





MEMOIRS

OF A

PEG-TOP.

By the AUTHOR of ADVENTURES of a  
PINCUSHION.

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Those *Trifles* that amuse in life,  
Promote a higher end ;  
Since *Reason* in this lighter dress,  
With pleasure we attend.

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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE different inclinations, employments, and amusements which engage the attention of boys and girls, suggested to the Author of the following trifling performance, that such a design might not be useless to fill up those intervals of leisure, which may occur to the former from their more important studies. With this view, therefore, it is now submitted to the candour of public inspection, trusting for a favourable reception, more to the utility of the plan, than the merit of its execution. The indulgent attention with which the *Adventures of a Pincushion* have been honoured, flattered the writer with an opinion, that a work like the present might meet with equal success; as the aim in both has been to promote the cause of *virtue*,

and to blend the hints of instruction with incidents of an amusing nature. The former work was designed chiefly for the use of young Ladies; this is evidently calculated for young Gentlemen: for although the laws of justice, probity, and truth are of *general* obligation, yet, it was imagined, that by consulting *different amusements* and *pursuits*, and recommending the accomplishments *separately*, in which each sex were more particularly concerned, the subjects would become more interesting to those readers to whom they were immediately addressed, and have, in consequence, a better chance for approbation.

# M E M O I R S

OF A

## P E G - T O P .

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**A**S I have heard that a *Pincushion*, a *Dog*, a *Halfpenny*, and a *Bank-Note*, have each written a history of their adventures, I thought to myself one morning, when I was left upon a writing desk, that it would be a convenient opportunity for me to imitate such examples, and that the memoirs of a *Peg-Top* might prove equally entertaining with any of the beforementioned histories. So resolving to recollect the various scenes I had passed through, I determined to present *my adventures*, likewise, to the world, and share in the fame of those Authors, who had bestowed their labours to immortalize a particular animal or toy, while the rest of their species were consigned to neglect or oblivion.

I was completed, gentle reader, into my present form on a *Friday* morning, and surveyed with great satisfaction by the workman who had accomplished me, as the best top he had ever produced. In the afternoon of the same day he carried me, with numbers of my brethren, to a large toy-shop in *Piccadilly*; where I was presented to the Master; and after being examined,

and having received great commendation from the mechanic who brought me thither, was tossed, with very little ceremony, into a large drawer with the companions who had accompanied me, and some whom I never before saw. As we were all *new*, and had not as yet seen any thing beyond our present abode, and the bag in which we were conveyed to it, we remained extremely silent and reserved; for you must allow me the privilege of supposing, I can make known my sentiments to other inanimate substances, though I have not the powers of articulation; as in effect if you can imagine a top to be capable of *writing* and *composition*, there will remain little difficulty in granting to it the licence of speech; all these talents being entirely inconsistent with truth and reality, but may be allowed to exist by the force of imagination. Thus far having premised, as a necessary preliminary to my history, I shall continue to inform you, that we had very little conversation with each other. A few indeed wished to make their escape from this place of confinement; and a poor top who had a piece broke off from one of its side, very pathetically lamented, that it had seen three drawers full disposed of, while it had lain always neglected on this account, and had been rolled out on the counter, and taken up as often as any purchaser appeared; and, although offered to sale for *half* the price of its



companions, had been tossed back with contempt, and was likely to remain in that situation for ever. I felt a great degree of sympathy for this unfortunate brother, and was just going to express my pity for his condition, when the drawer which contained us, was suddenly pulled out, and a very genteel lady selected some of us to present to a little boy in scarlet clothes,



who appeared to be about six years old. The youth, however, desired leave to choose for himself, telling the lady, whom he called mamma, that she did not understand which would be a good *spinner*: after handling almost all that he saw, he selected *me* as the best of the whole collection. The lady paid the price which was

asked for me, and I was put into master's pocket, who walked off not a little pleased with his purchase.

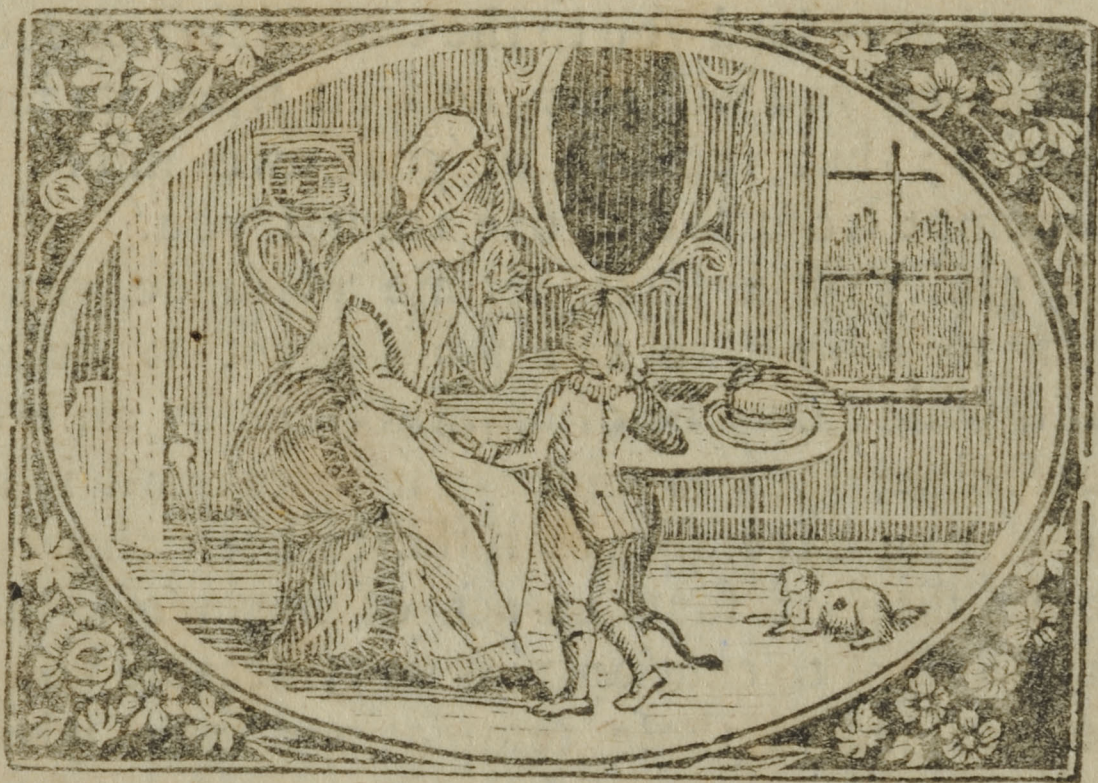
When we reached the house he was going to, which was a handsome building in *St. James's Square*, he took me out to show to another child in petticoats, who cried sadly to possess me; but was told by his mamma, that I was his brother's property, and that *Henry* must keep me, because on *Monday* he was going to a *boarding-school*. Some company soon after coming into the apartment, the lady desired her son to take care of me till a more convenient opportunity.

I soon found by their conversation, my new master had been brought up with great tenderness by his mother, who was a widow; and was to go to school on the day above-mentioned for the first time. That a great number of toys had been purchased to allure him into this measure, and to soothe his sorrows at the thoughts of separation.

As he had no opportunity to play with me the remainder of the evening, I lay snug in his pocket till he went to bed; when he took me out, and expatiated to a footman, who helped him to undress, on the pleasure he should have in amusing himself, and heartily wished the next day had not been *Sunday*, as it would prevent his enjoyment. This was certainly a fault, but

he was very young and inconsiderate; and it is to be hoped that when he grew older he acquired more wisdom. The next day he did not play with me indeed; but he took me out of his pocket a great number of times to look at; and even while he was at church (which was highly blameable) felt, to know if I was secure: a proof he was but too inattentive to his employment. But greatly as I had been favoured by his notice, the time was now come when I was to experience his entire neglect.

His mother, who had cautiously avoided the mention of his departure, in the evening pressed his hand with some emotion, and told him she



hoped that now he was going to a distance from her instructions, he would not forget what she had taken such pains to inculcate, I am afraid, my dear *Henry*, added she, wiping her eyes, as if

some dust had flown into them, though in reality to clear them from those tears she could not restrain, I am sadly afraid, that when you have left home, you will pay but little attention to those admonitions which you have hitherto so much regarded. There may, amongst the number of boys you will meet with at the large school to which you are going, be some, who will wickedly laugh at your observance of those duties, which, I flatter myself, you will always continue to respect. But remember there are some obligations, my dear boy, which nothing on earth can dispense with. Among these is a strict regard to truth and sincerity. However your interest may lead you to the commission of deceit, be assured you will reap no fruit from its indulgencies; but remorse in your own mind, and contempt from every one around you. If you are guilty of a fault, let me persuade you rather to submit to the punishment it deserves (and which may be often mitigated by an honest confession) than to endeavour to conceal it by a lie. You have always hitherto been above the commission of such an act of meanness, and I only design to caution you now, because you will be exposed to those temptations from which I have ever been careful to secure you. I trust, likewise, that you will be assiduous to cultivate a peaceable and kind disposition; for however *fighting* and *revenge* may be wrongly accounted

the marks of *spirit*, believe me, that *true courage* can never consist in a willingness to *offend*, or a captious inclination to be displeas'd. These maxims which you have hitherto been taught to reverence, will perhaps be derided by your school-fellows, as the weak advice of a *mother*, who can know nothing of *boyish* contentions. But I trust, that you, my son, whose affection for that mother is undoubted, will not so ill repay my solicitude as to despise these instructions when you are at a distance from my embraces. Be assured that I am your best friend, and would never desire you to do, or forbear any thing, which will not tend to make you beloved and respectable. *Henry*, who had been holding me in his hand without any design of playing from the time his mother began her discourse; but



