

THIRD SERIES.—No. 9.

THE
SELFISH GIRL;

A TALE OF TRUTH.



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Mrs. Mortimer, Anna, and Clara.

THE
SELFISH GIRL.



“SHUT the door, Anna, the wind is cold from the hall, and makes our room uncomfortable.”

“Oh, mother, why do you ask me, to close the door, when you can ring the bell, and let a servant come in and shut it?”

“What, Anna, bring James through the bleak wind to save you from the trouble of crossing the floor? I am ashamed of you, my daughter. See little Clara has jumped down and gone unbidden, and done what I requested you to do. Kiss me, Clara, I love obliging girls.”

The elder of the children thus spoken to, was at the time reclining upon her mother's lap, while the younger, was on the couch at her side with her head fondly resting upon her shoulder. The two were as opposite in looks as in temper. Anna was about eight years old, and Clara three years younger. Anna was very pretty. Her light brown hair fell in graceful curls over her white neck; she had bright blue eyes, her cheeks were like roses, and when she was a good girl, she was extremely lovely. Everybody admired, when they *first* knew her, but her disobliging and selfish temper soon made them withdraw their admiration — for no one is worthy of esteem, who has nothing but beauty of person, without that of mind, to recommend them. Clara seldom attracted attention at first, for she was by no means beautiful. Her complexion was pale, her eyes gray and without lustre; but in a little time she

became the favorite, for she was always ready to oblige, and would leave her play to render any person a benefit, and if smaller girls than herself came to visit her, she gave them her dolls and toys, and would try in every way to amuse and please them. But Anna never did so; she was too lazy to do a favor for those around her, and too selfish to care for the pleasure or convenience of any one but herself. It distressed her mother very much to see so beautiful a girl of such a disposition, and she could not avoid loving little Clara more every day for her goodness and obedience. After the last scene, the party sat silent for a few minutes, but Anna was too obstinate to think of feeling sorry for her conduct, though reproved by her mother's words, for her sister's different behavior.—“Anna,” said her mother, “you will never be happy nor beloved, while you continue so much absorbed by your own

comfort, and so regardless of that of others. Do you think servants are destitute of feeling, that you have so little consideration for them? Remember that you will hereafter have to give an account of your conduct to them—and that of every unkindness God takes notice, and will judge you for it in the last day. Now, you do not wish to leave your netting for an instant, nor your warm fire, and yet you did not mind disturbing the servants when you know how fatigued they are all day, and that at night they strive to do a little work for themselves, such as plating straw for baskets and mats, by the sale of which they earn money, to purchase a few luxuries for their families. Believe me, my child, if we do not think of the comforts of others, we shall be neither respected nor valued ourselves, and shall find few friends. Besides all this, you have disobeyed me, but I need not dwell upon

this point, you know as well as I do, the command of God on the subject.”

Anna hung down her head, and seemed for a moment to reflect on what she had heard, but a quick rap at the door made her forget the advice in curiosity to know who was at it. She hastily jumped up, and ran into the entry (in spite of the cold she had refused to encounter a few minutes before) and opened the door ere James could reach the spot. The snow blew in her face, and enwreathed her soft ringlets, and her cheeks were crimsoned with the sharp air, but Anna regarded not all this, for she was delighted to see the milliner's girl, with a basket containing their new bonnets—and taking them from her, she ran into the parlor to look at them; Clara passed by her, without attending to the exclamations of pleasure she heard, and kindly went to the girl, who was trembling with cold in the passage,



The Milliner's Girl.

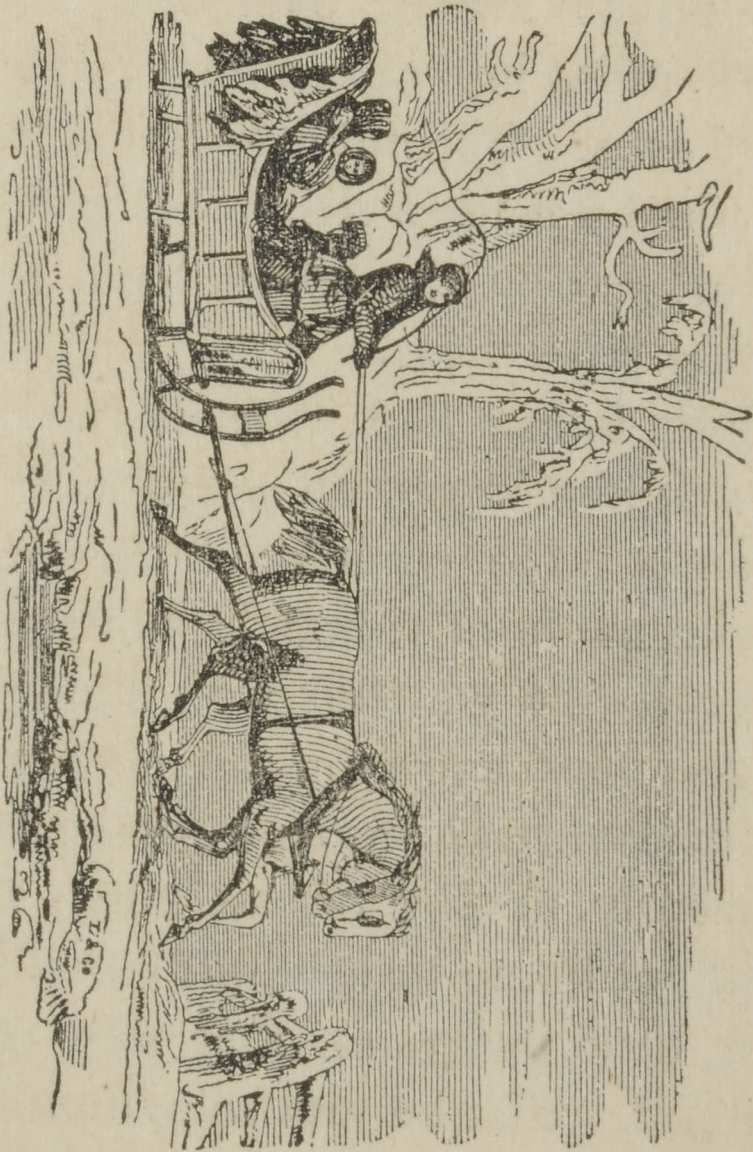
and begged her to come in to the fire. She gladly did so, and as the children tried on the beaver hats and feathers she had brought, she could not help thinking, that with all Anna's beauty, Clara's was a sweeter countenance, there was so much goodness and consideration in its expression. Thus by one little act of kindness, was a friend obtained!

