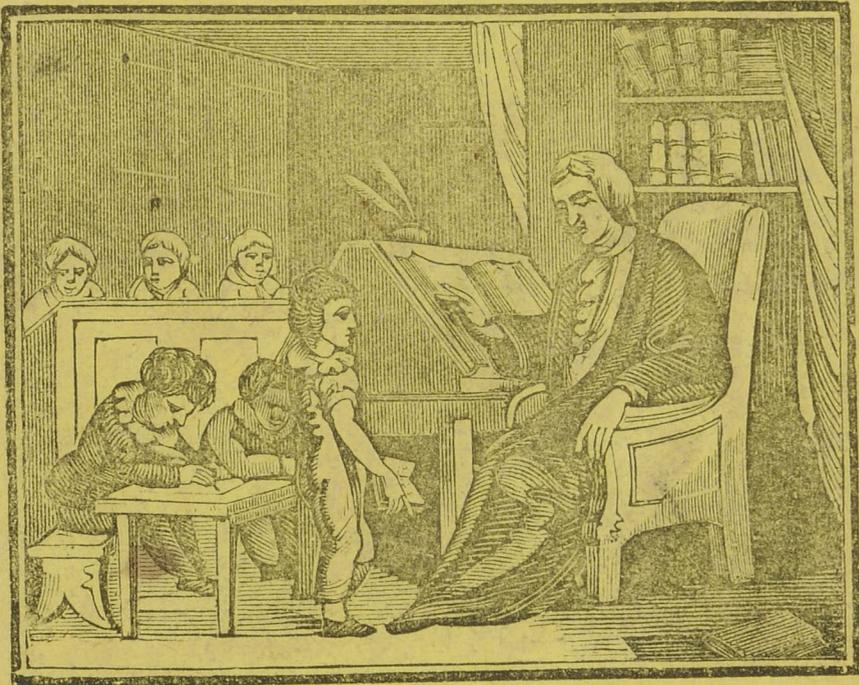


THE
RICH GENTLEMAN
AND HIS
TWO SONS.



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C. H. PELTON.....PRINT.

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THE

AMERICAN

ALPHABET



MIDDLEBURY

V. H. PHOENIX

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THE
RICH GENTLEMAN.

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MR. AIMWELL was a very rich gentleman who lived in London. He had two sons; the eldest whose name was Charles, was a very good boy; he was kind and affectionate to his parents, and obliging and mannerly to every one. His brother Thomas was quite a different character; his temper was irritable, and he was mischievous in a high degree. His parents tried every reasonable method to soften his manners and curb his fiery temper; but every means proved abortive.

Thomas had naturally a good disposition, but his proneness to mischief seemed interwoven with his very nature. Charles often expostulated with his refractory brother on his course of conduct, but Thomas would only laugh at his sedate brother, and call him his

father's chaplain, and tell him he ought to become a priest and wear a long black coat and wig, and then he would attend to his wise counsels.

One day as the two brothers were walking in the fields they espied a poor old woman walking deliberately along with a pail of milk upon her head. Thomas stepped behind her unperceived and gave her a push, when down came the pail of milk, and it was all spilled. The poor woman burst into tears and told Charles, her poor children would have no food for the remainder of the day. "I will see to that, my good woman," replied Charles, and told her to wipe away her tears, for her children should not starve while he had a penny in his purse; and so saying he slipped into her hand a half crown, and begged her to show him the way to her cottage. She pointed him to a little hut at no great distance, which was so nearly surrounded with shrubbery, that there was scarcely any thing visible but the curling smoke which issued from the little stone chimney. The old Lady wiped

her eyes and ejaculated, God bless you my son, took up her empty pail and departed.

Thomas had all this time stood by like an image of stone. "You will pay dear for this, Thomas," said Charles; "I will instantly go and tell our excellent Papa: how dare you thus afflict that poor old Lady whose children, perhaps are near dying with hunger. O! Thomas our teachers tell us to be good to the poor; and have you not read in your Bible that it is more blessed to give than to receive: and that if the wicked oppress the poor, and they cry at all unto the Lord he will surely hear their cry and hurl vengeance on their oppressors. "Charles," said Thomas, "you are very severe, I did not think much harm; I knew not what she had in her pail, and these poor folks are often so lazy that one cannot endure the sight of them. I have often heard Papa say that if poor people were more neat and industrious they would be entitled to more pity." "Well, Thomas, that may be true, but it does not justify your conduct. Be they neat and industrious, or filthy

and lazy, you ought not in any instance to insult the poor. But let us return to our Papa. I shall tell him about you, any way."