had merely been rubbing me about with his fingers, now laid me hastily on the table, and throwing his arms round her, sobbed forth an assent to her advice; assuring her that he would never forget her admonitions, and that he loved her too well to disobey them; while the lady, overcome by her son's emotion, joined her tears with his, and embraced him with an equal ardour of tenderness and affection. As to your learning, said she, after a pause, I am persuaded that emulation, and a desire to equal, if not exceed your companions, will inspire you with application; and I shall be much disappointed to hear that you are remiss in that article. I hope, that without considering it as a task, your affection will dispose you to write frequently to me, as you well know nothing can give me equal pleasure. The young gentleman was here summoned to supper, and left me on the table; from which place I was not removed till the next morning, when a servant hastily carried me down stairs to my master, who was in a post-chaise with two gentlemen, and who put me with a melancholy air into his pocket. I shall not detain my readers with any account of our journey, or the reception he met with from Mr. Verber, the person who kept the school; but proceeded to inform them, that Master Henry was conducted by this gentleman into the play-yard, where he left him: telling him to amuse himself with his

new companions. He wanted courage to advance, and had rather have retired to give vent to the affliction which he felt at a separation from his beloved mother, (and the desertion of his uncles who had accompanied him) that lady having declined the office from a fear of increasing his distress. Some of the boys surveyed him in silence; and quietly marched off; the older ones took no notice of a child so much their inferior, and some of the young ones proclaimed the arrival of a *new boy*, with a noise to which he was quite unaccustomed. Several, however, whose diffidence was seldom any restraint, accosted him with an inquiry after his name, family, and place of abode; and concluded with asking in the technical term of the school, whether he had brought any *prog.* To this last question, as he really did not understand it, Henry returned no answer till it was explained to mean, whether he had any cakes, &c. to dispose of. He replied in the affirmative; but his baggage was not in his possession, and therefore he could not satisfy their demand. At last, however, he took me from his pocket, and was going to play with a greater degree of freedom than he had yet assumed, when, with some surprise, he heard the boys address him and each other by their *surnames*, without any distinction of *Master*, or *Sir*, to which terms he had always been accustomed. He made this observation the next day to one of

his play-fellows, and was, in consequence of it, ridiculed with the appellation of *Sir-Master*; an epithet which was intended to convey peculiar derision.

Henry soon found that his skill in spinning a top, was greatly inferior to his companions; and a great boy one day who liked my appearance, told him, he would exchange tops with him, or offered to toss up for me, to which he ignorantly consented. A halfpenny was produced, and Henry twice called out *heads*, and it turning up the reverse, I was declared the property of Frank Powel, to the great disappointment of my master, who did not like to resign me, and who had not understood the intention of the proposal, he wanted much to keep me in his possession. All the boys, however, being unanimous in the opinion, that matters had been fairly conducted, I was reluctantly delivered by poor Henry to a new owner, Powel was near ten, remarkably sprightly and active, and esteemed by his companions one of the cleverest boys in the school. He surveyed me with great pleasure, and ran to a number of his play-mates, who were playing at peg-top in a circle. My master soon entered me in the list, and I was unfortunately so little acquainted with the game, that I did not understand how to extricate myself. I met here with two of my brethren, who informed me, that all our



species who were introduced into this fatal inclosure, would attempt to split us, and make



their own escape: and I had a melancholy proof of the truth of this intelligence in the very top who communicated it, as it immediately experienced the fate above-mentioned; and, I saw with horror, one which belonged to my own master cleave it through the middle. The peg, which was a valuable one, as it was of ten *acorns*, was immediately declared to be his prize, and he took it up with an air of triumph and satisfaction. It is impossible to describe the uneasiness I felt at this spectacle, which was increased when another was thrown in, which approached so near as twice to assault my sides with great violence: the third time, however,

effected my deliverance, and drove me beyond the limits which had been marked for the contest. Powel snatched me up with an ardour of joy, and the bell then ringing for supper, he hastened in, and devoted the rest of the time, till he went to bed, to execute the task which Mr. Verber had allotted him.

The quick manner in which he despatched, and the facility with which he comprehended his learning; gained him the favour of his master, and excited the envy of his school-fellows. But the constant good-nature with which he behaved to them, inclined them at the same time to love and respect him. His invariable honour, and uncorrupted honesty had been so often distinguished, that Mr. Verber deputed to his charge, the payment of their weekly allowance to about twenty boys. His commission he had executed with universal credit and satisfaction; till one day, when Jack Growler, who was of a most wicked and malignant disposition, declared that he had been cheated of sixpence, and that he would appeal to his master for redress.

Powel, whose only fault was in general to be too passionate in the vindication of his conduct, disdained on the present occasion to answer the charge, and treated Growler with the most provoking contempt, telling him, that he was welcome to make what complaints he pleased,

since he neither feared nor cared for his accusation.

This behaviour inflamed Jack so much, that though he soon after found the money, which he had dropped when he received it, he was yet determined to be revenged: and both going



up to show their exercise to Mr. Verber at the same time, he slyly slipped the sixpence in debate, and which was a very remarkable one, having a hole directly through the middle, into Frank's pocket, and soon after alleged, that when Powel had paid him ninepence, which was the sum due to him, he had taken back the sixpence, and refused to restore it, declaring that he had paid the whole.

Mr. Verber immediately summoned the ac-

cused party to defend himself, who very warmly retorted upon Growler the charge of meanness, malice, and detraction, and declared that he had delivered him the whole; protesting in the most solemn manner, that he had never touched or seen it since. His companions joined in this account, and confirmed it by saying, the money was as remarkable as I described. Upon which their master ordered them both to be searched, which afforded no small degree of pleasure to Growler, who first submitted to the command, and escaped with greater honour than fell to the share of the innocent Powel, in whose possession the sixpence was found. Amazed, confounded, and provoked to the highest degree at this unexpected accident, my poor master could not contain his indignation. He loudly repeated his protestations of innocence, and laid the blame of treachery and deceit with great justice on his accuser. But still appearances were so much in his disfavour, that Mr. Verber sternly told him, his passions rising to such excess, was a confirmation of his guilt; adding, that unless he could clear himself from the imputation, he must expect the severest punishment, as his crime appeared of the most complicated nature; comprehending a charge of deceit, lying, and fraud; crimes of such magnitude, as he never *did*, nor ever *would* pardon. He then ordered him to deliver up the money with which he had

been entrusted, as he was not worthy the office of his secretary, till his character was cleared, and his innocence made manifest. He was ordered likewise to confinement in a small room, which was called the *Bastile*, because it had but one window, which was a sky-light; and whoever was thought deserving this punishment, was banished from all the rest of his companions, and secluded from every amusement. All the toys which were found in his pocket were confiscated to Mr. Verber, who took me as part of that number, and deposited me in a drawer in his own study; where I remained in a state of quietness and inaction for some time. The companions of my secluded state were a *tea-totum*, which had been seized from a boy who spun it in school-time when he ought to have been writing; a bag of *marbles* that had forfeited their liberty from their masters having rolled them on the seat of the pew at church; together with an exceeding good *ball*, which had been thrown up against the house, and made its way through the parlour window; and a *drum battledore*, and curious *shuttlecock*, which the owner had used in school-time, when he was despatched on another errand; and which had prolonged his stay till Mr. Verber had discovered his employment. After some time this gentleman took me out, and presented me once more to his favourite Powel, whose character had been fully

vindicated, and as I soon learned; and who was now reinstated in his master's favour, and restored to his former distinction. With a smile of complacence, Mr. Verber gave me back to my master, and assured him, it was with the greatest pleasure he congratulated him on the complete manifestation of his innocence: at the same time, said he, I must blame you for that indiscreet warmth, with which, on all occasions, you are apt to defend yourself; and which will ever be an injury to the best cause; and I assure you more inclined me to imagine you guilty, than any other argument could have done. Be convinced, Powel, that virtue can never be *assisted*, but may be often *hurt* by the indulgence of passion. However, I trust that you will have so much good sense as to improve from the consciousness of past failings: and I do insist upon your giving up all thoughts of personal revenge against your accuser, whose punishment I shall take into my own hands; and I hope that you are too generous, to think of bearing future ill-will and enmity against him, since the best way to prove your own superiority and merit, will be by a generous forgiveness; and I should be extremely sorry to be obliged, through your violence to him, to involve you in a similar condemnation. Powel expressed his satisfaction at his master's approbation, and thanking him

for the continuance of his confidence, with a low bow he left the room.

