cried William; but looking up in his sister's face, he saw tears in her eyes, and he was silent, and walked on quietly.

Susan saw her lamb by the water-side.

"Who are those two men?" said William. "What are they going to do with *Daisy?*"

The two men were attorney Case and the butcher. The butcher was feeling whether the lamb was fat.

Susan sat down upon the bank in silent sorrow; her little brothers ran up to the butcher, and demanded whether he was going to *do any harm* to the lamb.

The butcher did not answer, but the attorney replied, "It is not your sister's lamb any longer, it's mine—mine to all intents and purposes."

"Yours!" cried the children with terror; "and will you kill it?"

"That's the butcher's business."

The little boys now burst into piercing lamentations; they pushed away the butcher's hand, they threw their arms round the neck of the lamb, they kissed its forehead—it bleated.

"It will not bleat to-morrow;" said William, and he wept bitterly.

The butcher looked aside, and hastily rubbed his eyes with the corner of his blue apron.

The attorney stood unmoved: he pulled up the head of the lamb, which had just stooped to crop a mouthful of clover. "I have no time to waste," said he; "butcher, you'll account with me. If

it's fat—the sooner the better. I've no more to say." And he walked off deaf to the prayers of the poor children.

As soon as the attorney was out of sight, Susan rose from the bank where she was seated, came up to her lamb, and stooped to gather some of the fresh dewy trefoil, to let it eat out of her hand for the last time. Poor Daisy licked her well-known hand.

"Now, let us go," said Susan.

"I'll wait as long as you please," said the butcher.

Susan thanked him, and walked away quickly, without looking again at her lamb.

Her little brothers begged the man to stay a few minutes, for they had gathered a handful of blue speedwell and yellow crowsfoot, and they were decking the poor animal.

As it followed the boys through the village, the children collected as they passed, and the butcher's own son was among the number. Susan's steadiness about the bad shilling was full in this boy's memory, it had saved him a beating; he went directly to his father to beg the life of Susan's lamb.

"I was thinking about it, boy, myself," said the butcher; "it's a sin to kill a *pet lamb,* I'm thinking—any way it's what I am not used to,

and don't fancy doing, and I'll go and say as much to attorney Case—but he's a hard man; there's but one way to deal with him, and that's the way I must take, though so be I shall be the loser thereby: but we'll say nothing to the boys, for fear it might be the thing would not take, and then it would be worse again to poor Susan, who is a good girl, and always was, as well she may, being of a good breed, and well reared from the first."

"Come, lads, don't keep a crowd and a scandal about my door," continued he aloud to the children; "turn the lamb in here, John, in the paddock, for to-night, and go your ways home."

The crowd dispersed, but murmured, and the butcher went to the attorney. "Seeing that all you want is a good, fat, tender lamb, for a present for sir Arthur, as you told me," said the butcher, "I could let you have what's as good and better for your purpose."

"Better—if it's better I'm ready to hear reason."

The butcher had choice, tender lamb, he said, fit to eat the next day; and as Mr. Case was impatient to make his offering to sir Arthur, he accepted the butcher's proposal, though with such seeming reluctance, that he actually squeezed out of him, before he would complete the bargain, a bribe of a fine sweetbread.

In the mean time Susan's brother ran home to tell her that her lamb was put into the paddock for the night: this was all they knew, and even this was some comfort to her. Rose, her good friend, was with her, and she had, before her, the pleasure of telling her father of his week's reprieve—her mother was better, and even said she was determined to sit up to supper in her wicker arm-chair.

Susan was getting things ready for supper, when little William, who was standing at the house-door, watching in the dusk for his father's return, suddenly exclaimed, "Susan! if here is not our old man!"

"Yes," said the old harper, "I have found my way to you; the neighbours were kind enough to show me whereabouts you lived, for though I didn't know your name, they guessed who I meant by what I said of you all."

Susan came to the door, and the old man was delighted to hear her speak again.

"If it would not be too bold," said he, "I'm a stranger in this part of the country, and come from afar off; my boy has got a bed for himself here in the village, but I have no place—could you be so charitable to give an old blind man a night's lodging?"

Susan said she would step and ask her mother,

and she soon returned with an answer, that he was heartily welcome, if he could sleep upon the children's bed, which was but small.

The old man thankfully entered the hospitable cottage—he struck his head against the low roof as he stepped over the door-sill.

"Many roofs that are twice as high are not half so good," said he.

Of this he had just had experience at the house of attorney Case, where he had asked, but had been roughly refused all assistance by miss Barbara, who was, according to her usual custom, standing, staring at the hall-door.

The old man's harp was set down in farmer Price's kitchen, and he promised to play a tune for the boys before they went to bed; their mother giving them leave to sit up to supper with their father.

He came home with a sorrowful countenance; but how soon did it brighten, when Susan, with a smile, said to him, "Father, we've good news for you! good news for us all!—you have a whole week longer to stay with us, and perhaps," continued she, putting her little purse into his hands, "perhaps with what's here, and the bread-bills, and what may some how be got together before a week's at an end, we may make up the nine guineas for the substitute, as they call him :

who knows, dear mother, but we may keep him with us for ever ?"—As she spoke she threw her arms round her father, who pressed her to his bosom without speaking, for his heart was full. He was some little time before he could perfectly believe that what he heard was true: but the revived smiles of his wife, the noisy joy of his little boys, and the satisfaction that shone in Susan's countenance, convinced him that he was not in a dream.

As they sat down to supper, the old harper was made welcome to his share of the cheerful though frugal meal.

Susan's father, as soon as supper was finished, even before he would let the harper play a tune for his boys, opened the little purse which Susan had given to him; he was surprised at the sight of the twelve shillings, and still more when he came to the bottom of the purse, to see the bright golden guinea.

"How did you come by all this money?" said he.

"Honestly and handsomely, that I'm sure of beforehand," said her proud mother; "but how I can't make out, except by the baking. Hey, Susan, is this your first baking ?"

