

The Broken Vase, and Other Stories, by Anonymous

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THE BROKEN VASE

and

OTHER STORIES

for

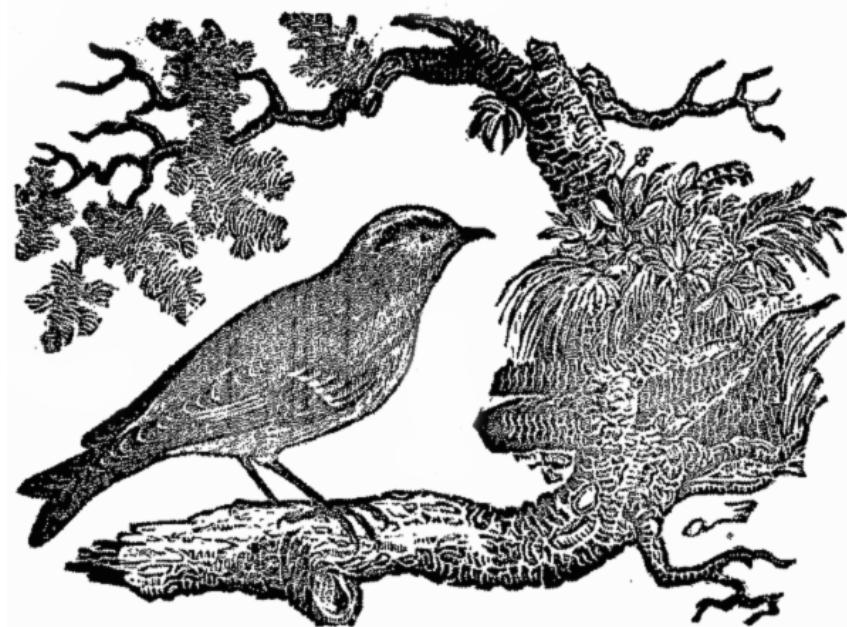
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Compiled by a Teacher.

FITCHBURG:

PUBLISHED BY S. and C. SHEPLEY.

1847.



WM. J. MERRIAM, PRINTER, FITCHBURG.

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THE BROKEN VASE.

"Don't shake the table so, Frank," said Mrs. Mervyn to her little son, a pretty blue-eyed boy, about six years old, who was building houses of small blocks on the same table where she was arranging flowers in a very beautiful China Vase. Little Frank rose and removed his blocks to another table, where he could build and throw down his castles without disturbing any one. Mrs. Mervyn was pleased with his ready obedience, and gave him a book of colored pictures to look at, while she continued to arrange her flowers. A few moments after, she was called out of the room, but before she went, she cautioned Frank not to touch the vase, and told him to remain where he was until she returned. The little boy promised, and continued for some time busily engaged with his blocks and pictures; but at length, growing tired of his playthings, he threw them down, and walked to the open window. It was a lovely afternoon; the sun was shining bright, and the birds were singing gaily in the trees. He thought how delightful it would be to go out in the garden and chase butterflies, or to sail his little boat in the pond, and he longed for his mother to return; but still she came not, and the little boy wandered listlessly round the room in search of amusement. He took up his picture-book, and turned over a few leaves; but he thought of his rabbits, and threw it down. He remembered he had not fed, or even seen the little animals that whole day; so he went to the door, and listened for the sound of his mother's footsteps,--but no--all was still. He walked again to the window; after a few moments, he saw a beautiful butterfly winging its way towards him; it alighted on a lovely rose, within a few feet of the window. In an instant, Frank forgot his mother's commands. He turned to seize his straw hat that lay on the table; but, in his eagerness, his arm brushed past the vase, and it fell to the floor! Poor Frank stood speechless with fright,--there lay his mother's elegant vase, that she so much valued as a present from her mother! The butterfly, the innocent cause of all this mischief, was forgotten. At this moment, Mrs. Mervyn entered the room.

She instantly saw what had happened, for Frank still retained his hat. "My vase,—my poor vase!" she exclaimed, the tears starting to her eyes, as she knelt to gather up the fragments. "It was not me, mother," stammered Frank; "It must have been pussy." Mrs. Mervyn looked up at her little son,—he trembled violently, and the blood mounted to his forehead. "Is this true, Frank?" she asked. He made no answer, and as a servant entered at that moment to assist Mrs. Mervyn, he ran out of the room. His mother observed him, but, preferring that he would confess his fault, allowed him to depart unnoticed.

In an unfrequented corner of the garden, was an old summer-house, falling to decay. Thither Frank bent his steps; it was a favorite spot of his, for it was cool and shady. The sides were covered with vines, in all their native luxuriance, and the old gardener, knowing that his little master loved this spot, had trained them over the broken windows, and placed many little conveniences inside for him. It was quiet and still, for no sound could be heard save the hum of insects, and now and then the note of a bird.