Jack Growler, as I afterwards found, had discoverd his treachery, by boasting of its success to one of his friends; and rejoicing in that plan of revenge, which had involved the innocent Powel in disgrace. But being overheard by his master, he had punished his wickedness by a severe flogging, and obliged him publicly to ask pardon, and likewise for some weeks deprived him of his allowance, as that had been the instrument of his malevolence. And, indeed, I have often had occasion to remark in the scenes in which I have been engaged, that however vice may triumph for a time, it is generally discovered in the end, and meets with its deserved retribution,

Soon after I was restored to my master, he went with four other boys, (who had likewise obtained leave so to do) to a neighbouring village, in order to purchase whipcord, gingerbread, marbles, and such other things as they wanted. Just as they set out for this purpose, Powel coming behind one of the party, whose name was Tom Swallowell, tossed his handkerchief over his head, and asked him how he should like to walk all the way blindfold! Why, I should not mind it a straw, returned he, and could find the path, I warrant you, without any assistance. I'll lay you sixpence, to be spent

in cheesecakes, which we will buy of the old pye-woman, said Powel, that you cannot go as far as the turnpike without assistance, if your eyes are bound up. Done! replied Tom, and I'll bet you sixpence that I can! but you shall promise that you will not let me run into danger without telling me of it; neither by going in the way of horses, or tumbling into a ditch. These articles agreed to, Swallowell stood still while they bound a handkerchief close over his eyes,



and he groped forward on his way. Tom, you must know, was remarkably fond of eating, and spent all his money in the purchase of tarts, fruit, and such kind of things; and at this time his cash was reduced to one poor twopence only,



so that he could not have immediately discharged his wager, had he lost it. At he was so fond of good things, he would make trial of whatever came in his way, and *taste* all that was offered him; by which means he was often disappointed, and sometimes made extremely sick. He had pursued his course in various directions, to the great entertainment of his companions; sometimes on one side of the road and sometimes on the other; one minute feeling for a post, which he thought he had arrived at, against the rails of a house; at another, groping for a tree in the middle of a highway; and, in short, appeared entirely ignorant at which part of his journey he had arrived. When they had got near half way, Mother Mixwell, the pye-woman, met them, and Tom was very earnest to taste some of the contents of her basket. Will Grinmore determined to purchase a laugh on the occasion, and offered him a custard if he could eat it without uncovering his eyes. That Tom agreed to be no impediment, and Will, with the assistance of the rest, prepared his present, by mixing with it a good quantity of cow-dung, which lay very opportunely in the road, some cattle having just passed in their way to a neighbouring farm. Swallowell, whose greedy disposition always engaged him to take a large mouthful, very eagerly received the custard; but had soon occasion to repent his

haste, and without thinking of his wager, (one of the conditions of which was, that he should on *no* occasion remove the bandage) he hastily pulled off the handkerchief, and began spitting and sputtering in a manner truly diverting. Powel soon demanded his sixpence, as the forfeit of unbinding his eyes; but Tom very angrily refused, declaring that he had been cheated, and that the filthy custard had been given him as a concerted measure to make him lose the wager. Powel denied the charge, but resented such an affront to his honour, and Grinmore having diverted himself some time with the anger of both parties, at length avowed that it was entirely his doing, and that Frank was wholly innocent of such an insidious design.

This, however, did not satisfy the displeased Swallowell, who still retained the taste of the cow-dung strongly in his mouth. He, therefore, gave Powel a blow on his head as he was stooping to buckle his shoe. This dastardly trick was soon returned by Frank with some violence, who declared himself unwilling to fight; but that he would not tamely stand still to be thrashed in such a cowardly manner, by a boy to whom he was much superior. After drubbing him some time he walked on with his companions, and left battered Tom rolling in the middle of the road, to taste a second time, the cow-dung which had occasioned the quarrel,

and into the midst of which his antagonist had thrown him.

Just as he was rising, and trying to wipe off the dirt and dust which his clothes were covered with, he was overtaken by Mr. Verber, who was taking a walk with Powel's father, that gentleman having arrived a short time before on a visit to his son.



The master inquired of Swallowell the cause of his being in that dirty and wounded condition; of which being informed, he sent him home, and pursued his walk in quest of his adversary. These particulars I learned from a friend of my master's, to whom Tom communicated them on his return.

Powel in the mean time arrived at the village, and having purchased the necessaries he set out to procure, sat down on a stile to eat some gingerbread; after which he took me out, and was just going to try my skill in pegging a halfpenny, when Mr. Verber and his father arrived. This unexpected sight afforded him great pleasure, and he accompanied the latter to an inn in the above-mentioned village, where he had bespoke a dinner, promising to return with his son, and drink tea with Mr. Verber; that gentleman after mutual compliments, leaving us to return home. I shall pass over the numberless inquiries which my master made after every individual of his family, not forgetting Ball, the black coach horse, and his companion Smiler; together with a great many questions after Rover, the young pointer, and old Honesty, the great yard dog; all which his father answered very kindly, and much to his satisfaction. But as the reader is not acquainted with Miss Polly his sister, or Miss Patty his little cousin, and a thousand Jacks, Toms, and Harrys, about whose welfare he appeared to be extremely solicitous, I shall omit these particulars to give some account of the advice which his father afterwards thought proper to give him, previous to their separation. He began by inquiring into the character of Swallowell, and Powel told him, that he was a good-natured

boy enough, but so greedy, that he was the jest of the whole school, every one taking pleasure to cheat him into a trial of some disagreeable taste. And I find *you* have this morning been of that number, replied his father which I should not be much inclined to blame, as such a hog-like disposition is a just subject of ridicule. But I am very sorry, Frank, the warmth of your temper has hurried you to add offence to raillery, and that you have concluded by fighting, what you began in play. You well know, my dear boy, the frequent caution I have given you upon this subject. I would by no means have you a *coward*, or afraid of being *hurt*; but to be ever ready to strike, or return a blow, is a proof of the violence of your passion, but no argument of the justice of your cause. If the boy you engage with is younger than yourself, it is the highest degree of meanness to take such an unfair advantage of his inferiority; and if he is older, you stand but a bad chance. Nor do I think such contests either prudent or honourable between *equals* in *age* and *strength*. To forgive an injury, and overlook an affront, is a much higher instance of *true* magnanimity, than to obtain the most complete conquest: and, in general, those are most ready to fight, who have been the aggressors, and commenced the dispute: but an ill action is not rendered more excuseable, or an unfair advantage reconciled

to justice by the blows of passion, or the taunts of provocation. Let me persuade you, therefore, to forbear this ungenerous use of that strength which was bestowed for nobler purposes; and endeavouring to make yourself *beloved* for your *kindness*, rather than *feared* for



your *resentment*. “ But if it was known, re-  
 “ plied my master, that a boy would not *fight*,  
 “ he would be subject to the insults of every  
 “ urchin in the school, and might stand still like  
 “ a cock on a Shrove Tuesday, to be thrown at  
 “ by every coward who was not afraid to be  
 “ trashed in return: and I do maintain it to be  
 “ *impossible* to keep one’s character without it.”  
 You are much mistaken, young man, returned

his father. I know what being at school is, and have been more years there than yourself; and if you will petulantly take offence at every little misunderstanding, and be so soon subject to take an affront, you may then find the cultivation of peace impossible.—But if on the contrary, you determine never to strike the first blow, nor ever return it but in self-defence, you will find, that those occasions but seldom happen; and there will other instances arise, to prove your contempt of pain, and for the exertion of your *courage*. In short, I think a boy who is afraid of being *hurt*, shows a very *weak* mind; but one that delights to hurt others, proves that he has a very *wicked* one.

Powel coloured at the keenness of this reproof, and assured his father, that he would endeavour for the future to avoid quattrelling as much as he could. With this assurance the conversation was concluded, as they arrived at Mr. Verber's gate. What passed in their interview with that gentleman, I cannot tell; as, on entering the house, I was borrowed of my master by Ben Playful, and accompanied him into the yard. He was just going to engage with another, in what might be called a race; which was, to try which of the two could first chip a halfpenny from the middle, to the wall of the play-ground. My antagonist, either from a defect in its form, or from a want of skill in

its owner, in vain essayed to make the money advance; two or three times it just removed it to a little distance, but more frequently failed of touching it at all.—While my new master (for such he afterwards became) with the most expert dexterity, guided me forwards to the spot he wished; and, at four spins, the halfpenny bounded forcibly against the wall. In a second and third game I met with equal success, and Ben exulted in having borrowed the most excellent Top he had ever met with. I was next engaged with one of my associates, whom I remember to have seen in the very drawer which I mentioned in the beginning of these memoirs, as the first place I was introduced to.—We had not much time for conversation, as we were each alternately pegged at an old brass button, with an intention to determine its progress different ways. I sought to impel it to the right, and my adversary, with great assiduity, endeavoured to force it to the left hand; while the successful labours of each, impressed the looks of our employers, with alternate joy or regret. At length, however, when the distance had nearly thrown me into despair, Playful, who was an adept in every game, with great judgment threw me upon the button, and struck it with such force, that it flew so great a distance as to secure the expectation of victory, which the next attempt put beyond a doubt. This



matter being decided, he was counting my *acorns* with great attention, when Powel joined him, and desired to have me restored: but Playful offered to give a *bat* and *ball* in exchange,



and begged he might keep me; to which Powel consenting, I became Ben Playful's property. I was now always in use: for my new master thought but little of his studies, though his neglect met with frequent disgrace.

In the morning he was continually in such a hurry, that he scarce knew which of his lessons to attend; and it was no unusual thing to see him employ the little time he had in searching for his books, which were generally thrown by with careless indifference the moment school hours were over. It may be easily imagined,

that in this situation he made greater proficiency in his play than in his learning; and indeed he was surpassed in the one by many boys of seven, though he was himself ten years old: while in every amusement he was considered as the first leader, and the most expert of the whole society. I had soon reason to repent the disposition of my new master; for although he commended me extremely, yet he complained that I was too heavy, and proposed a plan for my improvement, which I shudder to relate.