"Oh, no, no," said her father, "I have her first baking snug here, besides, in my pocket. I

kept it for a surprise, to do your mother's heart good, Susan. Here's twenty-nine shillings; and the Abbey bill, which is not paid yet, comes to ten more. What think you of this, wife? Have we not a right to be proud of our Susan? Why," continued he, turning to the harper, "I ask your pardon for speaking out so free before strangers in praise of my own, which I know is not mannerly; but the truth is the fittest thing to be spoken, as I think, at all times; therefore here's your good health, Susan;—why, by and by she'll be worth her weight in gold—in silver at least. But tell us, child, how you came by all these riches, and how come's it that I don't go to-morrow—All this happy news makes me so gay in myself, I'm afraid I shall hardly understand it rightly. But speak on, child—first bringing us a bottle of the good mead you made last night from your own honey."

Susan did not much like to tell the history of her guinea-hen—of the gown—and of her poor lamb—part of this would seem as if she was vaunting of her own generosity, and part of it she did not like to recollect. But her mother pressed to know the whole, and she related it as simply as she could. When she came to the story of the lamb, her voice faltered, and every body present was touched. The old harper sighed once

and cleared his throat several times—he then asked for his harp, and, after tuning it for a considerable time, he recollected, for he had often fits of absence, that he sent for it to play the tune he had promised to the boys.

This harper came from a great distance, from the mountains of Wales, to contend with several other competitors for a prize, which had been advertised by a musical society about a year before this time. There was to be a splendid ball given upon the occasion at Shrewsbury, which was about five miles from our village. The prize was ten guineas for the best performer on the harp, and the prize was now to be decided in a few days.

All this intelligence Barbara had long since gained from her maid, who often went to visit in the town of Shrewsbury, and she had long had her imagination inflamed with the idea of this splendid music-meeting and ball. Often had she sighed to be there, and often had she revolved in her mind schemes for introducing herself to some *genteel* neighbours, who might take her to the ball *in their carriage*. How rejoiced, how triumphant was she, when this very evening, just about the time when the butcher was bargaining with her father about Susan's lamb, a *livery* servant from the Abbey rapped at the

door, and left a card of invitation for Mr. and miss Barbara Case!

"There," cried Bab, "*I* and *papa* are to dine and drink tea at the Abbey to-morrow. Who knows? I dare say, when they see that I am not a vulgar looking person, and all that—and if I go cunningly to work with miss Somers—as I shall—to be sure, I dare say she'll take me to the ball with her."

"To be sure," said the maid, "it's the least one may expect from a lady that *demeans* herself to visit Susan Price, and goes about a-shopping for her; the least she can do for you is to take you in her carriage, *which* costs nothing, but is just a common civility, to a ball."

"Then pray, Betty," continued miss Barbara, "don't forget to-morrow, the first thing you do, to send off to Shrewsbury for my new bonnet. I must have it to *dine in*, at the Abbey, or the ladies will think nothing of me—and, Betty, remember the mantua-maker too. I must see and coax papa, to buy me a new gown against the ball. I can see, you know, something of the fashions to-morrow at the Abbey. I shall *look the ladies well over*, I promise you. And, Betty, I have thought of the most charming present for miss Somers: as papa says, it's good never to go empty-handed to a great house: I'll make

miss Somers, who is fond, as her maid told you, of such things—I'll make miss Somers a present of that guinea-hen of Susan's;—it's of no use to me, so do you carry it up early in the morning to the Abbey with my compliments—That's the thing."

In full confidence that her present, and her bonnet, would operate effectually in her favour, miss Barbara paid her first visit to the Abbey. She expected to see wonders; she was dressed in all the finery which she had heard from her maid, who had heard from the prentice of a Shrewsbury milliner, was *the thing* in London; and she was much surprised and disappointed when she was shown into the room where the miss Somerses, and the ladies at the Abbey, were sitting, to see that they did not, in any one part of their dress, agree with the picture her imagination had formed of fashionable ladies. She was embarrassed when she saw books, and work, and drawings, upon the table; and she began to think, that some affront was meant to her, because the *company* did not sit with their hands before them. When miss Somers endeavoured to find out conversation that would interest her, and spoke of walks, and flowers, and gardening, of which she was herself fond, miss Barbara still thought herself undervalued, and soon con-

trived to expose her ignorance most completely, by talking of things which she did not understand.

Those who never attempt to appear what they are not—those who do not in their manners pretend to any thing unsuited to their habits and situation in life, never are in danger of being laughed at by sensible well-bred people of any rank; but affectation is the constant and just object of ridicule.

Miss Barbara Case, with her mistaken airs of gentility, aiming to be thought a woman, and a fine lady, whilst she was in reality a child, and a vulgar attorney's daughter, rendered herself so thoroughly ridiculous, that the good-natured, yet discerning spectators, were painfully divided between their sense of comic absurdity, and a feeling of shame for one who could feel nothing for herself.

One by one the ladies dropped off—miss Somers went out of the room for a few minutes to alter her dress, as it was the custom of the family, before dinner. She left a port-folio of pretty drawings and good prints, for miss Barbara's amusement; but miss Barbara's thoughts were so intent upon the harpers' ball, that she could not be entertained with such *trifles*.

How unhappy are those who spend their time

in expectation! They can never enjoy the present.

Whilst Barbara was contriving means of interesting miss Somers in her favour, she recollected, with surprise, that not one word had yet been said of her present of the guinea-hen.

Mrs. Betty, in the hurry of her dressing her young lady in the morning, had forgotten it; but it came just while miss Somers was dressing, and the housekeeper came into her mistress's room to announce its arrival.

"Ma'am," said she, "here's a beautiful guinea-hen just come, *with* miss Barbara Case's compliments to you."

Miss Somers knew, by the tone in which the housekeeper delivered this message, that there was something in the business which did not perfectly please her. She made no answer, in expectation that the housekeeper, who was a woman of a very open temper, would explain her cause of dissatisfaction. In this she was not mistaken: the housekeeper came close up to the dressing-table, and continued, "I never like to speak till I'm sure, ma'am, and I'm not quite sure, to say certain, in this case, ma'am, but still I think it right to tell you, which can't wrong any body, what came across my mind about this same guinea-hen, ma'am, and you can inquire

into it, and do as you please afterwards, ma'am. Some time ago we had fine guinea-fowls of our own, and I made bold, not thinking, to be sure, that all our own would die away from us, as they have done, to give a fine couple last Christmas to Susan Price, and very fond and pleased she was at the time, and I'm sure would never have parted with the hen with her goodwill; but if my eyes don't strangely mistake, this hen that comes from miss Barbara, is the self-same identical guinea-hen that I gave to Susan. And how miss Bab came by it is the thing that puzzles me. If my boy Philip was at home, may be, as he's often at Mrs. Price's (which I don't disapprove), he might know the history of the guinea-hen. I expect him home this night, and, if you have no objection, I will sift the affair."