Frank, hurried along the gravel walk, and, pushing aside the overhanging vines at the entrance, threw himself on a low seat, and, covering his face with his hands, burst into tears. He wept bitterly. He thought of nothing but that he had told a lie! and to his dear, kind mother. She would have forgiven him for breaking the vase, for that was an accident. But what would she say, when she knew that he had told a falsehood to conceal his fault? Why did he not confess it at once? For a long time he sobbed and wept piteously,—but after a while a sweet calm stole over him, only broken now and then by short convulsive sobs, and then gentle "sleep slid into his soul," and, for a moment, his sorrows were forgotten. And then he dreamed. He thought he was again weeping in the old summer-house, and then the same gentle calm came over him. He continued for a long time in this state, when he saw a shadowy being approaching him. As she came nearer, her figure became more distinct, and he saw that she looked very

mournful, and she wore a band round her head, and on this was embroidered her name, *Reflection*. As she approached him, the boy leaned his head on his folded arms, and fell into a deep reverie. But still he thought he saw her distinctly in his mind's eye, and he saw she was followed by a shadowy train, so shadowy that it seemed if he breathed on them they would melt away. The foremost gradually grew more defined, and he saw her name was *Memory*. She hovered over him, and he *felt* her presence, though he could see her no longer. She assisted *Reflection* in recalling to his mind the fault that he had committed. While *Reflection* bade him meditate upon it, *Memory* whispered to him of his mother,--how kind she had always been,--how much she loved him,--how she had taught him to hate a falsehood,--how she had watched over him when an infant, and prayed for him! Again he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh! how sorry, how sorry I am!" As he spoke, he thought he saw at his feet a pale, sorrowful looking spirit, with eyes tearful as his own. On her forehead was stamped *Repentance*.--She did not try to soothe him; but when *Memory* recalled his fault, she wept with him, and besought him to return to his mother, and tell her the whole truth. But then *Reflection* whispered, "Will not thy mother be angry, instead of grieved, when she knows you have told a cowardly falsehood?" And then, *Fear*, (another of *Reflection's* train) crept into the boy's heart, and whispered, "Yes, yes,"--and then she pictured to him his mother frowning upon him,--she who had never looked upon him but with kindness and love, and he shrank from acknowledging the truth. *Repentance* began to melt into mist, and *Deceit* came to the assistance of *Fear*, and bade him still deny the accident, while *Fear* told him he would be punished, if he avowed it,--and though *Memory* recalled to him his mother's goodness again and again, he was still under the dominion of *Fear*, and *Repentance* had almost vanished. *Deceit* still whispered him to deceive, and *Fear* seconded her, and spoke of punishment. But Frank's heart could not harbor *Deceit*, and he recalled *Repentance* to his bosom. At the re-appearance of this good spirit, *Deceit* fled, and the little boy grieved that he had suffered her to remain,

and rebuked *Reflection* for introducing this, her wicked follower. *Repentance* still besought him to look upon *Truth*, the beautiful spirit of *Truth*, and bade him take *Courage*, and drive *Fear* from his heart; for, said she, "*Fear* and *Deceit* are companions, but *Courage* is the friend of *Truth*." The boy smiled, and *Fear*, feeling that her influence was fast diminishing, was on the point of giving him another warning, when Frank felt the approach of another spirit, and heard her say, in a low tone, "*Repent, and thou shall be forgiven.*" *Fear* instantly vanished, and *Courage* usurped her place, and whispered *Hope!* Then he thought that *Repentance* took him by the hand and led him to the feet of *Truth*. He knelt and kissed the hem of her spotless garment, and looked up in her glorious face. She smiled upon him and he felt happy. Then *Truth* and *Repentance* took him by the hand and led him to his mother, who pressed him to her bosom and forgave him,--and, filled with a sense of unspeakable happiness, he awoke! He started to his feet, and was about to leave the summer-house to seek his mother, but, turning round, he saw Mrs. Mervyn standing in the same place he had fancied he had seen the beautiful spirit of *Truth*. He had been absent so long she had come to seek him, and thinking he might have gone to his favorite retreat, she had bent her steps thither, and there she found him, his head resting on his folded arms, in deep sleep. She saw his cheeks were wet with tears, and she threw herself down beside him and listened to his quiet breathing, only now and then broken by a convulsive sob. She lay there for some time, but at length finding that he was awakening, she arose and stood at a short distance, wishing to see what he would do. But *Fear* had entirely vanished from the heart of little Frank, and he sprung forward, and, throwing himself in his mother's arms, begged to be forgiven, Mrs. Mervyn pressed him to her bosom and kissed his pale cheek; then, taking him on her knee, she told him how grieved she had been to find her little boy could deceive her. The tears again started to poor Frank's eyes, and, leaning his head on her shoulder, he told her all,--how he had broken the vase, and how very, very sorry he was that he attempted to conceal it; and

then he related his dream and all the doubts and fears *Reflection* gave rise to; he dwelt long on the beautiful appearance of the spirit of *Truth*; her glorious countenance had made a deep impression on his mind. His mother smiled, and, kissing him tenderly, bade him always to cherish *Truth*. She then explained to him his dream, and talked gently and soothingly to him until long after the sun went down, but the shades of evening beginning to gather round, soon warned them of the lateness of the hour. She then rose, and led her little repentant and now happy boy into the house.



LITTLE BERTRAM.

Bertram, the young son of an Anglo-Norman baron, had obtained leave to pass a summer's day in the woods with Hubert, the forester. Early in the morning he came to summon the young lord; and they left the castle whilst the dew-drops were yet standing on leaf and flower, and all nature, renovated by the cool repose of the night, looked joyous and young.

Merrily rang the woods with their own sylvan minstrelsy; merrily the bright sunbeams danced on the green-sward wherever they could find entrance; and not less merrily our friends pursued their sports, till fatigue converted pleasure into toil, and the noontide hour invited to rest and food.