It was on a Saturday afternoon, that he began to put in execution his cruel project. And, ah! gentle reader! will you not sympathize with my sufferings, when I inform you, that this detestable scheme was no other than to extract my peg, and insert it in another top? My apprehensions on hearing such a dreadful intention were beyond description; and had I been capable of tears, to be sure I should have wept most plentifully. This relief was however denied, and all I could do, was patiently to expect my fate. Nor indeed would the prospect have been at all improved, by the indulgence of those lamentations which are peculiar to the human species. No one, I suppose, likes to be in pain; but it is surely a great degree of weakness, and extremely unmanly, to cry and blubber upon every occasion, as I have seen some boys do, while they at the same time

refuse the necessary means of relief, and endure that uneasiness of which they are so impatient, because they want resolution to take some nauseous medicine which is prescribed as a cure for their disorder. I felt with the most dreadful apprehension, the string twisted right round my peg, while several boys stood by, as unfeeling spectators of my agony. They soon retired to the distance of a few paces to secure themselves from the danger of a blow, which they justly apprehended I might be the occasion of: nor, indeed, had this precaution been omitted, could I possibly avoid such an accident. My master likewise took care to retreat behind a tree, while he swung me with all his force against its sides; till at length overpowered by the blows, I felt myself divided, and my head flew off with impetuosity to a considerable distance, and lighting on a large bell-glass. (which the gardener had put down, while he opened a gate through which he wanted to pass) and broke it into a thousand pieces. The consternation which this misfortune had caused, for a time suspended the attention of my tormentors, and Playful appeared to be extremely apprehensive of the consequence. The gardener immediately seized on his shoulder, and declared he should appear before his master, and answer for the accident, which would otherwise be imputed to his negligence. To

this Ben had great objections: first, because he expected Mr. Verber to be displeas'd with the fracture of the glass, and for a second reason, as he had omitted, for the sake of performing the above operation, to learn a task which he had been order'd to get perfectly before night. His resistance was however in vain; so putting my peg into his waistcoat pocket, and the gardner



taking my head in his left hand, while with the right he dragg'd my master along, we proceeded to the great parlour, where we found Mr. Verber, two ladies, and a gentleman. The complaint was soon preferred against my larger part, which very narrowly escap'd from certain destruction; Mr. Verber at the conclusion of the account, tossing me, without the least concern,

into the fire; which, fortunately for me, happened to have a large quantity of fresh coals just laid on; so that I did not immediately suffer from that conflagration, of which I was terribly afraid. My case, however, seemed to be desperate; and although the reader may be anxious to hear the fate of my master, he must remember, that it is the Memoirs of a Peg-Top he is reading, and that therefore I consider myself as the principal object of his attention, I shall consequently take the liberty of first informing him what were my own reflections in this dismal situation; before I concern myself to release Ben



Playful, who is all this time standing in a state of frightful suspense before his master, and listening to the accusation of the gardener. As a

top when divided, as I then was, is just as capable of thought, as when in the most perfect condition, both parts having the power of imagination when separated, if such is the will of fancy to bestow; because as none but human beings can possess these properties which I now suppose, so it is equally easy to imagine, that the peg and the head can both understand a language, and reflect or fear, or rejoice and anticipate an event, when apart, as if they were united. In other words, any thing which a man can possibly make must be incapable of understanding. And therefore when a story is written, or told, where things inanimate are represented as talking or acting, it must be known to be only supposition; as in reality wood cannot feel nor iron think. So if the Author of this volume chooses to make both parts of me comprehend at the same time, you can just as well imagine that, as any thing else which you are told of the like kind. To continue then the account of my adventures, I must inform you, that I lay on the summit of a hill of coals in a dreadful apprehension that the blaze of two or three flues, which had made their way in different parts around, would some one of them reach and consume me. The force of my fall had sunk a kind of bed, as it were, in which I partly reposed; but every moment, as it increased my danger, added to the dread

which I experienced: and I had certainly been destroyed in a few moments, as I felt the coals which supported me give way, the fire having burnt a hollow space underneath, and a large cake falling in, I had unavoidably perished, but for the kind assistance of the gentleman above-mentioned; who going to stir the fire, took me



out with the tongs, saying, that it was a pity such a nice top should be lost, as they were so many children in the house who would be glad to possess it.

From this instance a moral reflection or two is so obvious, that I cannot persuade myself to omit them. As I was strongly impressed at the time with the consideration, that however innocence may be exposed through the folly of others

to misfortune and danger, yet some method will be ever found for its rescue and protection. And this should incline those who are in an uneasy situation, to bear with patience the vexations which may occur; as they may be well assured, if they act with propriety themselves, they will in the end be enabled to surmount every difficulty, and rejoice in the comforts of a more agreeable state. While those who neglect a proper attention to their necessary business, from an inclination to present pleasure, will frequently meet with some accident to obstruct their wishes, and punish them effectually for their disobedience.

Ben Playful had at this time reason to be sensible of the truth of what is here advanced, as his master declared, that after paying for the glass, which he thought in justice he was obliged to do, he should have been no ways displeas'd, had not his fondness for play constantly been the occasion of neglecting his studies: he therefore kept him confin'd the rest of the evening, till he had, in some degree, made amends for his former omission.—When it was bed time, and he had repeated the lesson which he had since been very diligent to learn, he begged that I might be restored, promising to behave with more caution for the future. I am sorry Playful, replied Mr. Verber, that your idleness does so frequently oblige me both to blame and



punish you. For my own credit I should certainly be desirous to have you improve; but it is not of equal consequence to any person, as it will in future be to yourself. To acquire a competent knowledge of different languages, but especially of your own and the Latin tongue, is so essential to the character of a gentleman, that without it, you will certainly (be your fortune ever so large) meet with derision and contempt. A man who has the advantage of good sense, improved by a liberal education, may, with assiduity and diligence, raise himself in the world, and be universally respected, although destitute of riches: but the greatest affluence cannot purchase esteem, when the possessor is illiterate or ill-bred. Bad spelling, or bad English, are certain indications of want of sense, and will be always considered as such: and if you are not attentive to acquire a thorough knowledge of your grammar, you will never at any age be able to speak with propriety, or write with elegance. The farther you advance in learning, the more agreeable you will find it; but by deferring your business for the sake of playing a little longer, you multiply your troubles, and introduce such confusion in the disposition of your time, as involves you in perpetual difficulty. Young people are seldom to be persuaded, that the first part of their days is the only season for the attainment of knowledge;

but believe me, Playful, if you neglect the present opportunity of improvement, you will have reason to repent your folly to the latest hour of your life.

My master very seriously attended to the conclusion of this good advice; but, before he retired, again intreated to have me restored. I was accordingly delivered to him with repeated charges to behave better, which he promised faithfully to comply with.

The next morning he rose very early with an intention of keeping his word; but, unluckily, in feeling for his handkerchief, my head rolled out at the same time from his pocket. The temptation of completing his top before school time became too great to be resisted, and going to some of his companions who had been of his party the preceding day, a consultation was held to determine to what top my peg should be joined: when after various experiments with several others, it was decreed, that my divided parts should be again re-united; and Playful hastily taking his hat, scraped of a little as it lay on his knee, and applying it to the end of my peg, in hopes of making it spin lighter, thrust it once more into its former position. As he had laid aside his books for the sake of finishing the improvement in his top, which the day before he had begun, he found it impossible to withstand the inclination of at least trying

how I should spin; and finding me much lighter than before, he went on with another and another trial, intending each one should be the last, his conscience suggesting all the time, the danger to which he exposed himself, of offending his master by a violation of his promise. He was twisting



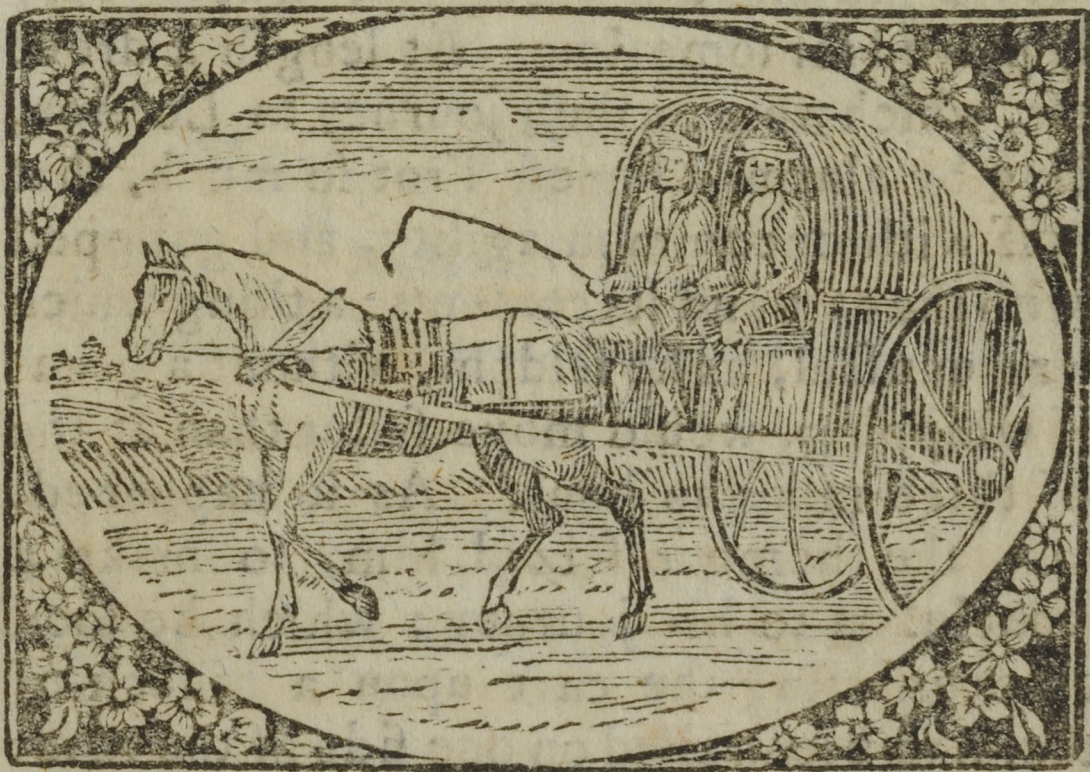
the string round as quick as he could move his fingers, telling his school-fellows, that he actually would play no longer than I kept up, before he went into his studies, when the school bell rang, and obliged him to attend its dreaded, but unavoidable summons.