"The shortest way, I should think," said Henrietta, "would be to ask miss Case herself about it, which I will do this evening."

"If you please, ma'am," said the housekeeper, coldly, for she knew that miss Barbara was not famous in the village for speaking the truth.

Dinner was now served. Attorney Case expected to smell mint-sauce, and as the covers were taken from off the dishes, looked around for lamb—but no lamb appeared. He had a

dexterous knack of twisting the conversation to his point.

Sir Arthur was speaking, when they sat down to dinner, of a new carving-knife, which he lately had had made for his sister; the attorney immediately went from carving-knives to poultry, thence to butcher's meat: some joints, he observed, were much more difficult to carve than others; he never saw a man carve better than the gentleman opposite him, who was the curate of the parish. "But, sir," said the vulgar attorney, "I must make bold to differ with you in one point, and I'll appeal to sir Arthur. Sir Arthur, pray may I ask, when you carve a forequarter of lamb, do you, when you raise the shoulder, throw in salt or not?"

This well-prepared question was not lost upon sir Arthur; the attorney was thanked for his intended present, but mortified and surprised to hear sir Arthur say, that it was a constant rule of his never to accept of any presents from his neighbours. "If we were to accept a lamb from a rich neighbour on my estate," said he, "I am afraid we should mortify many of our poor tenants who can have little to offer, though, perhaps, they may bear us thorough good-will notwithstanding."

After the ladies left the dining-room, as they

were walking up and down the large hall, miss Barbara had a fair opportunity of imitating her keen father's method of conversing. One of the ladies observed that this hall would be a charming place for music—Bab brought in harps and harpers, and the harpers' ball, in a breath.—"I know so much about it, about the ball I mean," said she, "because a lady in Shrewsbury, a friend of papa's, offered to take me with her, but papa did not like to give her the trouble of sending so far for me, though she has a coach of her own."

Barbara fixed her eyes upon miss Somers, as she spoke, but she could not read her countenance as distinctly as she wished, because miss Somers was at this moment letting down the veil of her hat.

"Shall we walk out before tea?" said she to her companions. "I have a pretty guinea-hen to show you."

Barbara, secretly drawing propitious omens from the guinea-hen, followed with a confidential step.

The pheasantry was well filled with pheasants, peacocks, &c. and Susan's pretty little guinea-hen appeared well, even in this high company—it was much admired. Barbara was in glory—but her glory was of short duration. Just as miss

Somers was going to inquire into the guinea-hen's history, Philip came up, to ask permission to have a bit of sycamore, to turn a nutmeg-box for his mother.

Philip was an ingenious lad, and a good turner for his age; sir Arthur had put by a bit of sycamore on purpose for him, and miss Somers told him where it was to be found. He thanked her, but in the midst of his bow of thanks his eye was struck by the sight of the guinea-hen, and he involuntarily exclaimed, "Susan's guinea-hen, I declare!"

"No, it's not Susan's guinea-hen," said miss Barbara, colouring furiously. "It is mine, and I've made a present of it to miss Somers."

At the sound of Bab's voice Philip turned—saw her—and indignation, unrestrained by the presence of all the amazed spectators, flashed in his countenance.

"What is the matter, Philip?" said miss Somers, in a pacifying tone; but Philip was not inclined to be pacified.

"Why, ma'am," said he, "may I speak out?" and, without waiting for permission, he spoke out, and gave a full, true, and warm account of Rose's embassy, and of miss Barbara's cruel and avaricious proceedings.

Barbara denied, prevaricated, stammered, and

at last was overcome with confusion, for which even the most indulgent spectators could scarcely pity her.

Miss Somers, however, mindful of what was due to her guest, was anxious to dispatch Philip for his piece of sycamore.

Bab recovered herself as soon as he was out of sight, but she further exposed herself by exclaiming, "I'm sure I wish this pitiful guinea-hen had never had come into my possession. I wish Susan had kept it at home, as she should have done!"

"Perhaps she will be more careful, now that she has received so strong a lesson," said miss Somers. "Shall we try her?" continued she; "Philip will, I dare say, take the guinea-hen back to Susan, if we desire it."

"If you please, ma'am," said Barbara, sullenly; "I have nothing more to do with it."

So the guinea-hen was delivered to Philip, who set off joyfully with his prize, and was soon in sight of farmer Price's cottage.

He stopped when he came to the door; he recollected Rose, and her generous friendship for Susan; he was determined that she should have the pleasure of restoring the guinea-hen; he ran into the village; all the children who had given up their little purse on May-day were

assembled on the play-green; they were delighted to see the guinea-hen once more— Philip took his pipe and tabor, and they marched in innocent triumph towards the white-washed cottage.

"Let me come with you—let me come with you," said the butcher's boy to Philip. "Stop one minute! my father has something to say to you."

He darted into his father's house. The little procession stopped, and in a few minutes the bleating of a lamb was heard. Through a back passage which led into the paddock behind the house they saw the butcher leading a lamb.

"It is Daisy," exclaimed Rose—"It's Daisy!" repeated all her companions. "Susan's lamb! Susan's lamb!" and there was a universal shout of joy.

"Well, for my part," said the good butcher, as soon as he could be heard, "for my part I would not be so cruel as attorney Case for the whole world. These poor brute beasts don't know aforehand what's going to happen to them; and as for dying, it's what we must all do some time or another; but to keep wringing the hearts of the living, that have as much sense as one's-self, is what I call cruel; and is not this what attorney Case has been doing by poor Susan and her whole family, ever since he took a spite against them?

But, at any rate, here's Susan's lamb safe and sound; I'd have taken it back sooner, but I was off before day to the fair, and am but just come back; however, Daisy has been as well off in my paddock, as he would have been in the field by the water-side."

The obliging shopkeeper, who showed the pretty calicoes to Susan, was now at his door; and when he saw the lamb, heard that it was Susan's, and learnt its history, he said that he would add his mite, and he gave the children some ends of narrow riband, with which Rose decorated her friend's lamb.

