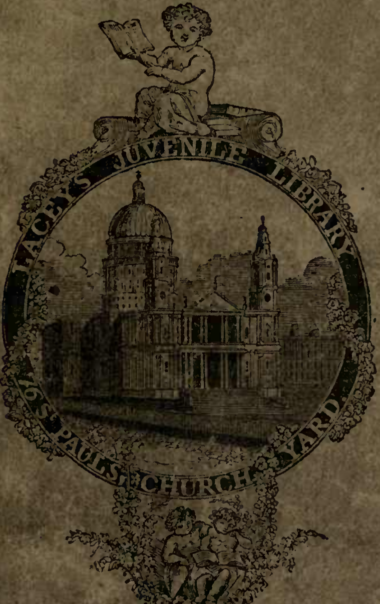
FLATTERY, LIBERTY,

AND

FRIENDSHIP.



NTERESTING DOMESTIC TALES,

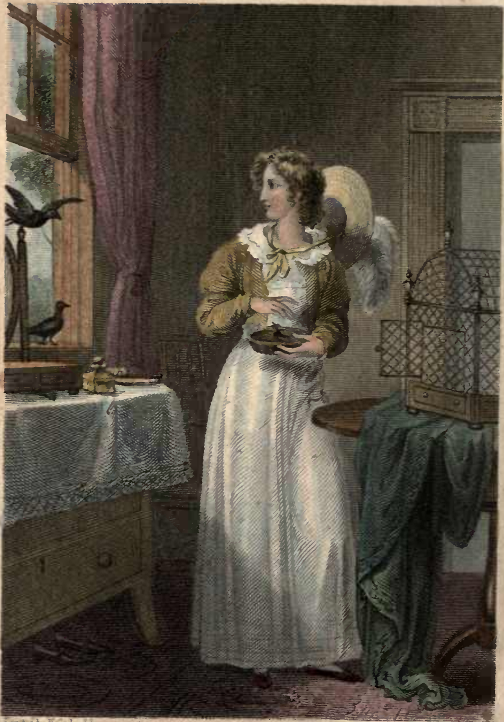
For the Young.

WITH FINE ENGRAVINGS.

ELIZA CRAVEN,

ELLAR CARR MILL.

Corbould & Jarvis



Painted by H. Corbould

Engraved & Printed by Fenner Sears & Co.

ELLA AND HER ROBIN.

B. Lacey, 76 St. Pauls, London

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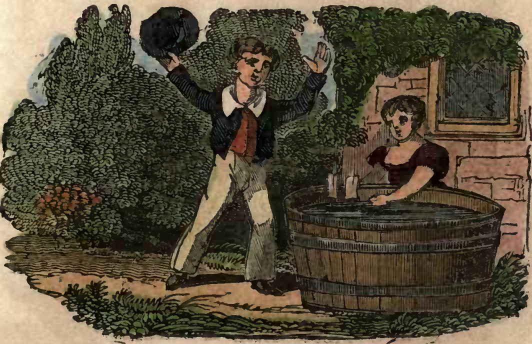
FLATTERY,

LIBERTY, AND FRIENDSHIP,

Instructive and Entertaining

STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

WITH FINE ENGRAVINGS.



LONDON:

EDWARD LACEY, 76, St. PAUL's CHURCH-YARD.

PARLOUR STORIES.

No. XVI.

FLATTERY.

A Sussex Farmer and his Son were one evening returning from a distant field to the farm-house, when they observed about a dozen ravens settle upon a heap of rubbish near a dung-hill. The boy was a shrewd sensible lad, and the father was a man of some judgment and wit. The following dialogue occupied the time of their slow walk home:—

Son.—"I say, father, I never see ravens fly about, and especially settle down, but where something seems likely to be got; but what can they expect to find in that lot of rubbish?"

Father.—"Oh, they will manage to find something, depend upon it,—and something strong and relishing, too; if the rubbish won't supply them with a supper, they will go to the dung-hill. If we were to stop ten minutes, we should see them eating as heartily from both, as if they had taken no food the whole day. But this is as much the disposition of men and boys, Thomas, as it is of beasts and birds."

SON.—"And therefore, I suppose, father, we call people that eat a great deal, and very fast, *ravenous* people."

FATHER.—"Just so: but this was not all I meant. I thought of people's propensity to do other things besides eating. They run as eagerly after the means of gratifying their favourite disposition, be it what it may, as these birds fly wherever they are likely to find something to eat; and when they reach the things that have attracted them, they indulge their propensity quite as much."

SON.—"I think, father, I have somewhere read that flattering people are like ravens, always flying to places where they are likely to benefit themselves, and settling upon people that are able to serve them."

FATHER.—"That may be, Thomas; but there must be a good deal of difference between ravens and such people, too. If you look, you will see the raven must have its food directly, and as much of it as possible, upon the spot; but flatterers, as you call them, when they fasten upon people, seem to have a good deal of patience before they get what they want, and peck about amazingly, for a long time, ere they can eat a single bit worth having."

Son.—"Is that all the difference between them?"

Father.—"No, Thomas; there is another: ravens have a power over what they settle upon, that flatterers have not."

Son.—"You must mean, father, that they *would not* have, and *need not* have, if the people they fasten upon minded what they be about."

Father.—"You are right there, Thomas: the rubbish, yonder, has no power, in any part of it, to keep out of the raven's reach, though some pieces may be too large to be taken into its mouth; but *we* need not be settled upon, any more than eaten up, unless we choose."

Son.—"But it seems, father, that we almost always *do* choose to be settled upon, and even eaten up, as you call it, by flattery: at the same time, I agree with you that it is our own fault. I think I have somewhere read that, if we did not first flatter ourselves, the flattery of others would never hurt us."

Father.—"Ah, boy, flattery is like bad money—if people were careful, it would never pass: it goes from one to the other, because it has a colour and a form that they like, and they take no pains to see whether it is really good or not."

Son.—"Well, father, I think I shall always hate to be flattered: flattery and flatterers will always, I believe—I hope, at least—be odious to me, as they be, I fancy, to you."

Father.—"We often suppose we hate to be flattered; but, when we come to look at the affair, we find out that we only hate the manner of the flattery. The person who flatters us may be hateful, and still we may like the flattery itself; or the words of the flattery may sound hateful, but what they mean may perhaps be very agreeable."

Son.—"There, father, I must beg leave to differ from you. I look upon the words of flattery to be generally sweet to the ear, but very bitter to the understanding."

Father.—"Thomas, you are a sensible lad, and I don't flatter you by saying so. You have a strong mind, and a good memory, and I bless God for it. You have looked at different objects about you with a careful eye, and you have observed the manners of men with more attention than many lads twice your age."

SON.—"Father, I don't want to hear you go on so."

FATHER.—"Why?—It is true. If, now, you were a wild boy, and I was to call you very steady; if you were a stupid boy, and I was to say you were very thoughtful; and, if you were an idle boy, and I was to praise you as active and industrious, then I should flatter you, with words, as you say, very sweet to the ear, but very bitter—bitter as gall, to the understanding.

It was now plain that all the farmer had said was to draw forth something from his son that would discover the attention and improvement of the boy's mind.

They had now reached the gate of the house, where the Farmer's daughter met them, who said that the Parson's son, a young gentleman of a rakish and fashionable character, had just left, and would call about some business in the evening."

"Did he tell you the business?" her father asked. "No," she answered; "he said I knew nothing about it, and therefore he would not mention it."

"That was not a very creditable compliment," said the Farmer; "for a daughter of fifteen to know nothing of her father's business." "Indeed, I think it was," answered the pert, vain girl; "and the young gentleman thought so, too; for he said I ought to know nothing about the farm,—I was so delicate, that I should attend to nothing but music, and dress, and dancing."

"Indeed!" said the Farmer; "what, and never eat nor drink?" "Why, I asked him that very question," replied Lucy; "and he said, what I never thought of before, that eating and drinking, especially in a farm-house, may do me harm, if I do not take care—it may make me look coarse, and lusty, and ordinary."

Thomas had gone into a back room, and returned, just as his sister had spoken these words. "Sister, sister!" he cried out, "I am sorry to hear this; and I am sorrier, still, that it seems to please you! Such company, and such conversation, will do you no good." "Indeed, but they will," said the mother, rather warmly; "Lucy was very much pleased, I can tell you, with the young gentleman's visit; especially when he said that he was glad that your father and you *was* out, because it gave him a better opportunity to chat with her. And I tell you more—*I* was pleased with him; for he told me that I looked ten years younger than just before Christmas, when I had such a cold in my head, and could hardly speak."