The next morning was bright and clear—the girls were in the nursery playing with their dolls. Mrs. Mortimer was in her chamber when she called out, “Anna, go down stairs, and tell Jacob to get the sleigh—the day is so fine we will take a ride.”—“Oh, mother! do send Clara, for I am so busy with this baby's frock, that I can not leave it.” Clara ran off without her mother's speaking, and gave the order. When the sleigh drove to the door, Mrs. Mortimer went into the next room, and there saw Anna, ready to go out, dressed in her

new hat and feathers, and with a gay cloak on, looking very prettily. "Where are you going, Anna?" said her mother. "To ride with you, mamma." — "Indeed, you are going to do no such a thing — as it was too much trouble for you to give my orders, I am sure it will be too much trouble for you to go down to get into the sleigh. Betty, undress Miss Anna, and put on her calico frock again, she will not leave the house to-day. How is this, Clara, not ready?" — "Why, mother, when I went to call Jacob, to give your message, I saw poor Fidelle limping along, and I stopped to bind up his foot; a thorn had got in it; but do not wait for me, mamma, I will stay at home, as Anna will be alone." — "No, my daughter, I will wait for you. I like to oblige obedient girls, and permit them to go out with me. Come here, and let me see your bonnet."

Clara was sorry to leave her sister,

The Sleighride



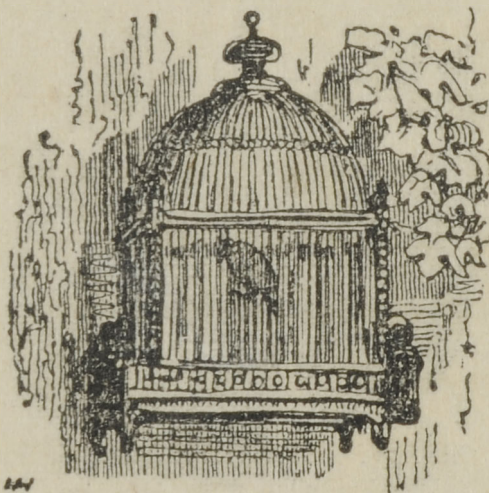
but she was very much delighted with her ride. Her uncle went with them; and the merry jingle of the sleigh-bells, as they glided swiftly over the snow for several miles into the country, was music to her ears. She only regretted that her sister had not been more obedient to her mother, so that she might have enjoyed the ride with them.

Their father had that morning gone to a neighboring town on business of importance. He went on horseback, his favorite mode of riding, in summer or in winter if the weather would permit of it. As they were on their way back, they discovered him some distance ahead, apparently urging on his horse that he might get home to his family before sundown, little dreaming that they were so near him. But he was soon apprized of their presence by the joyous ringing laugh of Clara as they came up with him. They continued on in company,

Mr. Morimer returning to Town.



till they came into town, when Jacob was ordered to drive to the milliner's in order that Mrs. Mortimer might pay for her daughters' hats, while Mr. Mortimer rode directly home. The same servant-girl who brought their hats, was in the store, and while Mrs. Mortimer was settling with her mistress, she brought a little gilt cage with a beautiful bird in it,



and begged Clara to accept it as a keepsake from her for the kindness she had shown her the night before in calling her in from the cold. "Whenever you look at it," said she, "it will remind you

that a good action always meets its reward."

Anna was much mortified when she saw this gift, and heard how much praise was bestowed on Clara, and nobody loved her, for being selfish. She determined to conquer her disagreeable temper, and took Clara for an example. In a short time she became an amiable girl, and then no one could tell which was the sweetest, herself or Clara.

Now I hope all little girls, who read my story, will be good too, and oblige every one, and never try to please themselves at the expense of another's pleasure; and I hope, too, they will remember, that the prettiest face looks ugly when spoiled by ill-humor; and the ugliest looks pretty if it expresses benevolence and virtue. I trust they will ever avoid that feeling which consists in loving self to excess, in thinking upon, and seeking eagerly at all times, one's

own comfort, interest, and pleasure. It is a feeling which, by indulgence, gains strength, and freezes up all the finer emotions of the heart. That they may avoid this error, and learn to be kind and generous, and to study the comfort and happiness of others as earnestly as they do their own, is the sincere wish of one who has written for their improvement, this "TALE OF TRUTH."



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