The pipe and tabor now once more began to play, and the procession moved on in joyful order, after giving the humane butcher three cheers—three cheers which were better deserved than "loud huzzas" usually are.

Susan was working in her arbour, with her little deal table before her; when she heard the sound of the music, she put down her work and listened; she saw the crowd of children coming nearer and nearer: they had closed round Daisy, so that she could not see him, but as they came up to the garden-gate she saw Rose beckon to her. Philip played as loud as he could, that she might not hear, till the proper moment, the bleating of the lamb.

Susan opened the garden-wicket, and at this signal the crowd divided, and the first thing that Susan saw in the midst of her taller friends was little smiling Mary, with the guinea-hen in her arms.

"Come on! come on!" cried Mary, as Susan started with joyful surprise, "you have more to see."

At this instant the music paused; Susan heard the bleating of a lamb, and scarcely daring to believe her senses, she pressed eagerly forward, and beheld poor Daisy!—she burst into tears.

"I did not shed one tear when I parted with you, my dear little Daisy!" said she; "it was for my father and mother; I would not have parted with you for any thing else in the whole world. Thank you, thank you all," added she to her companions, who sympathized in her joy even more than they had sympathized in her sorrow. "Now if my father was not to go away from us next week, and if my mother was quite stout, I should be the happiest person in the world!"

As Susan pronounced these words, a voice behind the listening crowd cried, in a brutal tone, "Let us pass, if you please; you have no right to stop up the public road!" This was the voice of attorney Case, who was returning with

his daughter Barbara from his visit to the Abbey. He saw the lamb, and tried to whistle as he passed on; Barbara also saw the guinea-hen, and turned her head another way, that she might avoid the contemptuous, reproachful looks of those whom she only affected to despise. Even her new bonnet, in which she had expected to be so much admired, was now only serviceable to hide her face, and conceal her mortification.

"I am glad she saw the guinea-hen," cried Rose, who now held it in her hands.

"Yes," said Philip, "she'll not forget May-day in a hurry."

"Nor I neither, I hope," said Susan, looking rouud upon her companions with a most affectionate smile; "I hope, whilst I live, I shall never forget your goodness to me last May-day. Now I've my pretty guinea-hen safe once more, I should think of returning your money."

"No! no! no!" was the general cry. "We don't want the money—keep it, keep it—you want it for your father."

"Well," said Susan, "I am not too proud to be obliged. I *will* keep your money for my father. Perhaps some time or other I may be able to earn—"

"Oh," interrupted Philip, "don't let us talk of earning, don't let us talk to her of money now; she has not had time hardly to look at poor Daisy and her guinea-hen. Come, we had best go about our business, and let her have them all to herself."

The crowd moved away in consequence in Philip's considerate advice; but it was observed that he was the very last to stir from the garden-wicket himself. He staid, first, to inform Susan that it was Rose who tied the ribands on Daisy's head; then he staid a little longer to let her into the history of the guinea-hen, and to tell her who it was that brought her hen home from the Abbey.

Rose held the sieve, and Susan was feeding her long-lost favourite, whilst Philip leaned over the wicket prolonging his narration.

"Now, my pretty guinea-hen, my naughty guinea-hen, that flew away from me, you shall never serve me so again—I must cut your nice wings, but I won't hurt you."

"Take care," cried Philip; "you'd better, indeed you'd better let me hold her, whilst you cut her wings."

When this operation was successfully performed, which it certainly could never have been, if Philip had not held the hen for Susan, he recollected that his mother had sent him with a message to Mrs. Price.

This message led to another quarter of an hour's delay, for he had the whole history of the guinea-hen to tell over again to Mrs. Price; and the farmer himself luckily came in whilst it was going on, so it was but civil to begin it afresh; and then the farmer was so rejoiced to see his Susan so happy again with her two little favourites, that he declared he must see Daisy fed himself, and Philip found that he was wanted to hold the jug full of milk, out of which farmer Price filled the pan for Daisy! happy Daisy! who lapped at his ease, whilst Susan caressed him, and thanked her fond father and her pleased mother.

"But Philip," said Mrs. Price, "I'll hold the jug—you'll be late with your message to your mother; we'll not detain you any longer."

Philip departed, and as he went out of the garden-wicket he looked up, and saw Bab and her maid Betty staring out of the window, as usual; on this he immediately turned back to try whether he had shut the gate fast, lest the guinea-hen might stray out and fall again into the hands of the enemy.

Miss Barbara, in the course of this day, had felt considerable mortification, but no contrition. She was vexed that her meanness was discovered, but she felt no desire to cure herself of any of

her faults. The ball was still uppermost in her vain selfish soul.

"Well," said she, to her confidante Betty, "you hear how things have turned out; but if miss Somers won't think of asking me to go with her, I've a notion I know who will. As papa says, it's a good thing to have two strings to one's bow."

Now some officers who were quartered at Shrewsbury had become acquainted with Mr. Case; they had gotten into some quarrel with a tradesman in the town, and attorney Case had promised to bring them through the affair, as the man threatened to take the law of them. Upon the faith of this promise, and with the vain hope, that by civility they might dispose him to bring in a *reasonable* bill of costs, these officers sometimes invited Mr. Case to the mess; and one of them, who had lately been married, prevailed upon his bride *sometimes* to take a little notice of miss Barbara. It was with this lady that miss Barbara now hoped to go to the harper's ball.

"The officers and Mrs. Strathspey, or more properly Mrs. Strathspey and the officers, are to breakfast here to-morrow, do you know," said Bab to Betty. "One of them dined at the Abbey to-day, and told papa they'd all come; they are going out on a party somewhere into

the country, and breakfast here in their way. Pray, Betty, don't forget that Mrs. Strathspey can't breakfast without honey; I heard her say so myself."

"Then, indeed," said Betty, "I'm afraid Mrs. Strathspey will be likely to go without her breakfast here, for not a spoonful of honey have we, let her long for it ever so much."

"But surely," said Bab, "we can contrive to get some some honey in the neighbourhood."

"There's none to be bought, as I know of," said Betty.

"But is there none to be begged or borrowed?" said Bab, laughing. "Do you forget Susan's bee-hive? Step over to her in the morning, with *my compliments*, and see what you can do—tell her it is for Mrs. Strathspey."