Under the branches of a solitary oak, round which the other trees of the forest, receding, left an irregular and spacious glade, the child and his attendant took their welcome meal. The south-western breeze, which the whole day had blown so cheerily, still refreshed them as they reclined under the venerable tree, and well nigh soothed them to sleep by its soft, rustling sound amongst the branches. The stout forester at last, shaking off the inclination to slumber, his dogs having arrived, prepared for the chase; but noticing the still pale and tired look of the boy, he pointed to a hermitage not far distant from the spot where they had dined, and bade him rest another hour within its safe retreat: ere long he would return and conduct him home. Young Bertram yielded to his counsel; and, approaching the rustic cell, seated himself at its entrance; and Hubert, calling to his dogs, all but one old faithful hound, whom he left to guard the child, withdrew. A little while his steps were heard, crushing the last year's leaves; a little longer his voice might be distinguished speaking cheerily to his dogs; but soon all trace of him was lost, and the child remained alone. The hermitage was a small, rude building, surmounted by a cross, which showed that it had been devised for holy retirement; but at

this time it had no occupant, and contained nothing but dried leaves and moss.

The boy, as before said, seated himself upon the ground at the entrance of the cell, not feeling now disposed to sleep; and old Lion lay stretched before him, his nose resting between his fore-paws, and evermore looking with his bright eyes into young Bertram's face. Thus these two remained in the heart of the wild forest, and sole tenants of the deserted hermitage.

The summer gale waxed louder and stronger; and the boy, as he listened to its varied sounds, raised his eyes to the tops of the tall trees, where it played freely amongst the branches. Backwards and forwards they waved in the blast; and as if agitated by conflicting passions, they sometimes bent their stately heads, and each seemed to communicate to his neighbor some tale of wo. Sometimes in wailing tones they would seem to lament and sob, and then, as if frenzied with rage, they wildly tossed their branches in the air, and made the forest resound with their fierce complaints.

Long young Bertram gazed and listened. At length, wearied with the continued struggle, he averted his eyes, and tried to converse with old Lion; but there was fascination in the sound; again he gazed upward, and again sat fixed in the contemplation of the same wild tumult.

Time passed--hours passed--and Hubert returned not. Was he faithless? or had some dire mischance detained him from his youthful charge? Who can say? The sad presaging notes among the trees--their mysterious gestures seemed to speak of treachery or wo. The sun at last went down, and with it the briskness of the gale. A soft, murmuring breeze crept through the quivering foliage, lulling all things to meek and trustful repose.

The child turned into the cell, and stretching himself on its mossy floor, with Lion by his side, fell into a dreamy sleep.

Bertram retained a consciousness of his own position; knew that he was resting in the hermitage, but he seemed still to listen to the

roar of the wind amongst the tall trees; and opening (as he thought) his eyes, he perceived the figure of a youth, who, although some years older, bore a strong resemblance to himself. The youth stood in the court-yard of his own father's castle, and with the assistance of a page, was buckling on his armor. A cross-bow was lying on the ground; it seemed to have been carelessly thrown aside. The child viewed the visionary form with intense interest, for he knew it was himself. "Speak to him," said a voice close to his elbow, but from whom it proceeded he could not tell: "question him." The child obeyed: "What do you? where go you?" he inquired. The youth replied, "I prepare for my departure; I am going to the Holy Land." Bertram felt pleased to hear him say so, and attentively watched his proceedings, till the whole scene faded gradually away, and he slept, or seemed to sleep, again.

Once more he thought that sleep had left his eyes; they rested on a belted knight, whose raised visor disclosed the same features that the boy had seen before--the same, and not the same. The complexion was richer and more manly, but with the bloom of youth had vanished its ingenuous innocence; the glance of the eye was brighter, but it was hard and reckless. Bertram gazed earnestly on the figure now before him; for he believed it to be the same whom he had spoken to before, and he felt that it was himself. As he gazed he thought that he could dimly descry other forms--his parents, most clearly that of his mother, and others whom he did not know. There were the aged and the young, the gray haired man, and the fair young girl; but all, all looked sorrowful, and some wrung their hands and wept. He almost fancied, as he considered the countenance of the knight, that its expression varied. A cloud of grief or remorse passed over it; but it did pass, and the scornful laugh of the eye succeeded. Again, urged by the invisible prompter, the child falteringly pronounced the words, "Are you going to the Holy Land?" A faint blush seemed to suffuse the cheek of the young knight; his eye was slightly troubled; but he replied with readiness, "Not yet--not yet: this is a busy time; I shall go when

I have leisure." The child sighed as he turned away his head, resolved to look no more.

He slept; but once again imagining himself to be awake, he looked into a room--what room he knew not. The floor was strewed with papers of various sorts, letters and memorials. Against the wall hung a suit of armor. At a table on which were writing materials, sat a personage apparently of high degree; he with thoughtful look and finger on his brow, dictated to a secretary who was placed at the opposite side of the table. The eyes of the nobleman, if such were his rank, had lost much of their vivacity; there was a contraction of the brow, a compression of the lip, a care-worn thinness of the cheek; but still the child thought that he resembled those who had gone before. The lattice of the window was thrown open, and seemed to admit a view of the scenery beyond; he could perceive the pinnacles of a stately cathedral, and not far distant from them the battlements of a kingly palace. The nobleman cast, from time to time, anxious and impatient looks towards the latter; and there seemed to be a constant coming and going of messengers between his private apartments and the court. But the other object, the beautiful cathedral, he could not see; for the high back of his richly carved chair was turned towards it. With fearful interest young Bertram considered the objects now presented to his view. "Speak," said the voice; but he spoke not. "Speak," was repeated, "*he must reply.*"

Once more the boy put this simple question, "Are you going to the Holy Land?" At the clear, young voice, the statesman seemed to start, but not to comprehend the meaning of the words. "Are you going to the Holy Land,?" again inquired the boy. "Folly! the fashion of crusades has passed away:" such was the reply which Bertram seemed to hear. Sorely perplexed, he gladly saw the unpleasant vision melt away.