A feather shows the direction of the wind; and this short and single speech of Lucy's Mother sufficiently manifests the vanity of her mind,—if mind it might be called, in which scarcely a correct notion existed. The speech will also account for Lucy's vain airs and notions, of whose training, upon her own principles, the mother had taken the greatest care.

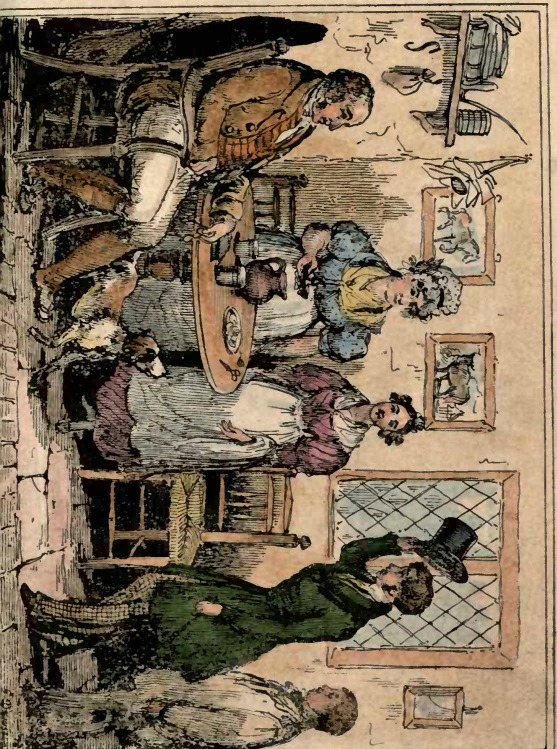
> "Tis education forms the youthful mind,—
> Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

An elder sister, the only remaining branch of this family, lived with an Uncle and Aunt, several miles off. They adopted her in her childhood, and had formed her, by a very different course of instruction, into a character the reverse of Lucy.

"I wish Sarah would pay us another visit," said the Farmer, as they sat down to supper. "Oh, Mr. Basset asked me about her to-day," said Lucy, "and said he should like to admire her fine figure, but was sorry to hear she was a prude. What is a prude, Thomas? It must be something bad, because Mr. Basset spoke the word so scornfully, and seemed to pity sister that she should conduct herself in such a manner.

"I wish you had left me to answer the question as soon as you had put it," said Thomas, "without running on about what Mr. Basset said: we don't want him to help us in settling our opinion about dear Sarah. Do you know what the word *prudent* means? Because, properly speaking, a prude *ought* to mean, and *used* to mean, a prudent person. Am I not right, father?"

"Certainly," said the Farmer; "but the word, both in French and English, now generally means a person over-nice—excessively, or affectedly prudent. Now let me declare, once for all, whatever Mr. Basset may say, and whatever daughter Lucy may think, that dear Sarah is a prude in the ancient, and not in the modern sense—she is prudent, indeed; but she is not, and, I believe, never



will be, nice, or scrupulous, or affected in her prudence."

An opening of the gate told them that Mr. Basset had returned. The Farmer's wife smiled, and said she was glad of it, to put a stop to the learned and dull conversation that her husband and son *was* always *bringing up*. Thomas left the table, to open the door for the young gentleman; while the Farmer rebuked his wife for her remark. "If," said he, "my dear, you had a little more learning, you would not talk of *bringing up* such conversation; if you used the words about our supper, even Lucy would have been shocked with the vulgar and indelicate expressions." The Farmer said this to prevent his daughter approving, as she would else have done, of what her Mother said.

Mr. Basset entered the room with his usual freedom and gayety. He bowed to the females, and said, "I always come here with ineffable delight; it does my heart good to see such blooming faces, and to receive such a transporting welcome." He then seated himself between the mother and daughter, and began telling them what excellent friends he had been dining with. "Oh, now," said Lucy, let us have an account of your charming company." "Ah, do tell us," said the Mother, "of some of the merry sort, that are worth hearing about."

"There is that liberal fellow, Freemantle," said Basset; and that accomplished gentleman, Courtenay; and that steadfast chap, Manfull; and that merry companion, Videon; and, to crown all, that prudent jockey, Divers. Oh, if you had been there!"—checking himself, and turning to the Farmer and his son; "if *you* had been there, I mean, you would have enjoyed their company."

"I doubt very much," said the Farmer, "whether I should have enjoyed their company, even if they had answered your description: but setting that aside, I must beg leave to differ from you in the character you give your friends."

"Father," said Lucy, "you should not differ from Mr. Basset; you have not had a college education; he must know things better than you do." This was too much for Basset himself to bear, from an ignorant girl; he therefore requested her to be silent, while he disputed the point with her father. "Wherein, sir," said he, "do you differ from me? I should like, now, to have a sensible farmer's opinion of my fine friends."

"I don't call myself sensible," answered the

Farmer," and I don't want any body to call me so; but I shall be free to speak my mind about the men you call your friends."

"Gentlemen, you mean," replied his wife. Without noticing this interruption, the Farmer went on. "You call Mr. Freemantle a liberal fellow: I wish he would be liberal enough to pay me for three horses that he has had more than as many years. I call him a prodigal spendthrift. You say that young Courtenay is an accomplished gentleman; but I call him, not only a contemptible coxcomb, but a vile and base seducer, who has ruined many a virtuous young woman, and broken many a worthy parent's heart. You call Manfull a steadfast chap; but the truth is, and every body knows it, he is as obstinate a mule as ever wore two ears, and carried a pannier. And then, as to Videon and Divers, your merry companion, and your prudent jockey, one is hardly ever sober, and the other is a hard-hearted miser, who grinds his poor tenants to dust."

Mr. Basset was silent, and Thomas requested his father to go on.

"Now, sir," he added, "all your description of these men is downright flattery. I know you say such things to their face, and would make them think themselves very different men to what they really are. If it is not proper always to be telling them the truth—that they are bad men, it certainly cannot be right ever to tell them, or to tell us, that they are good men, which is a broad falsehood. *They* must know better than this, and must have a wretched opinion of your wisdom and honesty. Suppose every body was to flatter men as you do, hiding their vices, or gilding and burnishing them up, to make them pass for virtues, the world would soon be turned upside down, and language would have no meaning left."

Mr. Basset was still silent, and seemed confused and uneasy. After a few moments' pause, Thomas kindly relieved his embarrassment, by offering to relate an anecdote. Mr. Basset had often been amused with the lad's humorous tales, and thanked him for the offer.

"You have read," said Thomas, "of Alexander the Great, and of Alphonso, King of Arragon, much more than I have, and you will, therefore, remember what I am going to mention. Both of those great men were a little wry-necked, and leaned their heads towards the left shoulder. Alexander was so, I believe, by nature, and Alfonso, I fancy, became so by habit. Great men are always flattered, and so were these. The noblemen and gentlemen that hung about their court and their camp were always trying to hang down their heads in the same manner, and some of them had collars made to keep their heads in a wry position."

"Perfectly ridiculous!" exclaimed Basset: "I mean not your story, Thomas, but their conduct."

"But not more ridiculous," said the Farmer, "than to call the wretched men, that you dined with to-day, by virtuous and honourable names."

This faithful rebuke again silenced Mr. Basset, and the Farmer offered to remind him of another story of flatterers, even more ridiculous than Alexander's and Alphonso's courtiers. "Mithridates, King of Pontus, took great delight in surgery, was esteemed very skilful, and fond of performing experiments, and receiving praise. One day some of his attendants requested him to make incisions in their flesh, and apply burning caustics to the wounds. They must have suffered great torture; but, instead of complaining, they kept praising his skill, and hazarded their lives, that they might flatter their king."

"I have read this strange account," said Mr. Basset, "and, to the best of my recollection, you have not stated it more strongly than it appears in the history. I will think of this matter. I begin to fear that I am acquiring a habit of flattering that may be injurious to others, as well as disgraceful to myself. I hope I shall leave it off."

"The very thing that I wished to accomplish in saying what I did," said the Farmer. Mr. Basset, you are a young man of a good understanding, and, what is still better, a good heart. Throw off the maxims, and the manners, and the men, that you have been accustomed to, and let all your future opinions and pursuits be rational and prudent, upright and useful. Take the advice—the sound advice, you have so long neglected,—the advice of your father. Remember his text last Sunday week:—'He that flattereth his neighbour, layeth snares for his feet;' and is, therefore, as your Father justly observed, a much greater enemy than one that openly assaults him."