In the morning Betty went with miss Barbara's compliments to Susan, to beg some honey for Mrs. Strathspey, who could not breakfast without it.

Susan did not like to part with her honey, because her mother loved it, and she therefore gave Betty but a small quantity: when Barbara saw how little Susan sent, she called her a *miser*, and said she *must* have some more for Mrs. Strathspey.

"I'll go myself and speak to her; come you

with me, Betty," said the young lady, who found it at present convenient to forget her having declared, the day that she sucked up the broth, that she never would honour Susan with another visit.

"Susan," said she, accosting the poor girl whom she had done every thing in her power to injure, "I must beg a little more honey from you for Mrs. Strathspey's breakfast. You know on a particular occasion, such as this, neighbours must help one another."

"To be sure they should," added Betty.

Susan, though she was generous, was not weak; she was willing to give to those she loved, but not disposed to let any thing be taken from her, or coaxed out of her, by those she had reason to despise. She civilly answered that she was sorry she had no more honey to spare. Barbara grew angry, and lost all command of herself, when she saw that Susan, without regarding her reproaches, went on looking through the glass pane in the bee-hive. "I'll tell you what, Susan Price," said she, in a high tone, "the honey I *will* have, so you may as well give it to me by fair means. Yes or no? Speak! will you give it me or not; will you give that piece of the honey-comb that lies there?"

"That bit of honey-comb is for my mother's breakfast," said Susan; "I cannot give it you."

"Can't you!" said Bab; "then see if I don't get it."

She stretched across Susan for the honey-comb, which was lying by some rosemary leaves that Susan had freshly gathered for her mother's tea. Bab grasped, but at her first effort she reached only the rosemary: she made a second dart at the honey-comb, and in her struggle to obtain it she overset the bee-hive. The bees swarmed about her—her maid Betty screamed, and ran away. Susan, who was sheltered by a laburnum tree, called to Barbara, upon whom the black clusters of bees were now settling, and begged her to stand still, and not to beat them away. "If you stand quietly, you won't be stung perhaps." But instead of standing quietly, Bab buffeted, and stamped, and roared, and the bees stung her terribly; her arms and her face swelled in a frightful manner. She was helped home by poor Susan and treacherous Mrs. Betty, who, now the mischief was done, thought only of exculpating herself to her master.

"Indeed, miss Barbara," said she, "this was quite wrong of you to go and get yourself into such a scrape. I shall be turned away for it, you'll see."

"I don't care whether you are turned away or not," said Barbara. "I never felt such pain in my life. Can't you do something for me? I don't mind the pain either, so much as being such as fright. Pray, how am I to be fit to be seen at breakfast by Mrs. Strathspey? and I suppose I can't go to the ball either, to-morrow, after all!

"No, that you can't expect to do, indeed," said Betty the comforter. "You need not think of balls, for those lumps and swellings won't go off your face this week. That's not what pains me, but I'm thinking of what your papa will say to me where he sees you, miss."

Whilst this amiable mistress and maid were in their adversity, reviling one another, Susan, when she saw that she could be of no farther use, was preparing to depart, but at the house-door she was met by Mr. Case.

Mr. Case had revolved things in his mind; for his second visit at the Abbey pleased him as little as his first, from a few words sir Arthur and miss Somers dropped in speaking of Susan and farmer Price. Mr. Case began to fear, that he had mistaken his game in quarrelling with this family. The refusal of his present dwelt upon the attorney's mind, and he was aware that, if the history of Susan's lamb ever reached the Abbey, he was undone; he now thought that the most prudent course he could possibly

follow would be to *hush up* matters with the *Prices* with all convenient speed. Consequently, when he met Susan at his door, he forced a gracious smile.

"How is your mother, Susan?" said he. "Is there any thing in our house can be of service to her? I'm glad to see you here. Barbara! Barbara! Bab!" cried he, "come down stairs, child, and speak to Susan Price." And, as no Barbara answered, her father stalked up stairs directly, opened the door, and stood amazed at the spectacle of her swelled visage.

Betty instantly began to tell the story her own way. Bab contradicted her as fast as she spoke. The attorney turned the maid away upon the spot; and partly with real anger, and partly with politic affectation of anger, he demanded from his daughter, how she dared to treat Susan Price so ill: "When she was so neighbourly and obliging as to give you some of her honey, couldn't you be content without seizing upon the honey-comb by force? This is scandalous behaviour, and what, I assure you, I can't countenance."

Susan now interceded for Barbara; and the attorney, softening his voice, said that Susan was a great deal too good to her, "as indeed you are, Susan," added he, "to everybody. I forgive her for your sake."

Susan curtsied, in great surprise, but her lamb could not be forgotten; and she left the attorney's house as soon as she could to make her mother's rosemary tea for breakfast.

Mr. Case saw that Susan was not so simple as to be taken in by a few fair words. His next attempt was to conciliate farmer Price; the farmer was a blunt, honest man, and his countenance remained inflexibly contemptuous, when the attorney addressed him in the softest tone.

So stood matters the day of the long-expected harpers' ball. Miss Barbara Case stung by Susan's bees, could not, after all her manœuvres, go with Mrs. Strathspey to the ball.

The ball-room was filled early in the evening; there was a numerous assembly; the harpers, who contended for the prize, were placed under the music-gallery at the lower end of the room; amongst them was our old blind friend, who, as he was not so well clad as his competitors, seemed to be disdained by many of the spectators. Six ladies and six gentlemen were now appointed to be judges of the performance. They were seated in a semicircle opposite to the harpers. The miss Somerses, who were fond of music, were amongst the ladies in the semicircle, and the prize was lodged in the hands of sir Arthur. There was now silence. The first harp sounded.

and as each musician tried his skill, the audience seemed to think that each deserved the prize. The old blind man was the last; he tuned his instrument, and such a simple pathetic strain was heard as touched every heart. All were fixed in delighted attention, and when the music ceased, the silence for some moments continued. The silence was followed by an universal buzz of applause. The judges were unanimous in their opinions, and it was declared, that the old blind harper, who played the last, deserved the prize.