The two brothers walked towards home, arm in arm, Charles all the while saying good things to his brother. Thomas said he hoped his Papa would not be very angry. Our Papa is a very good Papa, said Charles, and it grieves me very much that you should offend him; but let us hasten our pace, I fear the poor woman's children are crying for bread, and I mean to ask Papa's permission to carry them some—what say you brother, will you accompany me. "I must first obtain Papa's forgiveness," replied Thomas, "for I must confess, Charles, I feel some sorrow for having insulted the poor." Charles embraced his brother fondly, while the tears stood in his eyes; he exclaimed I hope Papa will forgive you, Thomas. The children pursued their way till they arrived at the garden gate, when their Papa, who had been walking in the garden run to meet them with the greatest affection. "How now my sons,"

said he, "you have been absent much longer than usual; has any thing happened to you of a disagreeable nature? Charles you have been weeping, what is the matter? Come in my children, your mother has been anxiously awaiting your return." Charles sighed, but followed his good father into the hall, and while dinner was preparing, he interrogated the children about the adventures of the walk. Thomas hung his head, but Charles animated by a sense of conscious innocence, began their little narrative. While he was relating it the color often came and went from his Papa's face; and when he had finished his undisguised tale, his Papa took him in his arms, and embracing him, said "my dear Charles, you are the glory and honor of my declining years: continue to walk perseveringly in the paths of virtue and benevolence, and all your future life will be crowned with blessedness, and your end will be peace.

"But how shall I punish your brother for this misdemeanor." "It will be best to forgive him, Papa," replied Charles: "my bro-

ther says he is sorry he insulted the poor old woman, and if you will give me a basket of provision, I will carry it to her this afternoon, and he will accompany me and ask her forgiveness." A tear glistened in the eye of Mr. Aimwell, as he viewed the benevolent countenance of his excellent child, and looking towards Thomas, he saw him in great agitation. At length he arose from his seat and fell on his knees before his father and implored his forgiveness. His Papa raised him from his kneeling posture, and said, "I freely forgive you Thomas, but you have offended a Being who is a Father to the poor as well as the rich—it is your heavenly Father that you have grievously offended, and you must seek His pardon and not offend any more. Consider, my son, that God made all men equal, but sin has introduced into our world poverty, disease and death. Some are made rich by unlawful gains which is very displeasing to their Creator; but they flourish for awhile like the green bay tree; they tyrannize over the poor and needy, and trample them beneath

their feet; they have riches but not by right and the fear of God is not in them. There are others that are left rich by their ancestors, and never know the pinching hand of want, and if such are enlightened with the spirit of benevolence, and the duty they owe to the Supreme Being, they become fathers to the poor, and thus fulfil his will."

With such discourse did the father of these two youth entertain his family; and after they had dined he ordered a servant to fill a large basket with provisions of almost all kinds and bear it before his sons to the cottage. Thomas had by this time recovered his usual spirits and they tripped joyfully over the fields, and through the dales 'till at length they discovered the curling smoke from the little stone chimney. The cottage was situated at the foot of a hill, and they discovered a little foot path winding around it. They entered the foot path and were soon at the door. There was a little fence about it which enclosed a garden of herbs, and though every thing about it bespoke the poverty of its inhabitants,

yet every thing was in the neatest order. The servant knocked at the door and was bid come in by a feeble voice. He raised the latch and discovered a little girl sitting by a cradle that contained a sleeping infant. She was chanting her lullaby, but when the stranger entered she arose and curtisied. My mama is not at home she accented. When will she be in my pretty lass said the servant. About night she replied; she has gone to town to get bread. Are you not hungry my poor girl replied the servant. I am hungry to be sure but I feel sorrow for my little sister. My mother went this morning for a pail of milk to one of her neighbors a great way off, who is very kind to my poor mother; as she was coming home she met a naughty boy who overturned it and my poor little sister has had nothing to eat the whole day. Charles looked at Thomas—his eyes were suffused with tears. “Heaven help you my poor child,” said the servant, “here is food enough:” and he began to unload his basket, and sit on a little wooden table before him all the provision he

had brought from his benevolent master. The little girl seemed astonished at such profusion, but eagerly satisfied her appetite. In the mean time the two boys stood looking on. Charles' countenance shone with the brightness of true benevolence, mixed with sorrow for his brothers' fault. Thomas eyed the little girl as she eat her food, and seemed to wonder at her voracious appetite. The servant waited till she had finished her meal, and then presented her with a bottle of milk for the babe, and ordered her to awaken it without delay, and give it some nourishment. She obeyed without hesitation. In a short time the door opened, and the poor woman appeared with her little sack of bread and some other small notions, which she procured with the half crown which the benevolent Charles had given her in the morning. She looked about her with a bewildered astonishment. But casting her eye upon Charles, she soon recognized her young benefactor, and in almost inarticulate accents repeated her thanks. Thomas went to the poor woman and kindly