With a heavy heart he put me into his pocket and going to a bench in the yard, where he had left it, took up his book, reading his lesson over as he slowly crept along, till stopping a consider-

able time at a window in a passage which led to the school, one of the ushers came softly behind, and giving him a hearty stroke with a cane upon his shoulders, told him to quicken his pace, for he was always lag last. The distress which he afterwards experienced on account of his neglect, was a deserved punishment for his disobedience to his master's advice, after giving a promise to the contrary. But so it ever will happen where a fondness for amusement is suffered to prevail to such excess, as to engross that portion of time, which ought to be more usefully employed.

Children are apt to think, that a few minutes, added to their diversions, can make no difference; and minutes slip away insensibly into a quarter of an hour; their play becomes more interesting, the game is nearly concluded, or the kite will soon be down, it is a pity to stop its flight! a race will shortly be determined, or some such reason prevails, till the time is elapsed in which their business should have been attended; and they are left to bewail in sorrow and regret the folly of their negligence. It would be more prudent, therefore, at first to secure the essentials, and do what is necessary before they begin to engage in those diversions, which, however laudable in their proper season, may frequently ensnare them into error, and subject them to future punishment.

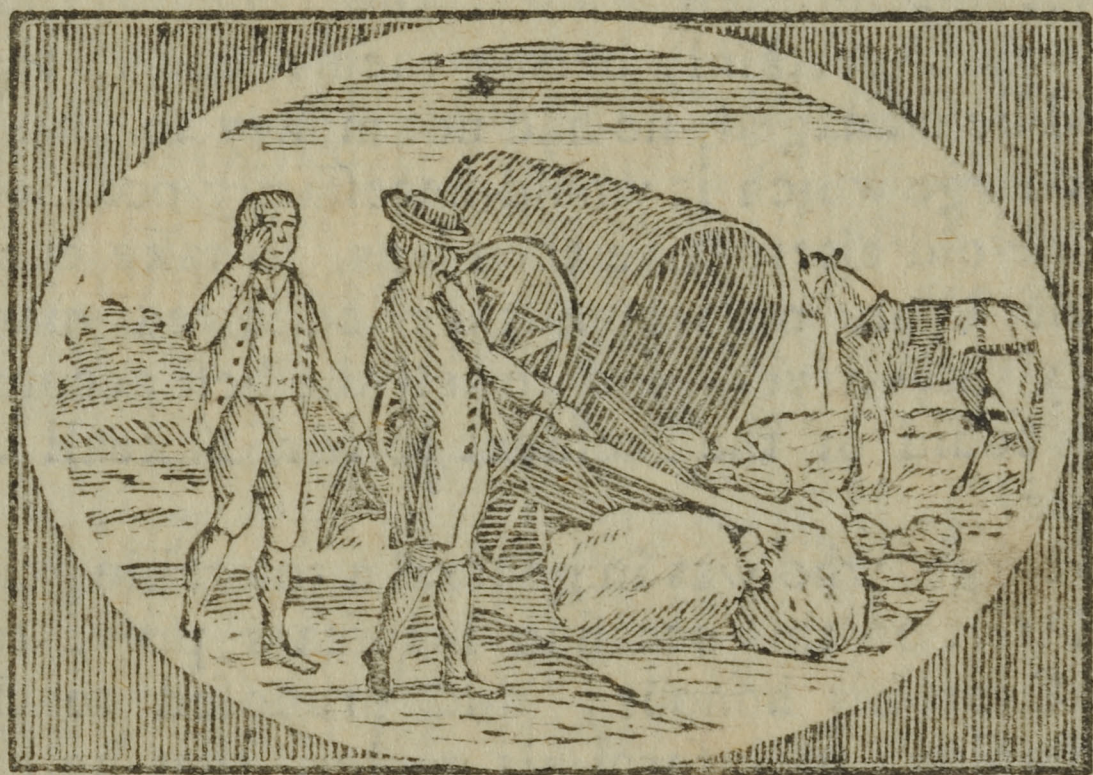
Poor Playful! who would have had time sufficient to have finished his job, and might have quietly enjoyed me when school time was over, by an indiscreet use of his morning hours, was confined all the rest of the day, and had an additional task given him to learn, upon pain of a severe flogging if it was neglected. — Whether he underwent any punishment, or what afterwards became of him, I can't tell, as I slipped through a hole in his pocket as he was standing at the yard gate after breakfast, whether he had been sent by the Latin Usher to fetch one of his companions who was at play in the road, I did not however remain long in a state of freedom, but was picked up by a baker's boy, who brought bread to Mr. Verber's. He surveyed me with



great joy, and we soon mounted together into his cart, and jolted on to several other houses in the neighbourhood; at one of which my new master met with a companion, who begged to ride to the next village, which was about half a mile distance. This boy who was near twelve years old, had been to carry a letter from a charity school, to which he belonged, to one of the gentlemen who was a benefactor to it.

Charles Heedmore (which was the name my master called him by) was soon made acquainted with the treasure which George Mealwell had found, and I was produced in consequence; and both parties agreed to make trial of my merit on the spot. Old Trot was accordingly stopped, and they adjourned to a piece of ground which suited with their intention; from whence they could watch the cart, and where they quietly played for some time. At length a drove of geese, which were on their journey to London, in passing by alarmed honest Trot so much, that he set off with uncommon agility, and galloped away with the cart and its contents: a thing which was very unusual, as he seldom, without a great deal of whipping, would move faster than at the rate of three miles an hour. As it happened, however, the humour seized him, to make a hasty conclusion to his journey; which he soon did, by upsetting the cart upon a hillock of dirt, that had been raised on one side of the road.

My master and his companion, who perceived their horse set off with such uncommon speed, immediately followed him with all the haste they could make, and were just time enough to be witnesses of (though not to prevent) the overthrow, which they most sadly deplored. To their great sorrow they soon found that one of the shafts were broken in two, and the top of the cart had received considerable damage; while poor Trot lay floundering and kicking, having entangled himself in the harness. They in vain endeavoured to set him



free, and were so terrified, especially George Mealwell, with the apprehension of returning to his master, that he was incapable of using the proper methods of procuring him liberty: at

length, however, with the assistance of a countryman, who was coming from a potatoe field, the horse was extricated, and the cart pronounced incapable of proceeding. The point was now to be determined, whether they should go home with the horse, and inform his master of the accident, or first endeavour to get a cartwright who lived in the village, to come and inspect the damage, and try to repair it. But to this last proposal George very justly objected, that if the man would consent to come, and even if he should be so fortunate as to accomplish their wishes, the time of their stay would certainly betray them; and if that could be managed, he had not money to satisfy the charge which it would necessarily occasion.

The old alternative then was, to take home honest Trot, on whom they bestowed many angry invectives, and to tell the best account they could of the accident to Mr. Bakeall his owner.

George, who was in general a tolerable good boy, felt on this occasion his fears prove too great for his honour; and proposed to his companion, to inform his master, that he had never left the cart but upon account of his business, and that the appearance of a man suddenly starting out of a hedge, had frightened the horse, who ran away with him, and nearly killed him by the overset of the cart, which all



his endeavours could not prevent: adding, that he would contrive to get a good bruise on his shoulder, and a scratch on the face, to prove the truth of his assertion, and which would incline his master to pity his sufferings and mitigate his anger. For to say that Trot had been frightened at a drove of geese would appear highly improbable, and subject the reality of his tale to be doubted.

Heedmore represented to his friend, that to speak the truth on all occasions, was, in his opinion, the safest way; as he would certainly live in continual dread of detection, and if that happened, incur a greater degree of punishment, and expose himself to unavoidable contempt: that the word of a liar is at all times liable to suspicion, and that it was to add wickedness to folly, to pursue the scheme he had mentioned. He therefore concluded with a concurrence with the old maxim, that come what might, in his mind, "honesty would be the best policy." George agreed to the force of his arguments in general, but opposed in this particular instance, the dread he was in of his master's displeasure.

That as to any discovery, he thought it utterly impossible, as no one was witness to the accident, or could confront him with a falsehood. That he had as great a dislike to lying as Heedmore, but really he did not relish the thoughts

of a thrashing, which a confession of the truth would certainly bring him, and in short, he was resolved to tell the story according to the above plan.

Charles repeated his reasons to dissuade him from so wrong a determination, and enforced them by saying, if he asked any questions about the affair, he would certainly declare the truth; which must involve Mealwell in disgrace, and reveal his deceit.

George, in consequence of this speech, grew extremely angry, and called his opponent a mean-spirited ill-natured treacherous fellow: declared he should scorn to betray a friend, and incur the odious character of mischief-making tell-tale. That if he did use him so basely, he would fight with him wherever he met him, and never speak or play with him again. To these threats Charles replied, that he was extremely sorry to perceive he was so much displeas'd, but he did not think he had behaved amiss, or given any just cause of offence: and continued he, I cannot agree to lie for you, though I would do every thing to serve you.