The simple, pathetic air, which won the suffrages of the whole assembly, was his own composition; he was pressed to give the words belonging to the music, and at last he modestly offered to repeat them, as he could not see to write. Miss Somers's ready pencil was instantly produced, and the old harper dictated the words of his ballad, which he called "*Susan's Lamentations for her Lamb.*"

Miss Somers looked at her brother from time to time, as she wrote; and sir Arthur, as soon as the old man had finished, took him aside and asked him some questions, which brought the whole history of Susan's lamb, and of attorney Case's cruelty, to light.

The attorney himself was present when the harper began to dictate his ballad; his colour, as

sir Arthur steadily looked at him, varied continually; till at length, when he heard the words, "Susan's Lamentations for her Lamb," he suddenly shrank back, skulked through the crowd, and disappeared. We shall not follow him; we had rather follow our old friend, the victorious harper.

No sooner had he received the ten guineas, his well-merited prize, than he retired into a small room belonging to the people of the house, asked for pen, ink, and paper, and dictated, in a low voice, to his boy, who was a tolerably good scribe, a letter, which he ordered him to put directly into the Shrewsbury post-office; the boy ran with the letter to the post-office; he was but just in time, for the postman's horn was sounding.

The next morning, when farmer Price, his wife, and Susan, were sitting together, reflecting that his week's leave of absence was nearly at an end, and that the money was not yet made up for John Simpson, a substitute, a knock was heard at the door, and the person who usually delivered the letters in the village put a letter into Susan's hand, saying, "A penny, if you please—here's a letter for your father."

"For me!" said farmer Price, "here's the penny then; but who can it be from, I wonder;

who can think of writing to me, in this world?" He tore open the letter, but the hard name at the bottom of the page puzzled him—"*your obliged friend*, Llewellyn." "And what's this?" said he, opening a paper that was enclosed in the letter; "it's a song, seemingly; it must be somebody that has a mind to make an April fool of me."

"But it is not April; it is May, father," said Susan.

"Well, let us read the letter, and we shall come at the truth—all in good time."

Farmer Price sat down in his own chair, for he could not read entirely to his satisfaction in any other, and read as follows:—

"My worthy friend,

"I am sure you will be glad to hear that I have had good success this night. I have won the ten-guinea prize, and for that I am in a great measure indebted to your sweet daughter Susan, as you will see by a little ballad I enclose for her. Your hospitality to me has afforded me an opportunity of learning some of your family history. You do not, I hope, forget that I was present when you were counting the treasure in Susan's little purse, and that I heard for what purpose it was all destined. You have not, I know, yet made up the full sum for the

substitute, John Simpson; therefore do me the favour to use the five-guinea bank note, which you will find within the ballad. You shall not find me as hard a creditor as attorney Case. Pay me the money at your own convenience; if it is never convenient to you to pay it, I shall never ask it. I shall go my rounds again through this country, I believe, about this time next year, and will call to see how you do, and to play the new tune for Susan and the dear little boys.

"I shall just add, to set your heart at rest about the money, that it does not distress me at all to lend it to you: I am not quite so poor as I appear to be; but it is my humour to go about as I do. I see more of the world under my tattered garb than, perhaps, I should see in a better dress. There are many of my profession who are of the same mind as myself in this respect; and we are glad, when it lays in our way, to do any kindness to such a worthy family as yours.—So, fare ye well.

"Your oliged friend,

"LLEWELLYN."

Susan now, by her father's desire, opened the ballad: he picked up the five-guinea bank note, whilst she read with surprise, "Susan's Lamentations for her Lamb." Her mother leaned over her shoulder to read the words, but they were

interrupted, before they had finished the first stanza, by another knock at the door. It was not the postman with another letter; it was sir Arthur and his sisters.

They came with an intention, which they were much disappointed to find that the old harper had rendered vain; they came to lend the farmer and his good family the money to pay for his substitute.

"But, since we are here," said sir Arthur, "let me do my own business, which I had like to have forgotten. Mr. Price, will you come out with me, and let me show you a piece of your land, through which I want to make a road? Look there," said sir Arthur, pointing to the spot, "I am laying out a ride round my estate, and that bit of land of yours stops me."

"Why so, sir?" said Price: "the land's mine, to be sure, for that matter; but I hope you don't look upon me to be that sort of person, that would be stiff about a trifle or so."

"Why," said sir Arthur, "I had heard you were a litigious, pig-headed fellow; but you do not seem to deserve this character."

"Hope not, sir," said the farmer; "but about the matter of the land, I don't want to make no advantage of your wishing for it: you are welcome to it, and I leave it to you to find

me out another bit of land convenient to me, that will be worth neither more nor less, or else to make up the value to me some way or other. I need say no more about it."

"I hear something," continued sir Arthur, after a short silence, "I hear something, Mr. Price, of *a flaw* in your lease. I would not speak to you of it whilst we were bargaining about your land, lest I should overawe you; but tell me what is this *flaw*?"

"In truth, and the truth is the fittest thing to be spoken at all times," said the farmer, "I didn't know myself what *a flaw*, as they call it, meant, till I heard of the word from attorney Case; and I take it, *a flaw* is neither more nor less than a mistake, as one should say. Now by reason a man does not make a mistake on purpose, it seems to me to be the fair thing, that if a man finds out his mistake, he might set it right: but attorney Case says this is not law, and I've no more to say. The man who drew up my lease made a mistake, and if I must suffer for it I must," said the farmer. "However, I can show you, sir Arthur, just for my own satisfaction and yours, a few lines of a memorandum on a slip of paper, which was given me by your relation, the gentleman who lived here before, and let me my farm. You'll see, by that bit of

paper what was meant; but the attorney says the paper's not worth a button in a court of justice, and I don't understand these things. All I understand is the common honesty of the matter. I've no more to say."

"This attorney, whom you speak of so often," said sir Arthur, "you seem to have some quarrel with him. Now, would you tell me frankly what is the matter between——"

"The matter between us, then," said Price, "is a little bit of ground, not worth much, that there is open to the lane at the end of Mr. Case's garden, sir, and he wanted to take it in. Now, I told him my mind, that it belonged to the parish, and that I never would willingly give my consent to his cribbing it in that way. Sir, I was the more loath to see it shut into his garden, which moreover is large enow of all conscience, without it, because you must know, sir Arthur, the children in our village are fond of making a little play-green of it, and they have a custom of meeting, on May-day, at a hawthorn that stands in the middle of it, and altogether I was very loath to see 'em turned off it by those who had no right."

