

to receive mercy and kindness only on the condition of your practising the same.

I advise you to ask Betty to pardon your impertinence; till you do so, she shall not assist you; you would find yourself very helpless without the assistance of men and women—unable to cook your meat, bake your bread, wash your clothes, or even put them on—such a helpless creature is a child—I know what you are, you perceive.

Mary submitted—and in future after she said her prayers, remembered that she was to endeavour to curb her temper.

CHAP. XIII.

Employment—Idleness produces Misery—The Cultivation of the Fancy raises us above the Vulgar, extends our Happiness, and leads to Virtue.

ONE afternoon, Mrs. Mason gave the children leave to amuse themselves; but a kind of listlessness hung over them, and at a loss what to do, they seemed fatigued with doing nothing. They eat cakes though they had just dined, and did many foolish things merely because they were idle. Their friend seeing that they were irresolute, and could not fix on any employment, requested Caroline to assist her to make some clothes, that a poor woman was in want of, and while we are at work, she added, Mary will read us an entertaining tale, which I will point out.

The tale interested the children, who cheerfully attended, and after it was finished, Mrs. Mason told them, that as she had some letters to write, she could not take her accustomed walk; but that she would allow them to represent her, and act for once like women. They received their commission, it was to take the clothes to the poor woman, whom they were intended for; learn her present wants; exercise their own judgment with respect to the immediate relief she stood in need of, and act accordingly.

They returned home delighted, eager to tell what they had done, and how thankful, and happy they had left the poor woman.

Observe now, said Mrs. Mason, the advantages arising from employment; three hours ago, you were uncomfortable, without being sensible of the cause, and knew not what to do with yourselves. Nay, you actually committed a sin; for you devoured cakes without feel-

ing hunger, merely to kill time, whilst many poor people have not the means of satisfying their natural wants. When I desired you to read to me you were amused; and now you have been useful you are delighted. Recollect this in future when you are at a loss what to do with yourselves—and remember that idleness must always be intolerable, because it is only an irksome consciousness of existence.

Every gift of Heaven is lent to us for our improvement; fancy is one of the first of the inferior ones; in cultivating it, we acquire what is called taste, or a relish for particular employments, which occupy our leisure hours, and raise us above the vulgar in our conversation. Those who have not any taste talk always of their own affairs or of their neighbours; every trivial matter that occurs within their knowledge they canvass and conjecture about—not so much out of ill-nature as idleness: just as you eat the cakes with-

out the impulse of hunger. In the same style people talk of eating and dress, and long for their meals merely to divide the day, because the intermediate time is not employed in a more interesting manner. Every new branch of taste that we cultivate, affords us a refuge from idleness, a fortress in which we may resist the assaults of vice; and the more noble our employments, the more exalted will our minds become.

Music, drawing, works of usefulness and fancy, all amuse and refine the mind, sharpen the ingenuity; and form, insensibly, the dawning judgment.—As the judgment gains strength, so do the passions also; we have actions to weigh, and need that taste in conduct, that delicate sense of propriety, which gives grace to virtue. The highest branch of solitary amusement is reading; but even in the choice of books the fancy is first employed; for in reading, the heart is touched, till
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its feelings are examined by the understanding, and the ripenings of reason regulate the imagination. This is the work of years, and the most important of all employments. When life advances, if the heart has been capable of receiving early impressions, and the head of reasoning and retaining the conclusions which were drawn from them; we have acquired a stock of knowledge, a gold mine which we can occasionally recur to, independent of outward circumstances.

The supreme Being has every thing in himself; we proceed from Him, and our knowledge and affections must return to Him for employment suited to them. And those who most resemble Him ought, next to Him, to be the objects of our love; and the beings whom we should try to associate with, that we may receive an inferior degree of satisfaction from their society.—But be assured our chief comfort must ever arise from
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the mind's reviewing its own operations—and the whispers of an approving conscience, to convince us that life has not slipped away unemployed.

CHAP. XIV.

Innocent Amusements.—Description of a Welsh Castle.—History of a Welsh Harper.—A tyrannical Landlord.—Family Pride.

AS it was now harvest time, the new scene, and the fine weather delighted the children, who ran continually out to view the reapers. Indeed every thing seemed to wear a face of festivity, and the ripe corn bent under its own weight, or, more erect, shewed the laughing appearance of plenty.

Mrs. Mason always allowing the gleaners to have a sufficient quantity,
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a great number of poor came to gather a little harvest; and she was pleased to see the feeble hands of childhood and age, collecting the scattered ears.

Honest Jack came with his family; and when the labours of the day were over, would play on a fiddle, that frequently had but three strings. But it served to set the feet in motion, and the lads and lasses dancing on the green sod, suffered every care to sleep.

An old Welsh harper generally came to the house about this time of the year, and staid a month or more; for Mrs. Mason was particularly fond of this instrument, and interested in the fate of the player; as is almost always the case, when we have rescued a person out of any distress.

She informed the children, that once travelling through Wales, her carriage was overturned near the ruins
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