Thomas now said, "I did not like, Father, to interrupt you and Mr. Basset, but let me not forget to tell you of what has just happened to one of the gentlemen you were speaking of. I am sorry to say that there is no prospect of your ever getting paid for the horses, for Mr. Freemantle is gone to sea—they say, for ever."

"To sea!" said Mr. Basset; "and for ever! What, Thomas, does this mean? I saw him a few days ago at Hastings; and, though he seemed a little jaded, he was as merry as ever."

"And perhaps as *liberal* as ever, Mr. Basset!" said the Farmer; "I mean to all but his creditors; for they have not seen a farthing of his money, I find, these three years."

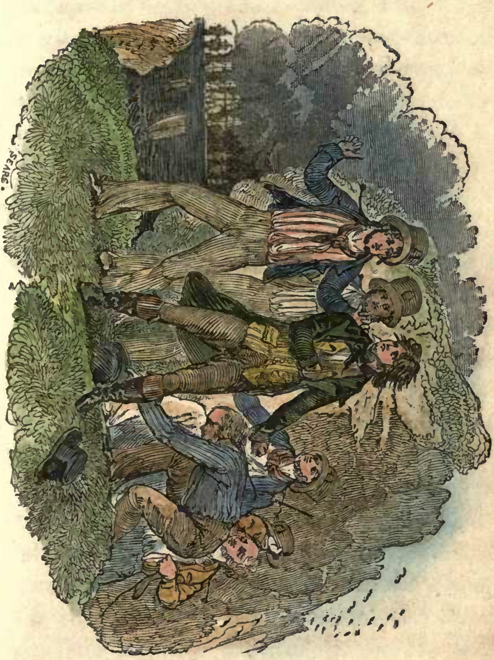
"It was impossible they should see any of *his* money," said Thomas; "for he has none of his own for any body to see. The full purse that he has shaken so much was all borrowed; and even that he squandered away among his worthless favourites, while his creditors were suffering, some of them in prison, because he, and such as he, had half ruined them."

"I am, unhappily, one of his creditors," said Mr. Basset: "he had all I had about me when we parted last Tuesday, at Hastings, and I suppose that is gone to sea with him."

"I fancy not, sir," answered Thomas, "if all I hear is true. When he went abroad, they say, he had not a sixpence left. He went, it seems, by the coach to Dover; and there he got kicked out of the inn, because he could not pay his bill He then went to the beach, where some sailors were waiting to pick up men for the fleet that was then in the Downs. Seeing him in a wild desperate state, the Leader of the Press-Gang tapped him on the shoulder, and then pointed him to the fleet, just ready to sail for the Scheldt, and, after a little hesitation, he went with them."

Mr. Basset was strongly agitated by this account of one whom he had called his liberal friend; and, after a few moments' silence, he said, "My resolution is now taken!" "Not to go aboard the fleet, too, I hope, sir," said the Farmer. "No!" answered Mr. Basset, emphatically, "but to relinquish such friends altogether, and follow your honest and homely advice."

"We are to be neglected now, I suppose," said the Farmer's wife to Lucy. Mr. Basset had been so intent upon the conversation with the Farmer and Thomas, that he had not even turned again towards the females. Now, however, he looked at them in a very different manner, with a serious air, and said—"If withholding all flattery



in future be neglect, I fear—rather, I hope, I shall neglect you; but, if I may be allowed to converse with you in the rational and straightforward manner that your honest husband and your intelligent son would have me, I shall still visit you with pleasure." With this he shook the Farmer by the hand, and wished them all good night.

The long-expected visit of Sarah was paid a few days after these incidents; and it is proper the reader should know that Mr. Basset was her warm admirer. She had taken serious offence at some strong proof of his flattering propensity, and treated him with marked disdain. Uncertain of the exact cause of her treatment, he had continued his visits to the farm, in the hope of discovering and removing the impediment to his wishes; and the conversation just related convinced him in what manner he had offended her. The Farmer's earnestness, too, in striving to convince Basset of his error, must be ascribed to his wish that his daughter might, in due time, become the wife of the Rector's son. Basset was sincere in his profession of reform; but, perhaps, he acknowledged that reform a little more than he would have done, and at the risk of losing favour with the Mother and Lucy, because Sarah was coming for a long summer visit.

The day after Sarah arrived, her Father said, wth a cheerful smile, "I am going to the Rectory: shall I bring Philip Basset back with me, or deliver any message to him from you?"

"I hoped," said Sarah, "never to be questioned about that young man again, or even to hear his name: do spare my feelings, dear Father; I never can sit in the presence of a flatterer." "But, supposing," said her Father, "that the flatterer is now become a faithful friend, and hates his former propensity more than he once loved it, what shall we do then, Sarah?"

"I will speak to that," she said, "when I am convinced that the reformation has taken place—that is, when my Father can assure me that appearances and professions have not deceived him."

Her brother heard this last answer, and, partaking of all his sister's apprehension, he said, "Sarah, I don't know how to love you enough, for your good confidence in Father's word, and your equally good suspicion of flattering Philip."

The Father was now at some loss; but, confiding in Basset's sincerity, he said, "Philip is, with certainty, so far reformed, that he will not now intrude upon you without your express permission. He has sent for me to know whether he may hope that your mind can undergo a change, as well as his. He now declares war with all flatterers and flattery; and, to tell you the truth, I think the most likely way to prevent his making peace with them, is for you to make peace with him."

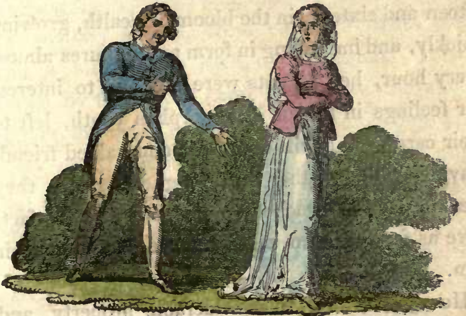
As the Farmer left the room, his son said, with his usual point, "Remember, Father, what you have often said of the wolf and the dog—that they are very much like one another, and that so the flatterer is very much like the friend, and we cannot always distinguish between them."

For a moment, we must return to the Mother and Lucy. It is pleasing to know that Sarah had almost as much influence over them, as her Father had over Basset. Whether they would so soon have joined the general opposition against flattery, if it had not been to promote an union between the Rector's family and theirs, we cannot tell. And whether they, at last, were so sincere in opposing it, as were the rest of the family, is extremely doubtful. However, the good principles of the Farmer and his son prevailed, and the hateful evil was banished from the house.

Basset returned with the Farmer; and, as they walked along, the latter said, "Now, Philip, remember that one flattering word will put all our hopes in danger. You are an educated young man, and you know how to behave well, without one deceptive word or look—to be courteous, as your worthy Father said in his sermon, without fawning or affectation. If Sarah finds you well altered, she may forgive a little blemish or two; but, if you use any fantastic airs, any wheedling, any false praise, she will leave the room, and never allow you to meet her again."

"Then she has consented to meet me now," said Basset, with great glee. "I am not quite certain of that," answered the Farmer; but, supposing she does, you must take the greatest care—every thing depends on this visit."

When they arrived, they found, to their joy, that Lucy and her Mother had been earnestly persuading Sarah to receive Philip with kindness. They had requested her brother to unite with them in interceding for Philip's success. He was some time doubtful and backward: at last, he said, "If you will both promise not to speak a flattering word, nor give a flattering look, I will join you. They promised, and he united with them. Sarah was then persuaded, and Philip, behaving well, was made truly happy.



PARLOUR STORIES.

No. XVII.

LIBERTY.

Elia Jacomb was an only child, of remarkably clever talents, and of a very lively and independent spirit. When she returned from school, between fifteen and sixteen, in the bloom of health, growing quickly, and improving in form and features almost every hour, her parents were anxious to interest her feelings in favour of an orphan youth, left to their care by the will of an old and valued friend. Having held his father in the highest esteem, they became equally attached to the son, and, in fact, were as fond of him as though he had been their own.

He was left heir to considerable property, and discovered, as he grew up, dispositions and habits likely to render him careful, without being covetous, of what he should possess. The ages and tempers, the circumstances and prospects, of the children, all seemed favourable to a persuasion that they might be mutually happy in a future union. But the greatest inducement Mr. and Mrs. Jacomb had for striving to forward such an union, was their own declining state of health: a reasonable apprehension that neither of them could live to see their daughter come of age, or even to see their ward, who was two years older, reach that period of his life.