"Let us go and see this nook," said sir Arthur; "it is not far off, is it?"

"Oh, no, sir, just hard-by here."

When they got to the ground, Mr. Case, who saw them walking together, was in a hurry to join them, that he might put a stop to any explanations. Explanations were things of which he had a great dread, but fortunately he was upon this occasion a little too late.

"Is this the nook in dispute?" said sir Arthur.

"Yes; this is the whole thing," said Price.

"Why, sir Arthur, don't let us talk any more about it," said the politic attorney, with an assumed air of generosity; "let it belong to whom it will, I give it up to you."

"So great a lawyer, Mr. Case, as you are," replied sir Arthur, "must know that a man cannot give up that to which he has no legal title; and in this case it is impossible that, with the best intentions to oblige me in the world, you can give up this bit of land to me, because it is mine already, as I can convince you effectually, by a map of the adjoining land, which I have fortunately safe among my papers. This piece of ground belonged to the farm on the opposite side of the road, and it was cut off when the lane was made."

"Very possibly; I dare say you are quite correct: you must know best," said the attorney, trembling for the agency.

"Then," said sir Arthur, "Mr. Price, you

will observe that I now promise this little green to the children, for a play-ground, and I hope they may gather hawthorn many a May-day at this their favourite bush."

Mr. Price bowed low, which he seldom did, even when he received a favour himself.

"And now, Mr. Case," said sir Arthur, turning to the attorney, who did not know which way to look, "you sent me a lease to look over."

"Ye—ye—yes," stammered Mr. Case. "I thought it my duty to do so, not out of any malice or ill-will to this good man."

"You have done him no injury," said sir Arthur coolly. "I am ready to make him a new lease, whenever he pleases, of his farm; and I shall be guided by a memorandum of the original bargain, which he has in his possession. I hope I shall never take an unfair advantage of any one."

"Heaven forbid, sir," said the attorney, sanctifying his face, "that I should suggest the taking an *unfair* advantage of any man rich or poor—but to break a bad lease is not taking an unfair advantage."

"You really think so?" said sir Arthur.

"Certainly I do, and I hope I have not hazarded your good opinion by speaking my mind concerning the flaw so plainly. I always understood, that there could be nothing ungentlemanlike in the way of business, in taking advantage of a flaw in a lease."

"Now," said sir Arthur, "you have pronounced judgment, *undesignedly*, in your own case—You intended to send me this poor man's lease, but your son, by some mistake, brought me your own, and I have discovered a fatal error in it."

"A fatal error!" said the alarmed attorney.

"Yes, sir," said sir Arthur, pulling the lease out of his pocket; "here it is—you will observe, that it is neither signed nor sealed by the grantor."

"But you won't take advantage of me, surely, sir Arthur," said Mr. Case, forgetting his own principles.

"I shall not take advantage of you, as you would have taken of this honest man. In both cases I shall be guided by memorandums which I have in my possession. I shall not, Mr. Case, defraud you of one shilling of your property. I am ready, at a fair valuation, to pay you the exact value of your house and land, but upon this condition, that you quit the parish within one month."

Attorney Case submitted, for he knew that he could not legally resist. He was glad to be let

off so easily, and he bowed, and sneaked away, secretly comforting himself with the hope, that whem they came to the valuation of the house and land, he should be the gainer perhaps of a few guineas; his reputation he justly held very cheap.

"You are a scholar, you write a good hand, you can keep accounts, cannot you?" said sir Arthur to Mr. Price, as they walked home towards his cottage.

"I think I saw a bill of your little daughter's drawing out the other day, which was very neatly written. Did you teach her to write?"

"No, sir," said Price, "I can't say I did *that*, for she mostly taught herself; but I taught her a little arithmetic, as far as I knew, on our winter nights, when I had nothing better to do."

"Your daughter shows that she has been well taught," said Arthur, "and her good conduct and good character speak strongly in favour of her parents."

"You are very good, very good indeed, sir, to speak in this sort of way," said the delighted father.

"But I mean to do more than *pay you with words*," said sir Arthur. "You are attached to your own family: perhaps you may become attached to me, when you come to know me, and

we shall have frequent opportunities of judging of one another. I want no agent to squeeze my tenants, or to do my dirty work. I only want a steady, intelligent, honest man, like you, to collect my rents, and I hope, Mr. Price, you will have no objection to the employment."

"I hope, sir," said Price, with joy and gratitude glowing in his honest countenance, "that you'll never have no cause to repent your goodness."

"And what are my sisters about here?" said sir Arthur, entering the cottage, and going behind his sisters, who were busily engaged in measuring an extremely pretty-coloured calico.

"It is for Susan! my dear brother," said they.

"I knew she did not keep that guinea for herself," said miss Somers; "I have just prevailed upon her mother to tell me what became of it. Susan gave it to her father—but she must not refuse a gown of our choosing this time, and I am sure she will not, because her mother, I see, likes it.—And Susan, I hear that, instead of being Queen of the May this year, you were sitting in your sick mother's room. Your mother has a little colour in her cheeks now."

"Oh, ma'am," interrupted Mrs. Price, "I'm quite well—joy, I think, has made me quite well."

"Then," said miss Somers, "I hope you will be able to come out on your daughter's birth-day, which I hear is the 25th of this month.—Make haste and get quite well before that day, for my brother intends that all the lads and lasses of the village shall have a dance on Susan's birth-day."

"Yes," said sir Arthur; "and I hope on that day, Susan, you will be very happy with your little friends upon their play-green. I shall tell them that it is your good conduct which has obtained it for them: and if you have any thing to ask, any little favour for any of your companions, which we can grant, now ask, Susan; these ladies look as if they would not refuse you any thing that is reasonable; and I think you look as if you would not ask any thing unreasonable."

"Sir," said Susan, after consulting her mother's eyes, "there is, to be sure, a favour I should like to ask; it is for Rose."

"Well, I don't know who Rose is," said sir Arthur, smiling; "but go on."

"Ma'am, you have seen her, I believe: she is a very good girl indeed," said Mrs. Price.

"And works very neatly indeed," continued Susan, eagerly, to miss Somers; "and she and her mother heard you were looking out for some one to wait upon you."