He wished to view no more; but he had no power to control his dreamy phantasy. What saw he now? There was the same figure,

habited in the same rich dress, but seated on a stone bench in front of some monastic building.

His cheek was paler--his eye even more sunk than when the child had seen him last. The gloomy, downcast eye spoke more of sullenness than submission, and was still fixed upon the coronet and mace, which lay on the ground before him. A religious man read aloud from some holy book; but his words were, to all appearance, unheeded. The phantom seemed not to listen. Presently voices from the church were heard, rising in sweet and holy chant. The priest departed to join in the sacred service; and the penitent, if penitent he were, remained alone.

And now spoke the child: "Shall you go to the Holy Land?" With a gesture of impatience the vision waved his hand, then with a sigh replied, "Alas! it is now too late."

"Then let me dream no more!" Thus murmured in troubled sleep young Bertram; but the dawn was approaching, and fairy visions came to bless his leafy couch. The eager stripling--the belted knight--the ambitious, as well as the degraded statesman--had each appeared and vanished. Now, in their place, Bertram beheld a man advanced in years, who, bearing some resemblance to those whom he before had seen, yet differed from them all. The hand of time had laid its withering touch on every feature; it had blanched the hair, and robbed the form of every youthful grace. The body, once so vigorous and erect, was bending towards its kindred dust; and the expression of the eye, how changed! how chastened! No longer it rested on the vain emblems of earthly pride still scattered round; but on the lowly and the destitute, whose shadowy forms hovered near, it beamed with love and holy charity; and brightened with more than youthful ardor whenever and anon the aged pilgrim--for such he seemed to be--looked heavenward.

Pleased with the vision, the child dwelt on each particular with reposeful and contented feelings. He could distinguish the interior of a stately hall, from whence proceeded, as he thought, strains of minstrelsy. Banners waved high over the heads of brave knights

and noble dames, and the "feast was eating merrilie." But the pilgrim, with cross on shoulder, and staff in hand, careful for nothing but one sacred book, which was ever pressed closely to his heart, turned his back on the gay revellers, and stood as one prepared for instant travel to some far distant land.

Unbidden, the child with hopeful tone renewed his oft-repeated question, "Go you to the Holy Land?" "Ay, by God's grace," was the prompt and glad reply; but scarcely had it fallen on the pleased ear of the listening boy, when the vision passed away.

Again Bertram slept, and again in sleep he looked into the small, but rich apartment which had once before been pictured in his dreams.

There stood the table, with its fringed and velvet covering; but no one was now seated at it. The rich chair was there, with its high carved back, but there was none to fill it. The armor on the wall was gone, and the bell of the church tolled a solemn knell. As Bertram listened intently to the heavy sound, others not less mournful fell upon his ear; mournful but not discordant voices were heard to lament over some departure; they were the voices of the poor and needy.

But all besides was bright and fair. The boy, as he looked upwards, thought that the pure blue of the summer sky was purer and more lovely than he had ever seen it. The sun poured its cheerful rays through the lattice, and lighted up the deserted room; they fell upon an open volume, which seemed to have dropped recently from some hand. Bertram gazed steadfastly on its pages; he could not read what thereon was written, but on each he plainly perceived the impression of a cross; and as he gazed, he heard a voice close to him whisper, "He is gone to the Holy Land."

The first rays of the sun were slanting on the forest glade. The tiny throats of innumerable birds were swelling with delight as they poured forth their earliest, happiest songs. The bees were up and abroad, intent upon providing for future want; whilst the butterfly,

careless of all but present enjoyment, flitted from flower to flower, tasting the sweets of all, but constant to none. Bertram, too, was awake, and, leaving the hermitage, looked out into the gay, green wood. By his side, stood Lion, who, having shaken himself, fixed an inquiring eye on his young lord, as if to say, "What next?" The spirit of the boy was troubled, and his heart oppressed by the visions of the night; and falling on his knees, he with clasped hands repeated aloud the simple prayer taught him by his mother:

"O Lord, my Saviour! have pity on a sinful child, and give thy holy angels charge to keep me in all my ways."

Ere he had risen from the ground, a clear, sweet voice was heard to sing:

"Thy promise, Lord, is sure to stay,
Thy faith immovable;
To thee we turn at dawning day,
To thee our wants we tell.

Blessed is he who in thy breast
Himself doth wholly hide;
No whirlwind's power shall break their rest,
Who in that rock abide."

At the first sound of a human voice, Lion had bounded forward in the direction whence it seemed to proceed, and again returning, seemed by his looks to invite Bertram to follow.

"Lead on," quoth the child; and Lion, through tangled bush and briar, led on. With such speed as he could make, the boy followed, and sometimes pushing aside, sometimes creeping under sprays laden with the morning dew, reached, ere long, an open space, and from the summit of a steep, ferny bank, looked upon a clear rivulet which trickled at its base. A young girl had filled her pitcher at the stream. Alarmed at the appearance of the hound, she had ceased to chant her morning hymn, and was retiring up the glade. Faint

with care and hunger, the boy vainly sought to overtake her nimble steps; but Lion kept closely by her side, and with friendly gestures and persuasive looks, at last prevailed upon the forest maid to halt, and listen to young Bertram's tale.

Soon the wood resounded with the tramp of horses, the clang of horns, and the shouts of those who had left the castle to seek the missing child; nor did the fierce blood-hound fail to trace his steps, first to the deserted hermitage, and then through the tangled brake to the woodman's lowly hut. There, feasting on such homely fare as cottagers could give, young Bertram and his faithful dog, were found.



ELM TREE HALL.

About twenty years ago there lived a singular gentleman in the old Hall among the Elm Trees. He was about three score years of age, very rich, and somewhat odd in many of his habits, but for generosity and benevolence he had no equal.