No one doubted that Horatio and Elia were growing up in mutual attachment; but not a word, nor scarcely a look, from either of them, could lead a stranger to such a conclusion. It was drawn by those who knew them from the almost perfect similarity of their views and feelings upon every important subject, and not from a single part of their public or private behaviour towards each other. It was considered a thing that must of necessity take place, rather than what appearances indicated was likely to come to pass. Even the circumstance, the strong circumstance, that kept them from behaving to each other like lovers —their enthusiasm in favour of liberty—became a satisfactory proof to their wisest friends, that, if ever either should marry, it would be to the other.

After a conversation, one day, on the subject, Elia said, "I cannot be sufficiently thankful, my dearest parents, that you have at last told me all the truth. I knew that you would never deceive me; I was assured that, whenever I entreated to know it, you would open your hearts to your dear and only child. You have now done so, and I bless you for it. But—pardon me for saying so, and, if it be my fault, for *feeling* so—I cannot think as you do. My opinion is, that both Horatio and myself should, in such a tender and perhaps terrible affair, be left perfectly free."

This was said with so much firmness and fervour, as well as true affection, that Mr. and Mrs. Jacomb consented to be silent *for the present*, on this matter.

A public meeting was to be held that very noon, in the market-hall of the town, to petition the King and Parliament in favour of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill, which had just been introduced; and Horatio, a true liberty boy, was in his room, preparing to go to the hall to witness the proceedings. In a few minutes he came down, and asked Mr. Jacomb if he purposed going, "because," he added, "if you do, Miss Jacomb may safely accompany you; for the Mayor's son told me that the gallery was to be fitted up for the accommodation of ladies. If you will take charge of Miss Jacomb, I will undertake to conduct my dear Mamma," as he called Mrs. J., "to a comfortable seat."

Mrs. Jacomb at once declined going, and said that she must also exercise her little authority over her husband; for she was afraid that his feeble health would be injured by the crowd and excitement. This might be *part* of her motive for the prohibition; but there is reason to believe, that the other part was to give Horatio an opportunity of asking Elia to go with him. In this, however, she was unsuccessful: Horatio bade them good morning, without requesting Elia's company, and promised to enliven them in the evening with a report of the speeches. "Then," said he, as he left the room, "I may probably

> Fight all the battles o'er again,
> And once more slay the slain."

Elia had determined not to renew the subject in any form, else she would now have said to her parents what she whispered to herself:—"I knew there could be no eagerness in Horatio to have my company, and I would scorn to abridge the liberty of such an honourable and happy mind as his."

Before her parents could make a single remark, Horatio returned, having forgotten his cane. To convince them that she was in no degree disappointed at his going without her, she said, more cheerfully than ever, — "Now, Mr. Reformer, take care and keep your eyes from the gallery. I should have neither fear nor hope that they would be lifted up, if I were there; but as I prefer the company of my dear Papa and Mamma at home, perhaps you may look at the gallery, quite as much as the chairman or the speakers, and may, perchance, be brought into bondage while you are shouting for liberty."

"Ah, Elia," said he, carelessly switching his cane, "if I were inclined to enter the bondage of matrimony at any future time, I should be terrified to ask you to enter with me. Your independence of spirit, and your love of perfect liberty, might lead to many a conflict which should be king and which subject. However, I have other affairs than matrimony at present to think of."

"There, Papa," Elia whispered, as Horatio left the house, " I hope you are now satisfied that he could have no more thought of marrying me, than of taking Helen Macgregor to wife. There is one point, indeed, on which Horatio and I perfectly agree—we both seem to think there is bondage in the very sound of love, and fully to credit the poet's words—

> A man and his wife
> Are captives for life;—
> Sold and purchased as slaves,
> Till they get to their graves."

" There are exceptions to your poet's rule, let me tell you, though," said her Mamma. " Such lines are a libel on your dear Papa and me, at least, for I think he will allow me to say, that we never felt ourselves more free than since we have worn the chains of matrimony, and been bound hand and heart as one."

" I own you to be *exceptions*," said Elia; " but then you are not the *rule*. There are few couples in the world have been so happy, and none, I believe, have been more so. But I know the cause—a cause which such headstrong reformers as Horatio and myself could never preserve in operation a single day. Your good sense and good taste have always rendered you examples of the good old rule—for the husband never to speak of his headship, and the wife never to speak against it. But I forgot, we were to drop the subject; now, therefore, let me go to my birds, and give them their usual two hours' freedom.

Elia had several favourite birds, that she had carefully trained, first to leave their cages, and hop about her dressing-room, and then, as they grew more tame, to leave the room, and enjoy themselves, an hour or two every day, among some trees that grew near the window. One of them had a nest and several nestlings; and Elia took great delight in letting the young birds try their strength, one after the other, under the guidance of their fond and faithful parent. Today, upon going into the room, she found that one little bird only remained in the nest, the last but one having reached as far as the window.

She threw up the sash, and the parent bird flew out to the tree. She then took the nest in her hand, and the mother flew back again towards her, as though it would assist its youngest offspring to follow the fortunes of the rest. At that moment, the next little one stopped in its progress to the tree, and looked back as if it wished also to render assistance.

" You little airy, thoughtless creatures," said Elia, as she looked at the two birds in the window, and held her hand over the young one in the nest to prevent its falling, " I wish creatures of our race, who boast of reason and independence, would but take a lesson now and then from you. How fond of liberty you appear! but yet you seem, sweet birds, as fond, and even fonder, of home and of me! I it was who first taught you to enjoy freedom under proper restraint; and now you appear reconciled, and even attached, to the restraint, and never wish to abuse the freedom you have acquired!"

Just as this innocent recreation, and these intelligent reflections, were over, Elia heard a bustling and rather rushing noise, as though a crowd was gathering at a little distance from the house; and, looking out, she saw several people going towards an ancient and favourite bower, at the eastern end of an old chapel of ease. " What can be the matter?" she asked her Mamma, who was in her room, dressing for dinner. " I suppose," she answered, hearing the noise only, and not seeing the kind of people that made it, "that the reformers are going from the hall to the bower, to hold their meeting where they can speak and breathe more freely."—"Perhaps," said her Papa, who overheard this, "they are going to declaim about liberty as near the old Gothic chapel as possible, that they may point to the venerable building, as approaching its downfall, with all the ancient institutions it brings to remembrance."

"Well," said Elia, "if this be the case, it will be quite as consistent as meeting for such a purpose in the Town-Hall, where the liberties of the people have been restrained, quite as often, and quite as offensively, as ever they were in the old chapel."

In saying this, Elia looked out, and observed, that the people going to the bower were those not in the least likely to be found in the hall. "The young and the gay," she cried out, "are gone to the hall for their holyday; and the old and the grave are going to the bower to have theirs at the same time."—"But not, surely," said her Papa, "to hold an anti-reform meeting, in one town, on the same day, and at the same hour!

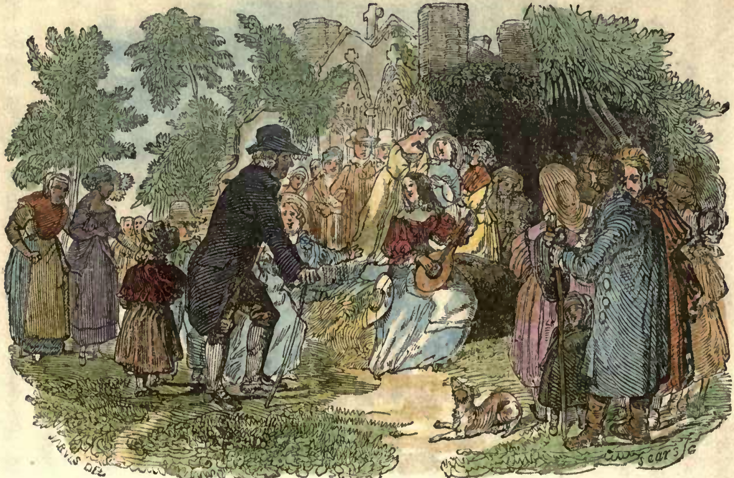
This would be strange indeed!"—"Never fear," answered Elia; "the countenances of the old people flocking to the bower are too smiling for this cross purpose; and yet I begin to fear, for I see the old Vicar is trudging to the scene of action; and he is leading his favourite granddaughter, perhaps to make a Tory of her, as soon as possible."