"Say no more," said miss Somers; "your

wish is granted; tell Rose to come to the Abbey to-morrow morning, or rather come with her yourself, for our housekeeper, I know, wants to talk to you about a certain cake. She wishes, Susan, that you should be the maker of the cake for the dance, and she has good things ready looked out for it already, I know. It must be large enough for every body to have a slice, and the housekeeper will slice it for you. I only hope your cake will be as good as your bread.—Fare ye well."

How happy are those who bid farewell to a whole family, silent with gratitude, who will bless them aloud when they are far out of hearing!

"How do I wish now," said Farmer Price, "and it's almost a sin for one that has had such a power of favours done him, to wish for anything more; but how I *do* wish, wife, that our good friend the harper, Susan, was only here at this time being, it would do his old warm heart good. Well, the best of it is, we shall be able next year, when he comes his rounds, to pay him his money with thanks, being all the time, and for ever, as much obliged to him as if we kept it, and wanted it as badly as we did when he gave it so handsome.—I long, so I do, to see him in this house again, drinking, as he did, just in this spot, a glass of Susan's mead, to her very good health."

"Yes," said Susan, "and the next time he comes I can give him one of my Guinea-hen's eggs, and I shall show him my lamb Daisy."

"True, love," said her mother; "and he will play that tune, and sing that pretty ballad—where is it, for I have not finished it?"

"Rose ran away with it, mother; and I'll step after her, and bring it back to you this minute," said Susan.

Susan found her friend Rose at the hawthorn, in the midst of a crowded circle of her companions, to whom she was reading "Susan's Lamentation for her Lamb."

"The words are something—but the tune—the tune—I must have the tune," cried Philip. "I'll ask my mother to ask Sir Arthur, to try and rout out which way that good old man went after the ball; and if he's above ground we'll have him back by Susan's birthday, and he shall sit here, just exactly here, by this our bush, and he shall play—I mean if he pleases—that there tune for us: and I shall learn it—I mean if I can—in a minute.

The good news, that Farmer Price was to be employed to collect the rents, and that Attorney Case was to leave the parish in a month, soon spread over the village. Many came out of their houses to have the pleasure of hearing the joyful

tidings confirmed by Susan herself; the crowd on the play-green increased every minute.

"Yes," cried the triumphant Philip, "I tell you it's all true, every word of it. Susan's too modest to say it herself—but I tell ye all, Sir Arthur gave us this play-green for ever, on account of her being so good."

You see, at last, Attorney Case, with all his cunning, has not proved a match for "Simple Susan."

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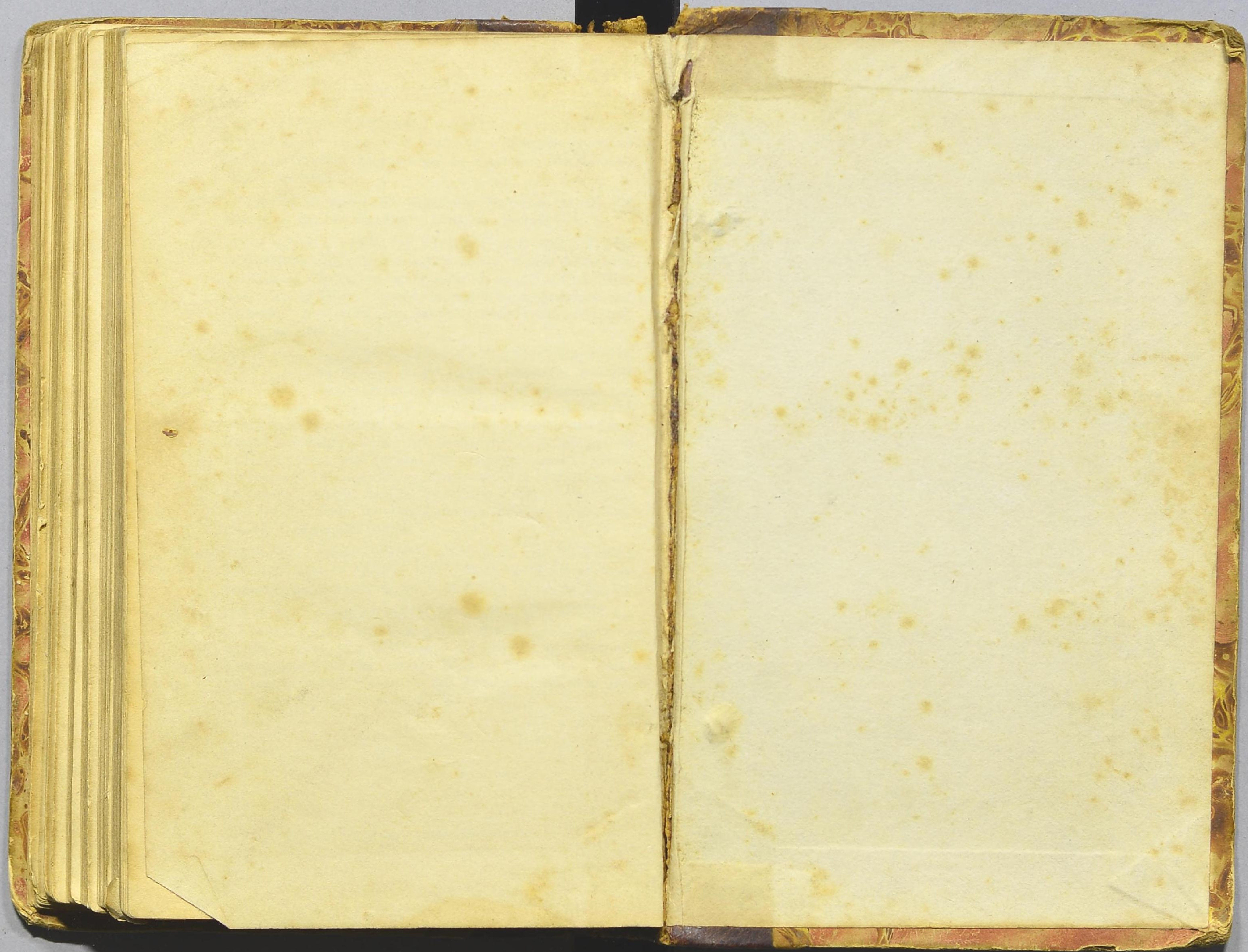

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