His dress was as old fashioned as his habits. He wore a cocked hat, richly embroidered, a waistcoat reaching nearly to his knees, and his shoes came almost up to his ankles. No poor cottager stood in need of comforts which he was not ready to supply, no sick man or woman languished for want of his assistance, and not even a beggar, unless a known impostor, went empty handed from the Hall.

The sick he sooth'd, the hungry fed,
Bade care and sorrow fly,
And loved to raise the downcast head
Of friendless poverty.

Now it happened that the old gentleman wanted a boy to wait upon him at table, and to attend to him in different ways, for he was very fond of young people. But much as he liked the society of the young, he had a great aversion to that curiosity in which many young people are apt to indulge. He used to say, "The boy who will peep into a drawer will be tempted to take something out of it, and he who will steal a penny in his youth will steal a pound in his manhood."

This disposition to repress evil, as well as to encourage good conduct, formed a part of his character; for though of a cheerful temper, and not given to severity, he never would pass over a fault till it was acknowledged and repented of.

No sooner was it known that the old gentleman was in want of a servant, than twenty applications were made for the situation; but had there been forty, no one would have been engaged until he had

undergone a trial; for a boy with a curious, prying disposition, the old gentleman would not engage. It was on a Monday morning that seven lads, dressed in their Sunday clothes, with faces as bright as cherry-cheeked apples, made their appearance at the Hall, each of them desirous to obtain the situation they applied for. Now the old gentleman, being of a singular disposition, had prepared a room in such a way that, if any of the young people who applied to be his servant were given to meddle unnecessarily with things around them, or to peep into cupboards and drawers, he might be aware of it, and he took care that the lads, who were then at Elm Tree Hall, should be shown into this room one after another.

And first, Joseph Turner was sent into the room, and told that he would have to wait a little; so Joseph sat down on a chair near the door. For some time he was very quiet, and looked about him, but there seemed to be so many curious things in the room that, at last, he got up to peep at them.

On the table was placed a dish cover, and Joseph wanted sadly to know what was under it, but he felt afraid of lifting it up. Bad habits are strong things, and as Joseph was of a curious disposition, he could not withstand the temptation of taking one peep; so he lifted up the cover.

This turned out to be a sad affair; for under the dish cover was a heap of very light feathers; part of the feathers, drawn up by the current of air, flew about the room, and Joseph in his fright, putting down the cover hastily, puffed the rest of them off the table.

What was to be done? Joseph began to pick up the feathers, one by one; but the old gentleman, who was in an adjoining room, hearing a shuffle, and guessing the cause of it, entered the room to the consternation of Joseph, who was very soon dismissed as a lad not at all likely to suit the situation.

When the room was once more arranged, Thomas Hawker was placed there until such time as he should be sent for; no sooner was he left to himself, than his attention was attracted by a plate of fine

ripe cherries; now Thomas was uncommonly fond of cherries, and he thought that it would be impossible to miss one cherry among so many. He looked and longed, and longed and looked for some time, and just as he had got off his seat to take one, he heard, as he thought, a foot coming to the door; but no, it was a false alarm. Taking fresh courage, he went cautiously and took a very fine cherry, for he was determined to take but one, and put it in his mouth. It was excellent, and then he persuaded himself that he ran no great risk in taking another; this he did and hastily popped it in his mouth.

Now the old gentleman had placed a few artificial cherries at the top of the others, filled with cayenne pepper; one of these Thomas had unfortunately taken, and no sooner did he put it in his mouth than he began to sputter in such an outrageous manner, that the old gentleman knew very well what was the matter. Thomas Hawker was sent about his business without delay, with his mouth almost as hot as if he had put a burning coal in it.

William Parkes was next introduced into the room, and left to himself, but he had not been there two minutes, before he began to move from one place to another. He was of a bold, resolute temper, but not overburdened with principle; for if he could have opened every drawer in the house, without being found out he would have done it directly. Having looked round the room, he noticed a drawer on the table, and made up his mind to peep therein, but no sooner did he lay hold of the drawer knob than he set a large bell ringing which was concealed under the table. The old gentleman immediately answered the summons, and entered the room. William Parkes was so startled by the sudden ringing of the bell, that all his impudence could not support him: he looked as though any one might knock him down with a feather. The old gentleman asked him if he had rung the bell because he wanted any thing? William stuttered and stammered, but all to no purpose, for it did not prevent his being ordered off the premises.

Samuel Tonks was then shown into the room, by an old servant, and, being of a cautious disposition, touched nothing, but only looked at the things about him. At last he saw that a closet door was a little open, and thinking it would be impossible for any one to know that he had opened it a little more, he very cautiously opened it an inch further, looking down at the bottom of the door that it might not catch against anything and make a noise. Now had he looked at the top instead of the bottom, it might have been better for him, for to the top of the door was fastened a plug which filled up the hole of a small barrel of shot. Samuel ventured to open the door another inch, and then another, till the plug being pulled out of the barrel, the leaden shot began to pour out at a strange rate; at the bottom of the closet was placed a tin pan, and the shot falling upon this pan made such a clatter that Samuel Tonks was half frightened out of his senses.

The old gentleman soon came into the room to inquire what was the matter, and there he found Samuel Tonks nearly as pale as a sheet. Samuel had opened one door, the old gentleman soon opened another, bidding him walk out of it, and never again to show his face at Elm Tree Hall.