"And look!" said Mrs. Jacomb, "look, Elia! There is old Gaffer Silverhead, and Goody Tucker, and Madame Starch, and Miss Prudhoe, all known to hate reform—it certainly must be a Tory meeting."—"If so, they will not be left without some opposition and merriment," said Elia; "for I see a number of country lads and lasses crossing the chapel-yard, and they will never suffer the antiquated Tories to have it all their own way."—"The crowd increases," said Mr. Jacomb, "in every direction, and, between the hall and the bower, the town must by this time be emptied of all but ourselves; how we shall defend it against a siege from either party remains to be seen."

They however soon became convinced that no anti-reform meeting was to be held, and, therefore, they quietly walked out, in the rear of the crowd; when, all on a sudden, some of the strongest and sweetest music burst upon their ear. They quickened their paces, and soon saw, seated on a bank in front of the bower, a foreign lady, playing most delightfully on a guitar, and singing as delightfully to her own music. She was an Italian minstrel, handsomely, though rather wildly dressed, with long ringlets of deep black hair falling on her bosom and shoulders, and her large rural hat strung to her side. The song was in her native language, and of course unintelligible, except to one or two of her numerous and breathless auditors. Elia was perhaps the only one present who understood Italian; but she stood at too great a distance to be able to distinguish any words beyond those of the chorus, which she translated, as correctly as they would admit, thus:—

> "O, for a while, let the bewildered soul
> Find in your country relief from woe!
> O, yield awhile to pity's soft control—
> Some help, ye friends of liberty, bestow!"

"She is no anti-reformer, however," said Horatio, when Elia had finished her description



of the scene, and translation of the song, after dinner.

"But now, Horatio," said Mr. Jacomb, "you must give us some account of your reform meeting. You seemed too hungry when you came in, and so I contrived that the dinner should be quite ready for you. But now some favourite food has strengthened your body, and Elia's description of the minstrel has enlivened your mind, we may hope for some smart description, and some rare entertainment."

"To tell you the truth," said Horatio, "I have not yet recovered the agitation that being obliged to speak excited in every part of my frame."—"To speak! to speak!" exclaimed Elia; "what, Horatio, a public orator already! I wish I had been there to hear your maiden address."

'And I am glad such a little troublesome critic was not there," said Horatio; "for in your absence I felt myself at some liberty, and went on without fear of having every little lapse of expression canvassed, before I could recruit my strength by a good dinner. Even now, uninterrupted as I have been, both in speech at the hall and dinner at home, I feel an exhaustion I never felt before."

"We agreed beforehand," said Mr. Jacomb, "that we would not interrupt your dinner till you had fairly eaten the last bit."—"And I'll engage," said Elia, "that this reforming Apollos was equally uninterrupted in his speech; that the whole assembly, ladies and all, mercifully agreed to let him go on to the very last word, without a single clap, or the faintest sound of—*hear*—to say nothing of the more boisterous interruptions of—*Bravo—Go on!*

"Now I ask," said Horatio, addressing himself to Mr. Jacomb, "whether it would have been possible for me to have spoken two sentences correctly, in the presence of such a curly critic as this?"

"You must mean," said Elia, "whether it *was* possible for you to utter *one* sentence correctly in her absence?"

"Come, come," said Mr. Jacomb, "if this raillery continues, Elia, we shall not have time left, before our tea-party arrives, to hear Horatio's description of the meeting."

"And I fear," answered Horatio, "that, whether the raillery continues or ceases, I shall not have courage left to give you, in Elia's presence, the simplest outline of a most interesting debate."

"Debate, debate!" said Elia, "at a reform meeting! I thought reformers and anti-reformers always kept apart, that each division might have all its own way. I have heard of declamation enough; but I never heard before of debate on such occasions! I am now astonished into sober seriousness, and can listen attentively to your description. Let us instantly hear it.

"You must know, then," said Horatio, "that I was provoked to speak, contrary to my purpose, by the new curate rising early in the business, and taking advantage of a *seconding* put into his hands, to oppose the spirit and design of the whole affair. You know Mr. Hornthrop, at the Castle Lodge: he introduced the business by a general resolution—

"That the liberty of a well-constituted government consists, not in every man doing as he pleases, but in a people being governed by laws of their own making."

This motion the curate, Mr. Oligar, was requested to second, in the full persuasion that he was friendly to the cause. He rose—a short slender man, concealed from the people when he sat down, and scarcely able to look over the rostrum when he stood up. Some friend pushed a box under his feet, and then, as if conscious that he was suddenly grown a foot, he assumed proportionate consequence, whisked out his fine perfumed handkerchief, and said—" Mr. Mayor, *Ladies* and Gentlemen"—

" Pardon me, Sir," said the Mayor, interrupting him; " the ladies are in the gallery upon sufferance only, and are not considered part of the assembly—at all events, they have not the privilege of voting."

" Pardon me, too, Mr. Mayor," said Oligar, " in considerable displeasure, the ladies *must* be considered part of the assembly, for they are here; and as to voting, I hope they will be allowed the privilege, if it be only for the support of my motion."

At this moment a reforming old bachelor, under the gallery, looked up and exclaimed, " Ladies here! that was more than I knew, and more than I should have suspected; for I heard no noise above me, and I thought it was impossible for women to be silent anywhere."

This gave Oligar a moment's respite and relief. When the laugh excited by the bachelor's speech was over, the little curate resumed his courage, bowed again to the Mayor, and spoke, as well as I can recollect, in this manner.

"The motion which I hold in my hand"—"would you hold it in your mouth?" said a voice from the centre of the meeting—"says, that 'liberty consists in a people being governed by laws of their own making.' I have certainly read this often, and heard it sometimes; but I presume I shall be able to prove, that, if we enjoy liberty, as undoubtedly we do, the maxim cannot be true. The greater part of the laws that govern us were made very long ago; and I should be glad to know how we could make those laws many years before we were born. This, to me, is the same self-evident conclusion as the worthy Mayor's, that ladies form no part of the present assembly."

Here the company began to hiss; but as the Mayor and principal gentlemen knew that the Curate's speech could not be longer than his sermons, and as they expected some entertainment, a hearing was requested, and he was suffered to proceed. He thus went on—

"But, you ask, are we not instrumentaloin making those laws which are passed in our own time? If I could admit this, I should yet remember that these are not the only laws that govern us—I should yet boldly remind you, that we must obey the common law of the land, called so because of its antiquity, as well as the new, and mostly weaker, laws made by the Parliaments of our own day."

"Well done, young parson Tory," cried out a lusty fellow towards the top of the hall, the only government pensioner in the town—"the old common law for ever, and never let it be altered by new-fangled acts, say I!"

No one applauded; but Oligar smiled, and proceeded thus:—"Our laws are made by King, Lords, and Commons, in all, about eight hundred persons: take this eight hundred from twelve millions of people, and you have eleven millions two hundred governed by laws which they did not make, and cannot alter. But why do I come to the present generation—the King, Lords, and

Commons, are themselves governed by laws that were made before they were born. On these grounds, not to go further, Mr. Mayor, I contend that, if *we* are a free people, liberty cannot consist in being governed by laws of our own making. I therefore have great pleasure in seconding the motion!"

"Charming," said Elia, "to second a motion that his speech directly and completely opposed! What effect did this absurdity produce?"

"The most ludicrous imaginable," said Horatio: "the whole assembly burst into one of the most immoderate fits of laughter you ever heard. Perceiving his mistake, Oligar begged to be allowed to withdraw his seconding; but this could not be granted. After considerable altercation, he was allowed to alter one word of it—pleasure into *pain*—which pacified his tender conscience, while it secured his vote for the resolution."

"And you had to answer this rhodomontade, Mr. Horatio?" said Elia. "Let us hear, at least, the substance of your speech." Horatio was about to comply, when music, the music of the minstrel, was heard at the door. Up the lively young fellow started, and said, "She shall come into the hall, and we will hear her to advantage." The minstrel was admitted, and, at Elia's request, she played and sang the verses, the chorus only of which was distinguished before. The lady was unusually careful and animated, because she found that Elia understood every word she uttered.

Horatio manifested the deepest interest in the performance, and spoke to the minstrel, the few words of Italian at his command, with a tenderness that Elia did not fail to notice.

"May I request," he said to Mr. Jacomb, "that the minstrel be allowed to entertain your evening party between tea and supper?"

"I will answer for Mamma," replied Elia, in haste, as though she feared that Mrs. Jacomb should answer for herself in the negative.

"It is her subject that awakens the interest I feel in her," he said; evidently deeming some apology necessary for so strange and sudden a request.