My father, George, said he, though he is but a poor shoemaker, and has, as you know, a large family, yet he has been very kind to us, and taken great pains to teach us as much as he can; and has got me into the charity-school,

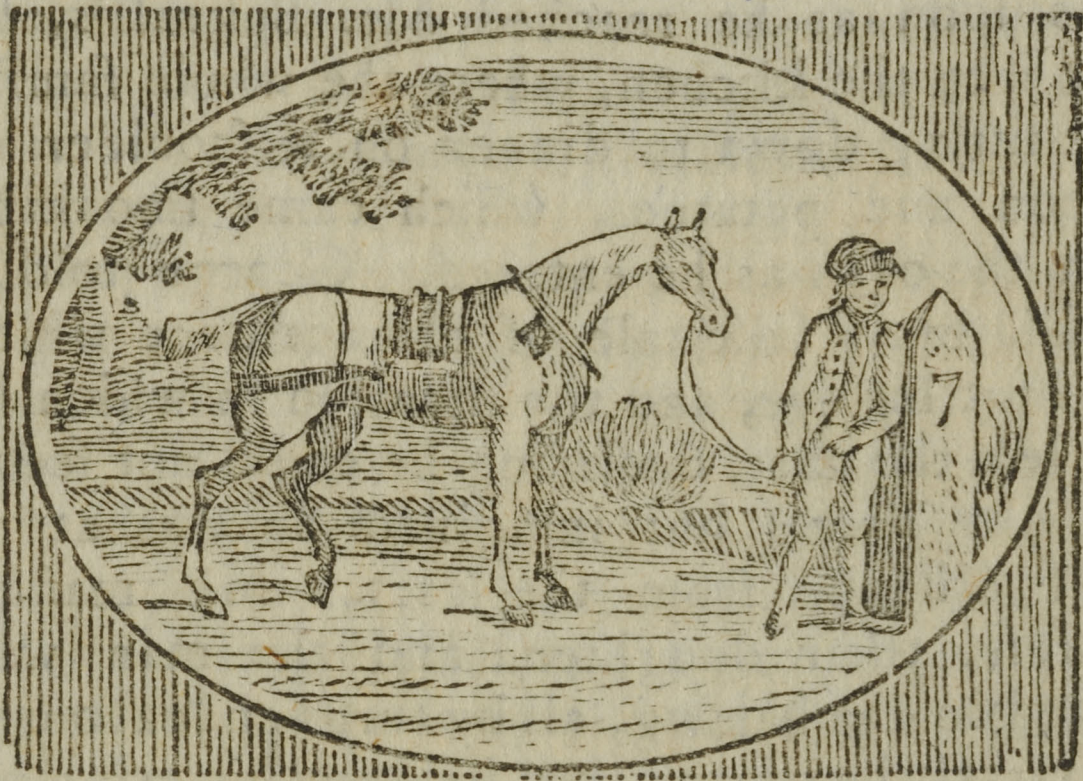
because he says it is a fine thing to be able to read and write; and my eldest brother, who is two year's older than I am, was taken a great while ago into farmer Wood's family, who would have provided for him, and did find him in his clothes; and gave him several presents. But Jack, like a simpleton, one day when he was sent with a letter to the post-office, forgot to carry it, and afterwards being afraid his master would be angry, said he had delivered it, and threw it into the fire to prevent being discovered.

While it was burning he was called away, and Mr. Wood found a piece which had dropped on the hearth, and which he produced to Jack, and scolded him heartily for telling such a falsity. Some time after that, he was sent to the next market town, to fetch a parcel which was left there from London: he staid very late to see a puppet-show, and when he came home, said, he had lost his way, (the night being very foggy) and that had detained him so long; adding a story of his own invention of the places he had wandered to. In short, his lies were discovered, and Mr. Wood sent him home, declaring he would have nothing further to do with a naughty boy; and he has never since got into place, no one being willing to take him with such a character.

This example, which I would not have mentioned, but to persuade you how wicked and foolish it is to be guilty of such a crime, may be a warning to you, to avoid falling into such a state as poor Jack has done; who has in vain tried to regain his lost good name. But do as you will, I am determined to speak the truth if I suffer for it at present, since I never did otherwise but once, and then I was so unhappy, that I resolved never to do the like again. For after all, George, if we are not found out, yet God sees and knows whether we speak truth or not; and I do always think of a chapter of the Acts I had a good while ago for my lesson at school, where a man and his wife dropped down dead for telling a lie; and I remember my master told Tom Hide, that though he might not die about it, he would certainly be punished, both in this world and the next. I am sure, said George, I shall be punished now with a vengeance if I speak the truth; but I am not such a liar as Hide neither; so if you promise not to betray me unless you are asked, and not to tell any body you was with me, why I will do as I told you, and go you home now, and leave me to come presently, if your conscience is not too squeamish for that.

Heedmore endeavoured to dissuade his friend once more from his purpose; but finding his

arguments were ineffectual, left him with regret. My new master employed himself in thumping his shoulder against a milestone, with



an intent to bruise it as he had projected, but having a great objection to every kind of pain, his knocks were so gentle as to make but little impression. He afterwards attempted to scratch his face, first with his nails, which he wanted resolution to use effectually, and afterwards with a piece of bramble which he tore out of a hedge, and which succeeded better than he wished, as a thorn got into his eye, and occasioned the most violent agony: a just reward for the wickedness of his intention, in so wilfully resolving to deceive his master. His endeavours to extract it proving quite ineffectual,

he stood screaming with the pain for some time, and at last hurried home leaving Trot to graze along the side of the road, which he did very quietly.

As soon as he reached Mr. Bakeall's, he went into the kitchen, where the whole family were sitting down to dinner on a shoulder of mutton and potatoes, which came smoaking from the oven as he entered. George told a pitiful, but a false tale of the accident which had hurt his eye, and the situation in which he had left the cart, declaring he could not see to find old Trot; but imagined he was at no great distance from the cart. His master, mistress, their daughter, and the man who assisted in the baking, all by turns endeavoured to extract the thorn: but he kept his eye close shut, by which means it worked its way still farther, and made the misfortune more dangerous. The anguish growing almost insupportable, his master took him to a Mr. Keen, a surgeon in the village, who declared the case to be a very bad one, and though he got it out at last, it was with the greatest degree of difficulty.

He then inquired by what means it had happened, and Mr. Bakeall gave the account which he had received from George, adding, that his man was gone to see what was become of the horse and cart. At the conclusion of the

history, Mr. Keen hoped there was no lie in the case, as he saw Mealwell at play with another boy at peg-top; and the horse and cart standing without a driver in the road, as he came from visiting a patient. He said likewise, that he knew the other boy by sight, and believed it to be Charles Heedmore the shoemaker's son.

George, who was now in a terrible fright, was yet unwilling to confess that he had told an untruth; so to prove the veracity of his former assertion, was obliged to support it by repeated lies. Thus does the commission of error lead to numberless crimes; and his first fault in leaving his business to attend unseasonably to his play, was the occasion of such a train of wickedness and guilt.

Mr. Bakeall, who before the present event, had never any reason to suspect the veracity of his apprentice, was strongly inclined to give credit to the history he had related; yet, at the same time, thought it necessary to discover the truth, that the success of a lie, if it be proved to be one, might not encourage him to any future deceit. He accordingly first searched his pocket, and finding me there, was rather staggered in his good opinion of Mealwell, as he knew he had not a top in his possession in the morning, having heard him at breakfast wish he could afford to purchase one. Taking

me, therefore, in his hand, he left George in the charge of Mr. Keen, and proceeded to Heedmore's father's, in hopes of learning further about the affair.

Having told his business, the old man desired him to walk into a little room behind his shop, and he would as soon as his son came home, whom he every moment expected, make the inquiries he wished, and that the door being left open between he might be an ear witness to his replies. This proposal being assented to, Mr. Bakeall seated himself in readiness, and Charles very soon entered the shop. His father immediately inquired what had occasioned his



not being at home to dinner? To which question he at first returned no answer: but