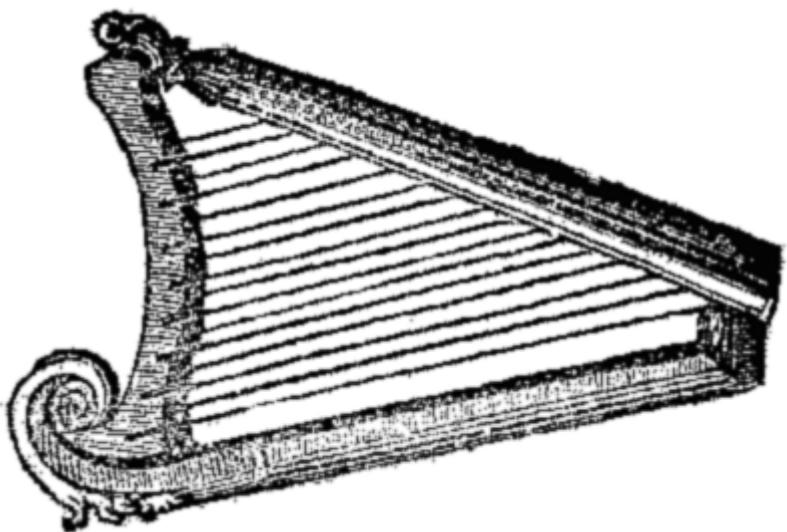
It now came to the turn of Edward Roberts to be put into the room, and as it was in a distant part of the house, he knew nothing of what had happened to the other lads.

On the table stood a round small box with a screw top to it, and Edward, thinking that it contained something curious, could not be easy without unscrewing the top, but no sooner did he do this, than out bounced an artificial snake, full a yard long, and fell upon his arm. Edward started back and uttered a scream, which brought the old gentleman to his elbow. There stood Edward with the bottom of the box in one hand, the top in the other, and the snake on the floor. "Come, come," said the old gentleman, handing him out of the room, "one snake is quite enough to have in the house at a time, therefore the sooner you are gone the better;" with that he dismissed him, without waiting a moment for his reply.

Henry Ball next entered the room, and, being left alone, soon began to amuse himself in looking at the curiosities around him. Ball was not only curious and prying, but downright dishonest, and observing that the key was left in the drawer of a bookcase, he stepped on tiptoe in that direction, but the moment he touched the key, he fell flat on the floor. The key had a wire fastened to it which communicated with an electrifying machine, and Henry received such a shock as he was not likely to forget. No sooner did he sufficiently recover himself to walk, than he was told to walk off the premises, and leave other people to lock and unlock their own drawers.

The last boy was John Grove, and though he was left in the room full twenty minutes, he never during that time stirred from his chair. John had eyes in his head as well as the rest of them, but he had more integrity in his heart; neither the dish cover, the cherries, the drawer knob, the closet door, the round box, nor the key tempted him to rise from his seat, and the consequence was, that, in half an hour after, he was engaged in the service of the old gentleman at Elm Tree Hall.

John Grove followed his good old master to his grave, and received a legacy of fifty pounds for his upright conduct in his service. Read this, ye busy, meddling, peeping, pilfering young people, and imitate the example of John Grove.



BELLEVILLE SCHOOL.

Bonny Belleville! bonny Belleville! I can think upon thee yet,

And many a year will pass ere I thy pleasant scenes forget;
Thy summers and thy winters all may in their turn depart,
But their record still is graven on the tablet of my heart.

Belleville school was delightfully situated, and when the morning sun shone on the grove of chestnut trees, gilded the church spire, and was reflected from the winding brook, a more lovely scene was not to be gazed on.

Many a light hearted girl received there that instruction which made her the ornament of her domestic circle, and added to the happiness of her future days. There the ignorant were informed, the timid encouraged, the bold reproved, the vicious punished, and the virtuous rewarded.

What has a young person to do with pride? Pride may make all around it uncomfortable, and excite a great deal of angry feeling, but it can never render its possessor happy.--Many a pretty face has been spoilt, for a short time, by being rubbed over with blackberries, but a little clean water has made the face as beautiful as before. This is not the case when a countenance is disfigured with pride, for neither cold nor hot water will penetrate more than skin deep, whereas pride is rooted in the very heart.

Of all the young people at Belleville school, Arabella Clarke had the most pride. She was indeed unbearable. No one could discover half the beauty or half the cleverness which she saw in herself, though none of her companions could deny that she had a fair face and a tolerable understanding.

Arabella Clarke was sixteen years of age, and had nearly finished her education; every hour of the day she gave herself airs, nor was there a young person near her, whom she had not displeased, at one time or other, by her insufferable pride. It was a common saying,

"You are as proud as Arabella Clarke;" and no circumstance gave the school girls half so much pleasure, as an opportunity of mortifying their vain companion.

Now it happened that a grand spectacle was to be seen in the park, and every one expected that the place would be thronged with fashionable people. A few of the elder girls of Belleville school were permitted to attend, and as the park was at some distance, a coach was ordered for the occasion. Arabella was foolishly determined to outdo her comrades, and for this purpose she borrowed of a friend a very handsome feather.