"And if her talents, and even her person, should be thrown into the scale," answered Elia, "there could be no harm; we are all at perfect liberty to propose and feel what we please."

Without giving the minstrel time to answer, Elia took her by the hand, and, as she led her to her room to adjust her dress, she turned to Horatio, and said, "I will bring her down as much more interesting as my toilet will allow."

During the quarter of an hour that the young ladies were absent, Horatio left the house, and was seen to walk, in a pensive mood, several times across the lawn, his eye often glancing towards the window of Elia's room. While tea was passing round, and Elia was conversing in the freest manner with the minstrel on a small couch, Horatio did not utter a word, but seemed to have lost all his gayety, and would scarcely take any refreshment. But how shall we describe his fixed, intense, enamoured look, when the minstrel swept her strings in the evening's entertainment, and sang with a richness and a melody that delighted the company beyond expression.

His night was sleepless, and his morning appearance like that of a man full of the most pressing solicitude. At breakfast, Elia said to him, cheerfully, but not bitterly, "I am going by promise to call on the minstrel at her lodgings—shall I give your love to her?" Horatio was charmed with her manner, yet embarrassed with the question. "Speak freely," she said. "Then," he answered, "I must confess that I have given her my love already."

Without appearing either surprised or displeased at this remarkable reply, Elia said, "Then let me be allowed to translate what you say to the object of your affections. Nay, feel yourself at perfect liberty to make every addition to it you please, and I will engage to render every word into the most expressive Italian it will admit; to repeat it over and over again as the minstrel shall love to hear it; to assist her in setting it to music; and to perform the whole task in a manner best suited to answer the wishes of your heart."

"Admirable girl!" exclaimed Horatio, pressing her hand as he retired to give vent to his emotions, "were my heart free, you would now, beyond all doubt, make it your captive."

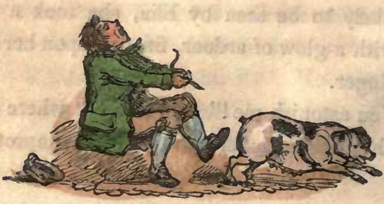
"Then," said Elia, "I will flee without delay to the minstrel, and rivet as fast as I can the chains of your Italian captivity. If these do not become fast for ever, it shall be no fault of Elia's. Such is her passion for liberty, that she would have every man and every woman free to impose upon themselves what bonds they please."

When she reached the minstrel's lodgings, she introduced the subject of Horatio's esteem, as she first called it, with all possible caution and care. At first the minstrel thought of a mere vague admiration, on the part of an English amateur of music, of her playing and singing; but when Elia began to enlarge on the excellencies of his character, and the amplitude of his fortune, especially when she spoke of the suitability of his temper to render the most refined and intelligent lady happy in the marriage state, the minstrel assumed a stern and solemn countenance. Without uttering a word in answer, she rose from her seat, and fetched from another part of the room a small casket. Unlocking it with great earnestness, she took out a beautiful miniature, and threw it around her neck. After placing the picture in a position best likely to be seen by Elia, she took a ring, and, with a glow of ardour, fixed it upon her wedding finger.

"You astonish me!" said Elia: "where is he, and why does he suffer you to wander unprotected in a foreign land?" Bursting into tears, she said, "He is in captivity, and I am collecting the means of liberating him."

"I will be with you again in half an hour," said Elia, hastily leaving the room and the house. She met Horatio coming pensively towards the spot, and said, "I am sorry to tell you she is not at liberty—she is married. For your sake, I wish she were not, for she is more than human. Some women are saints in prosperity, but she is an angel in adversity." Elia told him the whole tale. "Then," said Horatio, "*you* must be mine—I will not let another bind *you*, and keep *you* from me."

"I will be yours," said Elia, "on one condition—that you deduct enough from my marriage settlement to liberate the minstrel's husband."—Two thousand pounds soon effected the purpose.



PARLOUR STORIES.

No. IX.

FRIENDSHIP.

"Poor people and young people never appear to have any friendship for each other," said Mark Merton one day to his Mamma. "Indeed!" said Mrs. M., and continued her work, without any other word. "But I asked *you*, Mamma," said Mark, "whether that was the case or not." "You expressed an opinion upon it," said his Mamma, "but you asked no question. If you intended to request my opinion, you should have proposed a question to me, and not at once have settled the point yourself."

"Well then, dear Mamma," said Mark, "do you think that poor people and young people have any friendship for each other?" "I must first ask you," said Mrs. M., "what your question means. Am I to tell you whether poor people have any friendship for young people, or young people have any friendship for poor people?" "Oh, no," said Mark; "but whether you think that poor people have any friendship among them, and young people have any friendship among them?"

"Whether *I think* this!" said his Mamma, with a smile. "You began, Mark, by settling the point with an opinion of your own; but, when I propose to tell you any thing about it, I must only say modestly what I *think* of it."

"My dearest Mamma," said Mark, "I wish to speak, as well as think, what is right; do tell me how I should put the question."

"My dearest Mark," said his Mamma, "I wish to teach you how to speak, as well as to think, rightly. You might have saved me as well as yourself a great deal of trouble, if you had but put your two classes of persons into one." "How so?" inquired Mark, with some astonishment. "How could I make poor people and young people one class of people?"

"By asking," said his Mamma, "whether there could be any friendship among poor children."

Mark thanked his Mamma for this correction of his error, and promised to make his questions, in future, as short and simple as possible.

"And, now this point is settled," said Mrs. Merton, "let me ask you, Mark, why you came to introduce the subject at all?" "Because," said he, "Harry Holmes and I have been disputing about it till we were both angry, and he was ready to beat me because I insisted upon it he was wrong."

His Mamma smiled, and said, "The friendship between Harry and you cannot be very strong, since you can dispute, and be angry, and almost fight, about friendship—a want of friendship in others! It seems rather strange, too, that Harry was going to beat you in defence of friendship, and that you, more peaceably, left him, to consult me whether it was possible that such a thing could exist."

At that moment, there was a noise at the door, as though a bird was pecking to be let into the room.

"That," said Mrs. Merton, "is Fanny Furley's jackdaw; and Fanny herself, you may be sure, is not far behind. He shall peck away till she comes." This was not long: Fanny's step was heard at the door; and, when Mark opened it, the jackdaw jumped upon her shoulder, and seemed ready to listen to every thing that was said.

"I came," said Fanny, with a courtesy, to thank you, ma'am, for this nice shawl, that you were so kind as to send me, to go backwards and forwards to school in." While she said this, the bird took a corner of the shawl in its beak, and held it up, as if it would show Mark how fine it was; and then it pressed it down upon Fanny's shoulder, as though it would tell him that it kept her warm.

Before Mrs. Merton could answer, Mark said to Fanny, "You should speak to my Mamma more correctly: you don't go backwards to school; you go forwards to school, and backwards *from* school." "Oh, no, sir," answered the simple-hearted girl; "I never go backwards either way; if I did, I wonder what my poor bird would do! I walk straightforwards to school when I go, and straightforwards *from* school when I return, and pretty Jack always hops before me."

"That is more than you do, Mark," said his Mamma; "if you had either walked or hopped straightforwards home this morning, there would have been no quarrel with Harry Holmes."

"Somebody had made that young gentleman very angry, I am sure," said Fanny, "because he generally strokes and kisses my pretty jack; but this morning he never looked at him."

"Your quarrel, then, it seems," said Mrs. Merton to her son, "was injurious to more friendships than one. The poor bird suffered as well as you—he lost his morning stroke and kiss, and you lost your temper, and gained nothing for it but the danger of a good beating."

This silenced Mark; and Mrs. Merton said to Fanny, "You are quite welcome to the shawl. I sent it, because I thought you deserved as well as needed it. Your friendship for your lively bird is a reproof to many young persons who are at variance, and a lesson to all persons to be attached to each other."

"That is nothing, ma'am," said Fanny, "to the pretty creature's friendship for me. It will never leave me now: when I go to school, it will go, too, whatever weather it is; and, if mistress won't let it stay in the house, because it makes a noise, it sits outside the window, and watches till school is over, and then jumps upon my shoulder, as you see it now."

Fanny now left the room with her bird, and Mrs. Merton had a fine opportunity of convincing her son that friendship can exist, not only among poor children, but between a poor child and a jackdaw. "I have generally found," said Mrs. Merton, "that children most fond, in early life, of dumb creatures, are most faithful ever afterwards to their friends, and most given always to friendly feelings and actions."