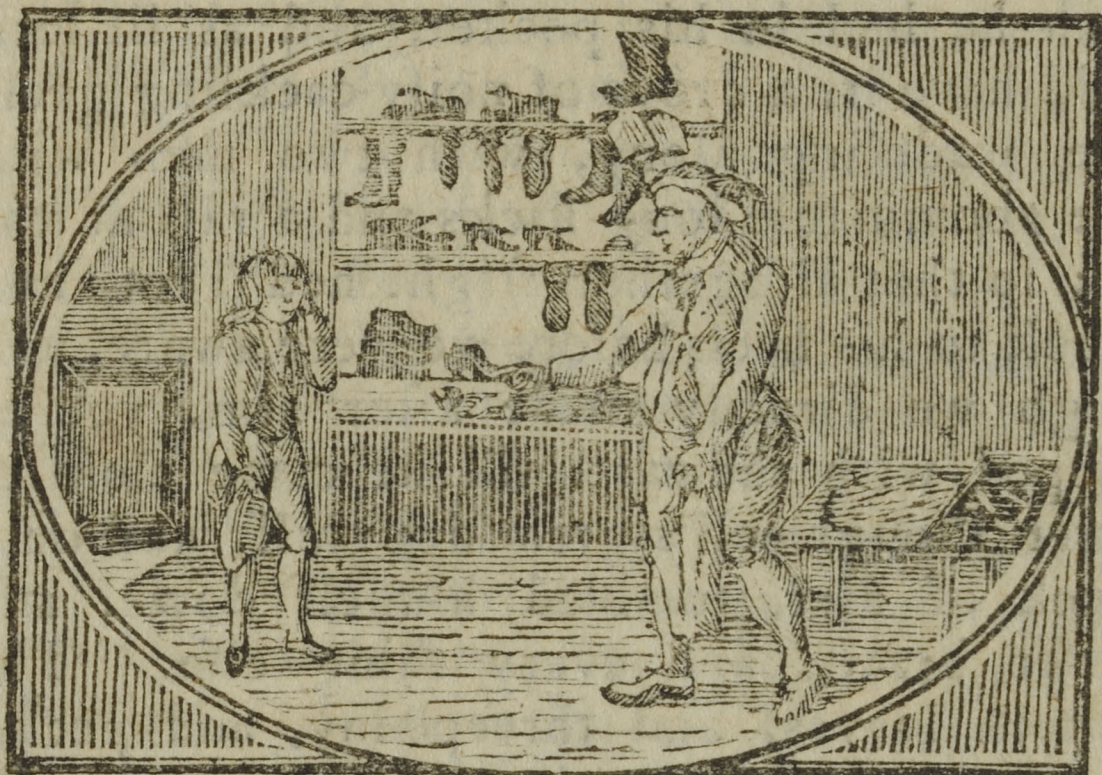


upon its being repeated, he honestly said, he did not like to tell, because another person was concerned with him on the occasion of his stay; however, said he, I will acknowledge thus far, that I foolishly loitered away my time, for the sake of a game with the best Peg-Top I ever saw. And was you at school as soon as you ought to have been? said his father. Why, I can't say I was, replied he; and my master was extremely angry, and would now the cause; and he blamed me very much for my idleness; but in consideration of having told the truth, he did not punish me; which he said, he should otherwise have done. But I am afraid, father, when you know what has been the consequence of my folly, you will be less merciful. Why, pray, what has? said Mr. Heedmore, in a voice sufficiently stern to have intimidated a boy of less honour than honest Charles. Don't be angry, and you shall know all! The pair of shoes which I was to have delivered to farmer Trudgeman, I lost while I was at play, I laid them down on the milestone, and till I came home, never once thought of them again: and though I then ran back to the place as fast as I could, they were gone. You lost the shoes? returned his father. Why, child, you never had them! I gave them to Jack to carry home, and you can't have had them, for you have never been in the house since.

Here was a subterfuge, by which Charles, had he been so inclined, might for the present have saved himself, and laid the blame on his brother. But disdaining such an ungenerous and base artifice, he added, that he was very sorry for his fault, but he had lost the shoes; for Jack had met him when he first came from school, and desired him as he was going with the circular letters, to carry them with him.

His father then insisted upon knowing with whom he had been at play, as probably they had been stolen by his companion. Charles assured him that could not be the case; and afterwards in vindication of his friends character, declared it was George Mealwell; but intreated his father on no account to reveal what he had told him to any one. What is your reason, Charles, rejoined Mr. Heedmore, for requiring silence? was there any great crime in playing with you at peg-top? To be sure you was wasting the time in which you should have been getting ready for school; but why is Mealwell so much afraid of its being known? Ah! Father, replied Charles, shaking his head, I wish he may have no more to answer for than I have; but in confidence I will tell you, that when we parted, he was determined to tell his master such a shocking lie about the cart, which the one-eyed horse ran away with and broke, and to hurt his own

eyes, and bruise his shoulder, to the truth of his story, that it has quite altered my opinion of him; though indeed I believe him to be strictly honest, and that he would not cheat any body for the world.



Those who are so wicked as to lie, returned Mr. Heedmore, will be guilty (at least are to be suspected) of any crime, since to forfeit your word, is to break every tie of honour; 'tis like the hemp with which we sew the shoes, Charles; if that fails, they will come in pieces, you know, and be rotten, and good for nothing. So if people say one thing, and mean another, there is no knowing when you may trust their tale.

But pray, how came the beast to set off? he looks staid and steady enough! I should never suspect him of a prancing freak! Why, father, replied Charles, we were busy on the ground upon the left hand side of the road, and George had just taken up a Top in a wooden spoon, which he had in his pocket, and as ill-luck would have it, a drove of noisy cackling geese came waddling along, with two men with those abominable long sticks and a rag at the end; so that altogether frightened Trot, and he took to his heels before we were aware, and though we directly made after him, yet he galloped with the cart, till he came close to farmer Ploughwell's great dunghill, and on a hillock of dirt, tumbled himself down, and overset bread, and every thing else. The quartern loaves, and threepenny, and pecks, and two bags of flour, all rolled into the middle of the road; but as it is a dry day, that was no great harm; the worst matter of all was, the cart was broken, and the harness much damaged, and so for fear his master should be angry, as he certainly would be, Mealwell was resolved to lie, and get of that way if he can.

And did you endeavour (inquired his father) to persuade him not to do so? for to know that was his mind, and leave him to follow it, was not much like an honest fellow. Yes, that I did, answered Charles! but he would have his

own way, and desired me to march home, and so I did at last, when I found all I could say was to no purpose.

Well, you are a good boy, said Mr. Heedmore, but I hardly think it right to know he is telling such a falsehood, without letting it be known; and I think his master ought to be acquainted with his tricks. He then concluded with lamenting the loss his son's carelessness had occasioned; but said, he would convince him that he was not less merciful than his schoolmaster, by pardoning his fault for the sake of encouragement to his veracity: assuring him, that truth would be at all times its own reward. After receiving his father's acquittal, Charles walked away with the cheerful appearance of conscious innocence, and Mr. Bakeall came forward to take his leave. He soon returned to the terrified Mealwell, who in the mean time had suffered all the uneasiness of a guilty conscience, being afraid of detection, punishment, and contempt. His master informed Mr. Keen of the success of his visit, and concluded with high commendations of Charles Heedmore: and after which, turning to George, he said very calmly, you had good reason to think I should have been angry at an accident, which has happened entirely from your idleness and folly. But you shall find, my lad, that your trimming shall be pretty handsomely increased,

for the lies you have told about it! So saying, he took him by the shoulder, and turned him towards the door.



Mr. Keen hoped his eye would soon be well, and said, he was sorry he had behaved in so wicked a manner as to deserve chastisement. but hoped, it would be a warning to him in future, that in doing a wrong action no one can be sure of secrecy; and that to be faithful to truth upon all occasions, is the only way to be secure from evil. He then took his leave, and his visitors departed.

George trudged silently on, with a heavy heart, behind his master, who had misunderstood Mr. Keen's expression abovementioned, of a *warning*, and called out to him to quicken

his pace, adding, yes, yes, as the surgeon says, I'll give you a *warming* with a vengeance! you shall not be cold in a hurry, I'll warrant you! Come along you lying dog! I'll try whether you can feel my horse-whip as soon as you get home; and as for your eye, if you had quite lost it, it would have been but what you deserved. This threat, it may be well imagined, did not make George more willing to proceed. So taking hold of his arm, Mr. Bakeall, who was near the house, dragged him on, and first examined the bruise on his shoulder, which was scarce visible, but which he promised his strokes should much increase; and then leading him to a tree in a little yard, where the man was entering with old Trot and the shattered cart, he snatched his whip in a hurry, and tying him up with some rope, which had fastened the broken harness, thrashed him so violently, that the blood followed his strokes before he concluded; which was sufficiently visible, as he had taken off his clothes before he began. This ended an affair of which I had been the innocent occasion, and which George imagined he in some measure revenged in a short time after, when finding me on the seat of an old easy chair, where Mr. Bakeall had thrown me, he took me up, and abused me with as much warmth as if I had been able to defend myself; concluding with

a declaration, that I should never again get him a thrashing; and that but for me, he had been in a whole skin. So saying, he whirled me with great violence into the high road, where I narrowly escaped falling on a sharp stone, which must inevitably have split and rendered me useless: but fortunately I rolled on the edge of an opposite path-way, where I was soon after picked up, for the first time in my life, by a young lady, who was walking home with her maid from a boarding school, at some little distance.



While I lay in this situation a reflection naturally arose, on the anger which children often express against inanimate things: which, by making a wrong use of, have proved, as in the present case the means of subjecting them to



disgrace. Had George when he found me at Mr. Verber's, been content to put me into his pocket till his business was finished, he might have played without fear or blame. But by doing what his conscience told him was improper, he carelessly left the cart to the care of old Trot, who finding himself free from the restraint of a driver, occasioned the mischief, which Mealwell's care ought to have prevented. But was the poor Peg-Top to blame in all this? Did the Peg-Top make him tell a lie, and forfeit his honour and reputation? Was that at all accountable for his perseverance in an untruth? or, for the thorn which he put into his eye? In short, I think it will be evident to every reader, that the fault was all his own; and that the poor Peg-Top could not be justly charged with any share of his guilt.

But to return to my new mistress, who was a girl about ten years old, and who appeared greatly pleased with what she had found. Taking me up, and showing me to the servant who attended her, said with much glee, "See, Betty, what I have got! I shall now have a Top as well as my brothers, who will not lend me theirs, because they say, it is not a girl's play-thing." She then hopped along, first on one leg, and then on the other, till we came to a handsome house, where two genteel looking boys were sitting on a chain, which was

fastened to a number of small white posts, which inclosed a round plot of grass before it.

Your servant, Miss! said the eldest: what are you returned from school? and how do all the young ladies do? And what, interrupted the other, have you got into your hand, Sophy? Whose Top is that! I dare say it is the one I bought last Tuesday at the fair, and you must not have it, I assure you.