taking her hand, said good matron will you forgive me for spilling your milk. I am heartily sorry for it, my papa has forgiven me, and sent us hither ^{with} this provision, and will come in a few days himself. The poor woman burst into tears, and putting her arms around the penitent child's neck, freely said I forgive you my son, and may heaven also. And I hope from this time your heart will be enlarged towards your poor fellow mortals, and that you will ever consider that poverty itself is sufficiently excruciating without the taunts and insults of the rich. I have seen better days, but when your father arrives, I shall make him acquainted with my little history. Good dame replied the servant, the day is fast hastening to its close, we must hasten towards home; can I render you any further service? She told him he might bring her a pail of water from a neighboring spring, and break her some fuel as she was very weary from her long walk to town. The servant cheerfully complied with her desire, and when he had made a fire upon her hearth and he

helped her fill her small teakettle, he took his leave rejoicing that he had added to the comforts of one who appeared to be a worthy object of benevolence. The children had a long way to walk, but they were cheered by the company of their good servant, who chatted with them all the way, telling them stories he had learned in his boyish days. Shall I tell you one of them.

“When I was a small boy,” said he, “I used to keep my father’s sheep; it was a delightful employment to attend the little lambs, keep them from all harm, and see that they were comfortably fed, and their sports were very amusing as they gamboled over the plain in search of the best food, There was a very wicked little boy that lived in the neighborhood, that took great delight in frightening my poor sheep. I often complained to his father of his conduct and he received many stripes, and much of every kind of punishment usual for such incorrigible offenders, but all in vain; the poor boy grew more and more hardened in his sins. He would be all day long skulking about the neighborhood in

search of mischief. One day as I was by the way side with my flock feeding by my side, I saw coming up the road a very aged man with crutches in his hands, he appeared very lame and walked with weary and unsteady steps. I pitied the poor old man, and thought to myself when he comes up with me, I will give him a part of my dinner, for my mother had plentifully furnished my basket with cold victuals. I turned to look at my sheep for a few moments, and my ears were saluted by a loud scream, I looked behind me and beheld the poor old man lying flat upon the ground, and upon the other side of the road, I beheld little Alfred the name of the wicked boy, scrambling to get over the hedge. I flew to the stranger's assistance, he lay groaning with pain and affright. I tried to raise him from the ground, but he could not help himself at all. I soon discovered his leg was broken. I halloed for help with all my might, and I soon saw two men running to my assistance. By this time I had an opportunity to look about me, and I discovered Alfred hang dangling from the hedge.

In his haste to clamber over the hedge, his foot got entangled among the bushes and thorns, and he could not disengage himself—he was senseless, pale and bloody. One of the men immediately went for a conveyance, the other assisted me in recovering poor Alfred from his perilous situation. The man returned with a carriage and a bed in it, on which we laid the old gentleman and the senseless Alfred, and carried them both into the town. The old gentleman was placed in the almshouse where he slowly recovered, and Alfred was carried to his father's cottage. He recovered his senses, but he had broken his ankle, and was very sick a long time. He confessed to his father that he had tripped the old man's crutches from under him, which caused his fall.

Thus you see my pretty children sin in this instance, met with a speedy punishment, and proves the words of the inspired penman to be true that 'tho' hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished.'" They had by this time reached their father's door, and re-

ceived a cordial welcome from their expectant parents. Thomas from this time became thoughtful and more sedate in his behavior, and his happy parents rejoiced in the reformation of their son. The next week Mr. Aimwell set out on horseback for the cottage, attended by his servant. They arrived in the fore part of the day and found the good woman at home. She welcomed the stranger to her lowly dwelling, but when she found that her guest was the father of the good little Charles, she was quite overjoyed. Mr Aimwell told her he called to enquire into her history, and to find out if he could be serviceable to her in any way. I can give you my history, said the poor woman in a very few words. "I was born of poor but respectable parents. They were obliged to put me out to service very young, but they had given me a pious education, and taught me the fear of God. This was of great use to me, in great families where I lived, as the servants of great folks are apt to lead very dissolute lives, in consequence of too great indulgence. In my 16th

year one of my fellow servants whose name was Goodwill solicited my hand in marriage. I could have no reasonable objection to him, he was sober and steady minded, and though not strictly religious, was a pattern of virtue and sobriety. We were married and our good master made us a nuptial present of this little cottage and garden, and was our liberal friend till his death, which happened soon after. My poor husband worked early and late to support me and these two sweet babes, till at length he fell sick and died. Since then I have done what I could, but if it had not been for the charity of some good people of my acquaintance, I could not possibly have held out to keep my children so long with myself." Saying this she wept. "Dry up your tears my good woman" said Mr. Aimwell, "to-morrow I shall send for you and the poor children. I have a neat little cottage at the bottom of my garden which shall become yours. I shall see you suffer for nothing in my life time, and I shall remember you in my will." Mr. Aimwell was as good as his word, the cottage was fit-

ted up for her reception, and the very next day the widow with the small remains of her property, took possession of it.

Charles and Thomas were her daily visitors, rejoicing in the benevolence of their good papa and cheering the presence of the lonely widow by their innocent pastimes, and a thousand little acts of charity.

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