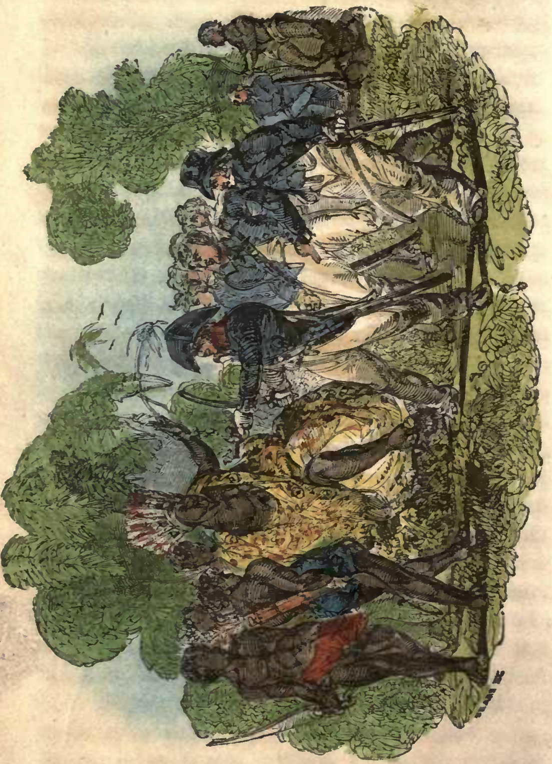
"But," said Mark, "I would have been as much a friend to the bird as Fanny is, and then would not the bird have been as fond of me as it is of her?

"Mark," said Mrs. Merton, "friendship is not to be purchased with money; this is another proof that it may exist among the poor, and among poor children."

"If the bird had known nothing of the money, then, Mamma," said Mark, "do you think it would have been contented to come here, and stay with me?"

"No," answered Mrs. M., "certainly not; friendship is an attachment confined to a few persons, and generally lasts through life: where it begins, it generally proceeds and ends, and when it commences earliest, it generally lasts longest."

A public meeting was to be held in the town the same evening, to petition Government to set the slaves of the West Indies at liberty, or, rather, to make them free labourers, like the working people of this and other lands. Mark was very eager to go before; but, after this conversation, he said that he looked forward to the speeches with the greatest anxiety and interest. "Ah, Mark," said his Mother, "you must not judge of mankind generally, by the dreadful examples you will hear mentioned to-night. We have been talking of friendship, and looking at a poor bird and a little school-girl as amiable patterns of it, but this evening you will no doubt hear of men who, because they are rich and powerful, and wish to be more so, worry their helpless fellow men like so many beasts. While slaves are willing



to work, they are treated like beasts of burden; and the moment they resist, they are hunted down like beasts of prey."

The proceedings of the Slave Meeting were remarkably interesting to the people of this retired and friendly town. About the middle of them, an incident occurred which connects the meeting with this tale, and for the sake of which it is introduced. One of the chief speakers related an account of an African Prince, living near the slave coast, who was ruling his people with great kindness, and esteemed by them in a very high degree. He wished them to become industrious, and accepted a proposal from the Commander of an European vessel off the coast, to send some of his men to teach them the arts of civilization. A day was appointed for the treaty to be concluded, and the Prince took his station under a spreading tree to receive his new friends. The Commander approached, at the head of his crew, and the Prince was rising from his seat to receive him; when, suddenly, the cruel Captain drew his sword, took a pistol from his pocket, and, presenting them to the Prince, convinced him that he and the whole tribe of his people were slaves. Some who attempted to resist, were slain; and the rest were conveyed on board three vessels lying off the coast to receive them.

The feeling manner in which the anecdote was related, obtained great applause for the speaker; and while all hands were clapping, Fanny's jackdaw, that had gone with her, jumped from her arm, and placed itself on the speaker's shoulder, looking at him, and cawing, and even dancing, with joy, as though it were sensible that the speaker was the friend of the feeble and helpless.

We must now return to the movements of Mark Merton. The next day, being a half-holyday, he was to go with his father to Sandgate, where Mr. Merton had two houses under repair for summer lodges. As they entered that neat retired watering-place, Mr. Merton was told that one of the boys at work at his houses had fallen from a ladder, and broken his thigh. "Where have they taken the poor fellow?" said Mr. Merton; and, upon being told, he immediately drove to the place, and found that the fractured bones had been set, but the boy was in a high fever, and watched by another boy, about the same age.

"You must return to your work, as the repairs are in haste," said Mr. Merton. "I will leave my son here, till we can get a person to watch poor Frank."

"If it would please you, sir," said the boy, I should be glad to stay—not from the work, sir, for I don't want to be idle, but to watch Frank, for he is very bad, and says he should be nappy if I could stop with him till he dies. He would do so for me, sir, if I was bad."

This was said with such an honest feeling, that Mr. Merton observed, he would go to the works, and see if the lad could be spared for a day or two. "Till Frank is out of all danger, and proper to be left alone, or with a stranger, I hope, sir," said the boy.

As Mr. M. and Mark left the house, Mark seemed remarkably thoughtful; but his Father imputed it to his seeing the poor injured boy, and said nothing immediately about it. He was most intent upon relieving the poor fellow who had been injured in his service, as soon as possible. He saw his danger, and apprehended that he might soon be worse; and therefore resolved that his young friend should not be taken from him. "I have often wondered," he said, as they walked along, "at persons supposing that the poor can never be faithful friends to each other! Here are two poor boys, coming from the same place, perhaps, as well as working at the same labour, who seem as closely attached to each other as Fanny Furley and her jackdaw."

"I don't wonder at it," said Mark, bursting into tears. "Why, what is the matter?" said his Father; "the boy is very ill, 'tis true, and we ought to feel for him; but you seem to weep as though he was your particular friend, and as if you were his."

Mark now confessed an affair that his Father never heard of before. "You remember, Papa," said he, "our being here last autumn. While you were at the houses, seeing that all was right after the lodgers had left, I went to bathe above the town, and these two boys had just come out of the water and dressed themselves. In trying to swim, I got out of my depth; and the tide, going out, was likely to drive me away. I cried out, and the boy that watches Frank ran in, and stood over his head in water, and stopped me from being driven farther: he then pushed me on to the shore till I was able to get out myself. Frank, who stood in the water ready to help me, then missed Peter, and cried out, "He will be lost! He then rushed in after him; and, when he had dived about for some minutes, brought him on his back to land, where he brought him to life again, for, to all appearance, he was quite dead."

"I don't wonder myself, now," said Mr. Merton, "at the friendship of these two boys. Frank, it seems, then, saved the life of Peter; and Peter now wishes to save Frank's life. I saw that Peter looked very earnestly at you, as I was talking to Frank: I suppose he knew you again; but, as I was there, the considerate boy did not like to speak to you. You must do something for both the boys."

"I gave them all the money I had then," said Mark; "shall I do so again now?" Without waiting for an answer, he ran back, and put into Peter's hand the purse that he had offered Fanny for her jackdaw. In doing so, he said, "You remember me, and I remember you: never shall either of you want while Mark Merton has a purse or a penny."

As soon as Mr. Merton could leave the men, he said, "Now I must go, and see that poor Frank is taken proper care of."—"Pray, Sir," said one of them, as he was going, "would you be so good as to take this trifle, that we have collected for the poor boy's help? He has neither father nor mother, nor any friend to take care of him, but Peter; and as he can earn nothing for weeks to come, if ever again, we have collected this for him, and will try and do the same next week."

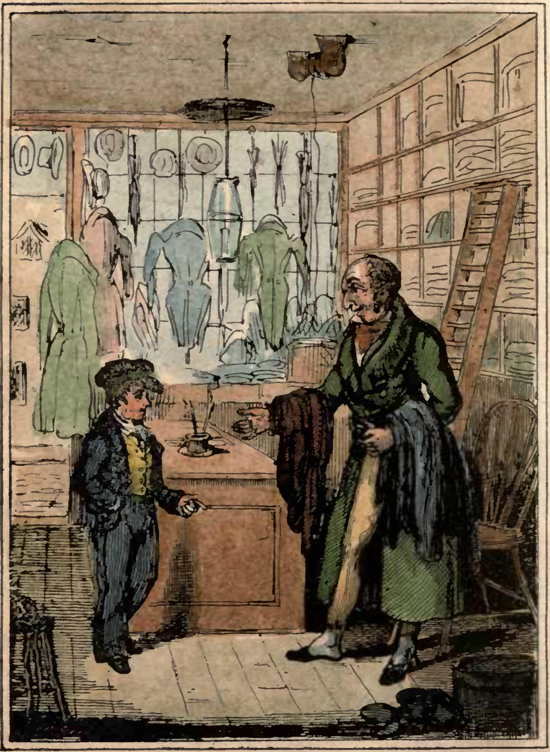
"Here are eight shillings," said Mr. Merton: "I will double it, and pay the doctor's bill; then the whole sixteen shillings a week can go to make the poor lad as comfortable as he can be made."