With this feather stuck in her hat, she walked about among her companions, giving herself more airs than before, and ridiculing the less showy bonnets of those around her. Pride ought always to be mortified, and it generally is. Two of Arabella's schoolfellows made up their minds to punish her for her ill behaviour, and, before the coach drove up to the school they contrived to pin on the back of her pelisse a paper with the following inscription:

"Miss Wiggins lent her the feather." Little suspecting the trick which had been played her, Arabella skipped into the coach, and in a short time alighted at the park, which was thronged with company. Scarcely had she proceeded a dozen yards, looking about her with an air of self-satisfaction, before she heard a titter, while some one whispered loud enough for those around to hear, "Miss Wiggins lent her the feather." Arabella, believing that one of her companions was the whisperer, turned round, with a frown, and saw a whole party laughing. "I wonder who Miss Wiggins is?" asked one of them provokingly. "I cannot tell that," replied another; "but you see, Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

Mortified at these remarks, Arabella hurried on to get away from the ill mannerly people around her; but wherever she went, a laugh reached her ear, and the provoking observation, "Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

The higher you shoot an arrow into the air, the deeper will it sink into the ground when it falls, and in like manner the prouder a spirit is, the deeper shame and humiliation it has to endure when humbled. Arabella Clarke was stung to the quick. "Look, look," cried a young man fashionably dressed, "what do you think of that, Tom? Miss Wiggins lent her the feather." "I wish Miss Wiggins would lend me one," replied his companion, "but what necessity is there for the whole world to be told of it?" "A well dressed young woman," said a fat gentleman, as he passed her. "True, my love," replied his wife, who turned back to look at her; "but Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

In pushing among the crowd, to get out of the park, the paper fell from Arabella's pelisse, but not before fifty persons, at least, had repeated in as many different tones, "Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

Arabella with a flushed face, a heavy heart, and a wounded spirit, reached the school, without ever suspecting the cause of her mortification.

The stratagem had succeeded so well that the two girls who had contrived it, determined to resort to it again, if Arabella did not conduct herself in a more affable and humble manner.

Bad habits are not easily overcome, and in a short period Arabella became as unbearable as she was before.

About this time, Arabella and the two schoolfellows, who had played her the trick in the park, set off to a little village at no great distance.

The pride of Arabella had led her, on this occasion, to put on a pair of pink silk stockings, that she might be smarter than her companions.

Now these silk stockings had a large hole in one of the toes, which she had neglected to mend. Her schoolfellows being aware of this circumstance, laid their plan accordingly; and when they arrived at

the entrance of the village, under pretence of arranging Arabella's shawl, they pinned a paper to it written as follows:

"She has a hole in the toe of her stocking."

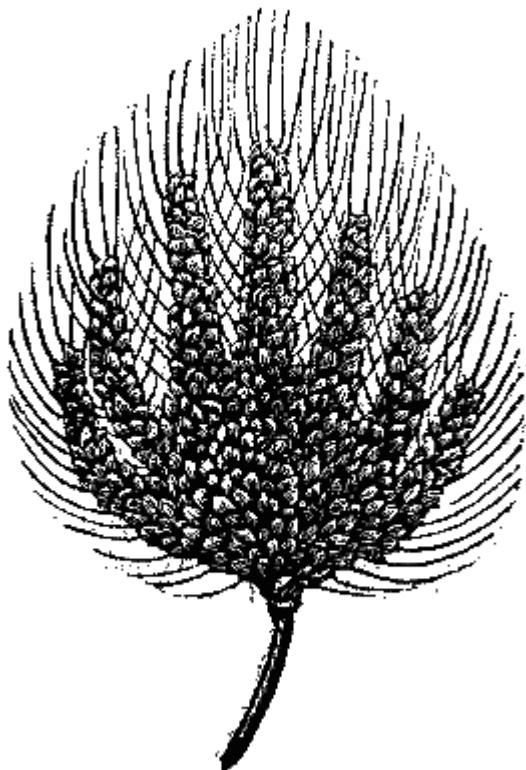
There happened to be a merry making in the village, so that a throng was gathered together. Two or three rude lads who had observed the paper came up to read it, and one of them cried out, "She has a hole in the toe of her stocking." This was immediately repeated by the rest, and half a dozen young ragamuffins hooted out at once, "She has a hole in her stocking."

Poor Arabella reddened up to her very ears, for she was too conscious of the fact, not to apply what the boys said to herself. By turning, however, into a shop, she escaped from her tormenters. Her two companions made some excuse to leave her by herself. When she came once more into the street a butcher cried out to another, on the other side of the way, "Bill, lad, she has a hole in the toe of her stocking."

Arabella hastened on extremely mortified, and yet wondering how it was possible for any one to see that the toe of her stocking was out of repair. As she crossed the market place, the jeering of the country fellows, the laughing of the women, and the hallooing of the lads were intolerable. "What a pity it is," said one, "that such fine stockings should have a hole in the toe!" "What is the matter?" cried another. "O, nothing at all," said a third, "she has only got a hole in the toe of her stocking."--The uproar increased, and Arabella was half dead with vexation and fright, when she joined her companions, humbled to the very dust, she caught hold of them to support her, and burst into tears. The paper, unseen by her, was unpinned from her shawl, and thankful was Arabella Clarke to escape from the mortification she had endured.

An obstinate malady requires strong medicine, and nothing but such complete humiliations as she had endured, would have corrected the insufferable pride of Arabella Clarke.

In course of time the whole school became acquainted with the tricks which had been played Arabella, and the extreme mortification they had drawn upon her. Their proud schoolfellow became more humble, affable and amiable; for whenever she manifested the accustomed pride and haughtiness of her disposition, she was immediately rebuked by an allusion to the past. "Though her hat did look smart in the park," one would say, "*Miss Wiggins lent her the feather.*" "And if she does toss up her head," another would reply, "yet, for aught I know, *she has a hole in the toe of her stocking.*"



HONEST POVERTY AND BENEFICENCE.

The emperor of Germany, walking one day in the streets of Vienna, dressed as a private individual, met a young girl who appeared in great distress, and who carried a packet under her arm. "Where are you going?" said the emperor. "What have you in that bundle? Can I not assist in calming your grief?"