When Mr. Merton reached the room, Mark was gone out to fetch something nourishing. Mr. M.

asked Peter if he had a purse that would hold money? "Yes, Sir," said he; "but I don't think I ought to keep it, and I won't keep it till you tell me," laying it down upon the bed. "This is Mark's purse," said Mr. Merton; "hold it up, and open it, Peter."—"I have counted the money in it," said the boy. "that all may be fair, and there be as much as eight shillings."—"Well, then," said Mr. Merton, "we will try and double it," dropping in eight shillings more: "and now we will try and treble it"—adding another eight shillings to the stock. "Can you be trusted with so much money at once, Peter?" asked Mr. Merton. "I'll give an account of every farthing," said Peter; "and it shall go to Frank's use, and I will support myself how I can."

"No, you sha'nt," said Frank, faintly. Every thing you buy for me, you shall have a part of, except the physic."—"That I shall buy," said Mr. Merton; "give yourselves no concern about the doctor, except to have him here as often as you please, and have whatever is necessary for Frank's recovery."—"I shall never recover," said Frank, scarcely loud enough to be heard; "but what signifies that? Frank will die, blessing all his friends."

"I hear that some of us," said Mr. Merton. "would have died, if it had not been for you."—



The Jew returning the clothes.

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" He almost lost his life in saving Master Mark," said Frank. " And you almost lost your life in saving me," said Peter. " I shall quite lose my life now," answered Frank; but I know that every one of you would save it, if you could."

Mark had returned during this conversation, and heard it, weeping, behind the door. When he had recovered himself, he said, " Papa, I met the doctor, as I was coming along, and he asked me to bring this money back, and to say that he won't have it; he says, Frank is a fatherless and motherless boy, and he shan't receive a shilling for setting a poor orphan's bones." It then came out, that Peter had sent a woman, privately, to sell his best clothes, and take the money to the doctor, to pay for setting poor Frank's thigh. The woman had left the money at the doctor's house, while he was from home; and when he returned, he resolved upon sending it back. Mr. Merton took up the money, and said to Mark, " Take it immediately, and this half-crown with it; request the salesman to return the clothes, and to receive the half-crown for his trouble." Mark ran with all his speed, and in five minutes was back with Peter's clothes.

Poor Frank became worse the following day, and in four days after died. His sufferings were very great, but were borne with even greater patience. Peter was so devoted to his comfort, that he never once left him; and, after his death, insisted upon helping to make his coffin and dig his grave. In a delirium that Frank had the night before his death, he said something about pretty jack, and hoped he was safe, and did no mischief. This came to Mark's ears, and the next time he went to Sandgate, he asked Peter if he knew what Frank could mean.

"Let me see," said Peter, "I think I can remember something about it. Frank, I believe, had a very favourite jackdaw, that lived with him some time; but he was obliged to go about to different places to work, and could not take care of it as he wished to do. It would have broken his heart to kill it, and sell it he never could; so he asked a good man that he knew, somewhere in the marshes,—a blacksmith, I believe—to take it to his house and keep it safe. I wonder whether it be alive. Frank spoke of it several times when he was well, and while he lay bad he would talk of it for an hour together."

"The pretty bird was alive and hearty this morning," said Mark. "I saw it go from the blacksmith's house to school with his daughter, as it does, I find, every morning and every afternoon."

"To school!" said Peter. "Master Mark,

you are now joking: I used to like a joke with poor Frank when he was alive and well; but I can't relish joking now he is under ground."

Mark then told him what he meant, and all he knew of the jackdaw, speaking much in praise of Fanny's affection for it. "Frank himself," said he, "could not love the pretty creature more than she does."

"If I live," said Peter, "I'll see the bird the first leisure day I can get to go into the marshes, for Frank's sake. I want to go to Dymchurch as soon as I can, and that is for Frank's sake, too," he said with a deep sigh.

"Perhaps it is for something that I can do for you," said Mark; "if so, tell me what you want, and, if my father will let me, I will do it as we go home to-night."

"I'll send a little parcel and a message, if you will be pleased to leave it at Ellis's, the carpenter," said Peter.

Mark cheerfully consented, and before he left Sandgate, Peter brought him a little packet, and requested him to give it to Ellis, and ask him when the job would be done? as then Peter would go over to take the other half, and bring the job away. Mark wrote the message down, that he might not forget a single word.

As he returned to Romney with his father, Mark told him what he had undertaken to do. "That," said his father, "is another proof of Peter's lasting friendship for Frank. I have no doubt Ellis is making a grave-rail for the poor boy, and this money is half the payment of it. Untie the packet, and if it is as I suspect, we must make up the money, and send Peter's half back by the carrier, with the answer when the rail will be done."

They untied the packet, and found in it seventeen shillings, and a paper written as follows:—

"To the memory of as good a boy as ever died or lived. He fell from a ladder, August 21, 1822, and died six days afterwards. Aged 12 years."

On the other side of the paper were the following lines, for the reverse of the rail:—

"A richer boy may soon be found,
Than he who lies beneath this ground;
But not a warmer, worthier friend,
Could Heaven to Peter Blewit lend."

"It is as I thought," said Mr. Merton. "I will save the worthy boy his seventeen shillings, by telling Ellis to put the whole expense of the rail to my account. This was done, and Ellis promised to send back the money and message to Peter the next morning."

Upon reaching home, Mark was delighted, and his father was scarcely less delighted, to relate what they had seen and heard. Mrs. Merton agreed with them to send for Fanny, to know from her where she had the bird, and what her father knew of the boy from whom he received it. She told them that her father took charge of it at the request of a poor boy, who would receive no money for it; and that when he left it, he was in as much distress as though he was parting with a friend.

"And could you part with it, if the boy wished for it again?" said Mrs. Merton, to Fanny. The poor girl knew that Mr. Merton and Mark had been that day to Sandgate, and, fearful they had brought some message about the bird, she burst into tears, and said, "I think I could sooner die than be separated from it."

"But suppose Mr. Merton and I wished the pretty bird to live with us?" said Mrs. M. "We should be sure to take care of it, and you might often pay it a visit, and that might often pay a visit to you." While Mrs. Merton was saying this, Fanny gave the bird one of her significant looks, and the pretty creature was upon her shoulder, and its beak to her lips, in a moment. "I should not so much mind your having my little Jack," said Fanny, "if you were always in Romney; but you often go to Sandgate for weeks together, and I am told you are going to live there entirely."

This was the case: Mr. Merton and his family were to remove in a few weeks, finding Romney unfavourable to their health. "We are certainly going there," said Mrs. Merton, "and I believe little Jack must go with us. Your Father will not refuse our request; and, you know, the bird belongs to him." "But he gave it to me—indeed he did," said Fanny. "Well, suppose he did," said Mark, "you can't refuse to let Mamma have it, after she has given you so many good things." The poor girl was now in the deepest distress; which Mrs. Merton relieved, by saying, "I promise one thing,—that, if the bird lives with us, you shall live with us, too; if your Father wont let you go, we won't take care of his bird."

"He will, he will let me go!" said Fanny, eagerly; and the bird, which had looked depressed when she wept, now it saw her cheerful, jumped and flew about, partaking of her joy. "We shall know his mind to-morrow," said Mrs. Merton, "and we know yours already; so, for the present, you and your sweet friend may get your supper in the kitchen, and depart to your home."

The next morning Mrs. Merton called on Fanny's Mother, to settle the matter of the girl becoming a servant in her family. "My daughter, Madam," said the Mother, "has had no sleep all night, with the thought of going to Sandgate. She wishes to live with you, and, so far, she is happy; but she is afraid her little Jack will find out his old master—I mean, the young boy that had him first, and this makes her very uncomfortable."

"Dry up her tears, and tell her to sleep in peace," said Mrs. Merton; "the poor boy is dead. The bird may perhaps visit his grave, and settle a short time on his grave-rail; but this may never be the case but in Fanny's company."

The family, with Fanny and her bird, are now at Sandgate; and the visit to Frank's grave, in a neighbouring parish church-yard, is made about once a week.

THE END.

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