"These," said the young girl, opening her bundle, "are the clothes of my mother: alas, sir, they are our last resource. I am hastening to dispose of them to procure food for our family. If we had received the pay of our poor father, who was killed in the service of the emperor, we would not have been reduced to this sad necessity."

"And why have you not applied at court?" said the other: "you should have stated your case upon paper, and sent it to the sovereign, when he doubtless would have relieved you."

"All this has been done, sir; but the lord who undertook to befriend us, said that nothing could be obtained, and that it was useless to renew our application."

"There must have been some sad mistake," answered the emperor, concealing the mortification which the story caused him. "I am sure that the emperor has never seen your petition; because he is too just to allow the widow and children of an officer, who perished in his service, to want the comforts of life. Draw up another petition, and bring it to the castle to-morrow morning; then, if I find that what you have stated is true, you shall see the emperor, and I have no doubt that you will obtain what you require. But in the mean time you must not sell your mother's clothes.-- How much did you expect to receive for them?"

"Six ducats," replied the astonished female.

"Here are ten," said the other, "which I will lend you until you can repay me out of the pension, which I am in hopes we will, together, be able to procure on your visit to court."

The emperor turned away, and the delighted daughter flew back to her mother with the ten ducats and the bundle of clothes.

After describing to her relations the person and manners of the stranger, they at once recognised the emperor, and became excessively alarmed at the consequences which they thought would ensue from the freedom with which his apparent injustice had been mentioned. The young girl refused to go to court, and was at last taken, almost by force, on the following morning, to the appointed place.

On the appearance of the emperor she recognised in him the person of her benefactor, and fainted. The emperor assisted in the kindest manner in recovering her; and, when she became again sensible, said to her--"Here, my young friend, is the grant of a pension for your mother, equal to the full pay of your father, with the reversion of one half of it to you, should you be so unfortunate as to lose her. Could I have learned sooner your situation, I should have been able sooner to have relieved it. Hereafter, that none may have cause to complain, I will set aside one day in each week to receive the personal applications of my subjects."



INTEGRITY, AND ITS REWARD.

After the well-contested action of Stono, during the revolution, an American lieutenant, passing over the field of battle, saw a British officer dangerously wounded, and unable to move. The latter, on seeing the American, besought him in the most moving accents for a draught of water to allay the burning thirst which was consuming him. There was no refusing such a request, even had the American felt inclined to do so; he procured the water therefore, and stooping down, held it to the parched lips of the sufferer. The Englishman drank, and then drawing an elegant and valuable watch from his pocket, presented it to the other.

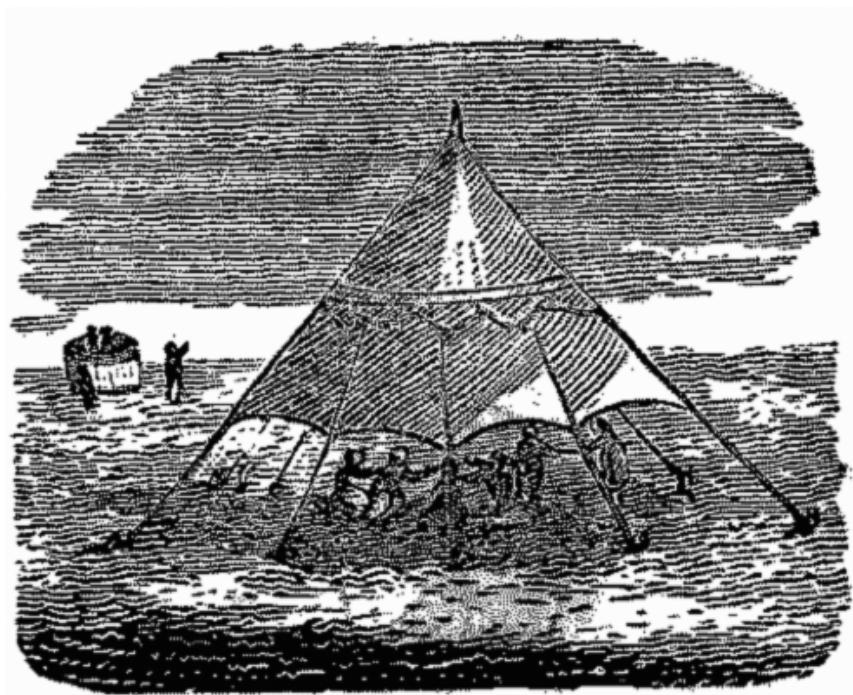
"Take it, sir," he said; "'tis yours by conquest, and your generous behavior still further entitles you to possess it."

"I came into the field to fight, and not to plunder," was the answer: "it gives me pleasure to have rendered you a service, and I ask no other recompense."

"Keep it for me then, in trust," rejoined the officer, "till we meet again; for if left in my hands, it may be wrested from me by some marauder, who to secure silence may inflict death."

"I will take it on these terms only," said the American, "that you shall receive it when I meet with an opportunity to return it."

Many were the chances of war against the second meeting, and the Englishman had almost forgotten the circumstance, and had entirely given up all hopes of recovering his property, when a package was presented to him, which, on opening, he found to contain his watch, which the American had taken advantage of a flag of truce, to return uninjured to its owner.



Transcriber's Note:

The following printer errors have been corrected:--

Page 20 'jestures' to 'gestures' in line 'their mysterious gestures'

Page 26 'peninent' to 'penitent' in line 'and the penitent'

Page 48 'Bellville' to Belleville' in line 'girls of Belleville school'

Page 49 'Wiggins' to Wiggins' in line 'Miss Wiggins lent her'

[The end of *The Broken Vase, and other stories* by Anonymous]