It is my own, Sir! replied my mistress with an air of triumph, and I do not want your's again, I promise you! So saying, she was walking in doors: but they both in an instant pursued her, and forced away the top, to ex-

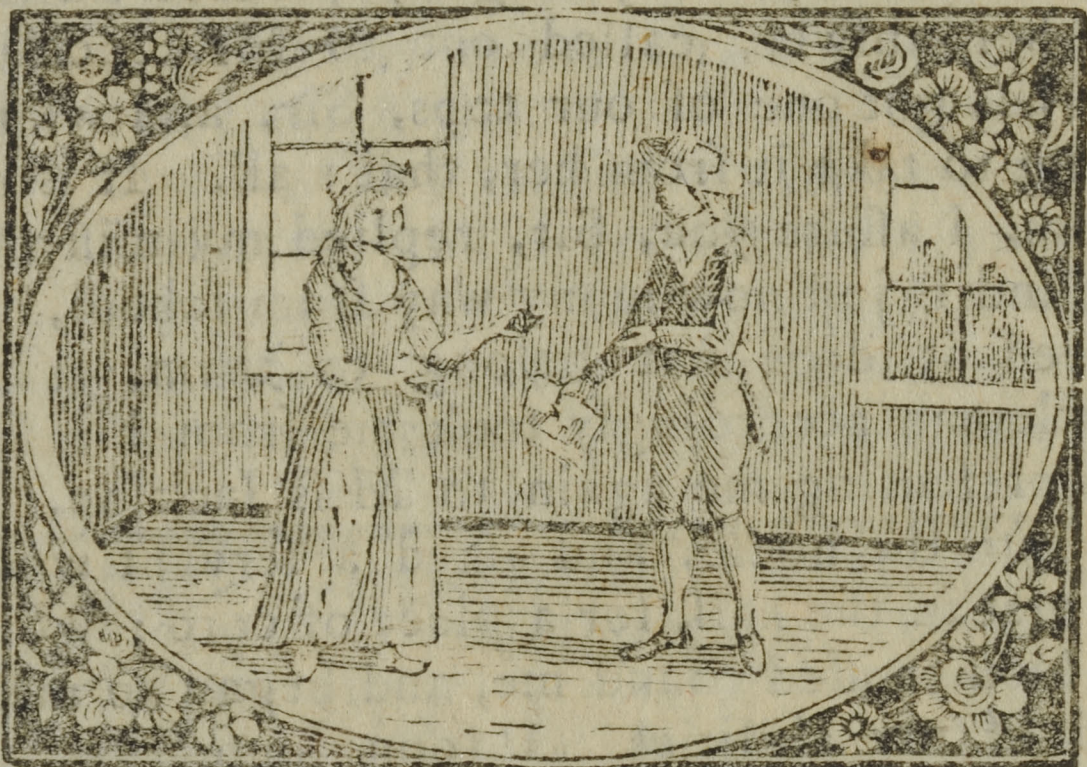


amine whether it was the one they suspected. Just at this instant, a gentleman, whom I

afterwards found was their father, came up and taking hold of the youngest, "Pray, young man," said he, "what are you about? is this behaving properly to your sister? I am quite ashamed of you! What is the matter Sophy?" The young lady was going to speak, but Frederick, the youngest, without waiting for her answer, called out to Mr. Jackson, "She has got one of our tops, Sir, and we are going to take it from her, that's all. It is not theirs, I assure you, Sir, replied my mistress; I found it just now in my way from school, and indeed it does not belong to them. The gentleman accordingly took me from his son, and presenting me again to Miss Jackson, she ran into the house, and asked a servant whom she met in the hall, for a piece of cord; which she soon twisted round me, and began to make trial of my abilities. I soon found she was ignorant of the art, as she flung me down so awkwardly, that I only rolled about, without being at all able to spin.

Her brothers, who were not long before they paid her a visit, were much diverted at her unsuccessful attempt, and begged they might be permitted to try whether the fault was in me or their sister; to which she consented, upon their promise of returning me immediately.

Edward, who was the eldest, kept me for near a minute; and I spun so well, as to sleep more soundly than I had ever done before. In short, he declared he would give her any thing to possess me, and delivered me to Frederick



with the highest commendations; adding, it was a shame that any girl in the world should be suffered to keep such a top.

His brother afforded me as much satisfaction: for a Peg-Top of any emulation is as happy as its owner, when it is spun by a skilful hand, and when it is so fortunate as to excel, "will share with its Lord the pleasure and the pride," of those praises which are bestowed on its merit. I was soon returned to Sophia, who seemed to be much mortified that she could not

make me spin; and rejoiced exceedingly, when I once staggered round two or three times, though I immediately after fell down, to the entertainment of her brothers, who offered her any thing in their possession in exchange for me.

The following verses, however, at last effected, what no other argument had the power to accomplish, and she gave me to master Edward for a landscape, which his father had the same morning presented him with.

### To Miss JACKSON.

WHY Sophy! you had better the trial give o'er,  
 As you still disappointment are like to deplore;  
 Some other amusement attempt to pursue,  
 For a top, my dear girl, is ill chosen for you.  
 Go take up your doll, to your baby-house go,  
 And there your attention much better bestow!  
 Leave the Peg-Top behind, and behave like a miss,  
 And I'll give you this picture, these nuts, and a kiss.  
 Like the dog in the manger, our sport you destroy,  
 Nor receive for yourself either pleasure or joy,  
 From a native so cross, if you offer to stay,  
 I declare I will toss all your gewgaws away.  
 Should I sit on a stool with a needle and thread,  
 And dress up Miss Dolly, or put her to bed?  
 Or do you not think it would be pleasant to see,  
 Master Neddy turn'd fribble, and pouring out tea?  
 And a boy just as well, sure, might trundle a mop,  
 As for you to attempt to be spinning a top;

I ne'er yet saw a lady at cricket engage,  
 Although you just now flounc'd away in a rage;  
 When you took up my bat with so awkward an air,  
 And I told you such toys were not made for the fair:  
 Then let me persuade you the top to resign.  
 Since 'twill spin in my fingers much better than thine.

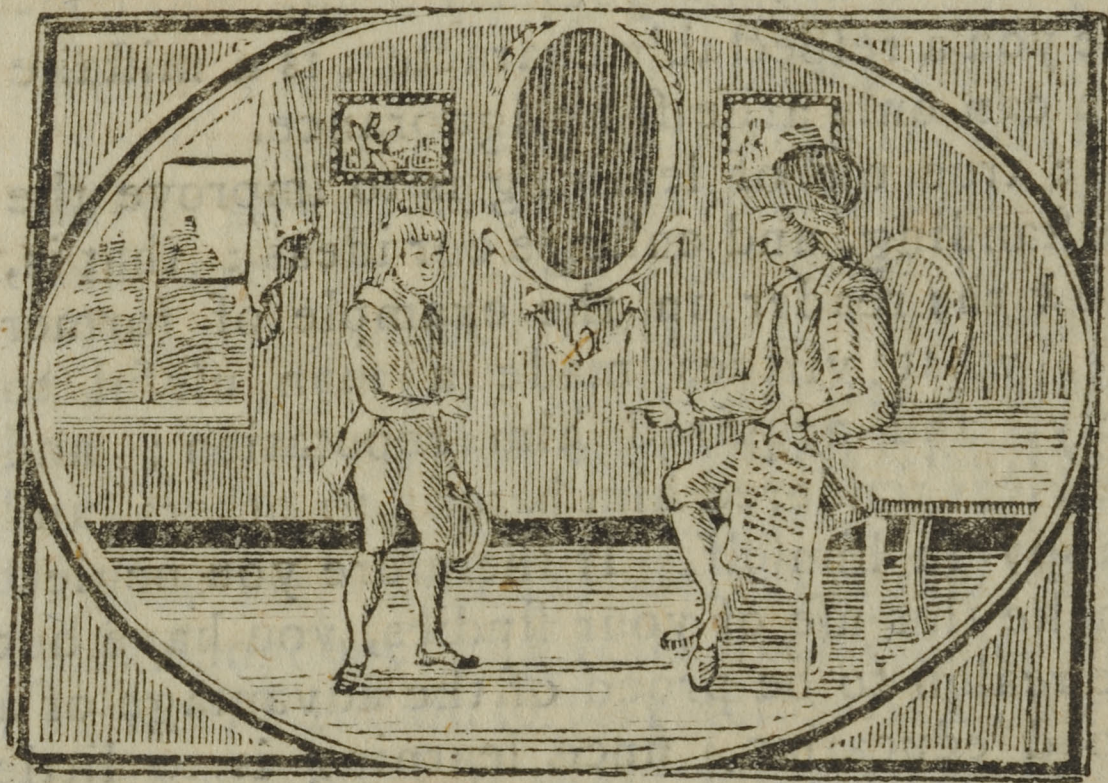
Just as the exchange was agreed upon, Mr. Jackson entered; the above verses laying upon the table, he took them up and read them; after which, addressing himself to his eldest son, I see Edward, said he, by the hand-writing that this is your composition, and perhaps the poetry, when your age is considered, may not be thought much amiss. But I am very sorry to say, the sentiments which they contain are deficient in a very essential point, and are so much wanting in good-nature, that whatever credit may be derived to your head, they will certainly do no honour to your heart.

A talent for ridicule is a very dangerous accomplishment, as it is seldom exerted under the influence of good humour: at least the feelings of those against whom it is levelled are seldom considered; and he deserves but little of our esteem, who, to prove his wit, would say, or write any thing which might give uneasiness to a friend.

In the present instance, though your satire may be justly pointed against such girls as forget the delicacy of their sex, and behave im-

properly; yet, to address them to a sister, who is not guilty of this fault, and who was by no means to blame in keeping what was her own property, is, as I before said, no proof of your affection or kindness.

To exult with a pretended superiority over the girls, as you are apt with an air of insult to express yourself, and to sneer at their amusements, while you deny them a share in yours, is a proof of the weakness of your understanding; but will never exalt you in the opinion of men of sense.



A coxcomb, Edward, is a despicable character; and those who are most proud of their fancied advantages, will be commonly found to have the least real merit. Never, therefore,

pretend to boast of your learning, or despise women in general or your sister in particular, under the idea that you are so much wiser because you understand a little Latin and Greek, since such an affectation of superiority is equally despicable in men or boys.

To disregard the learned languages is a proof of an illiterate and uninformed mind, which, from not knowing, is unacquainted with their necessity and use; but to imagine that wisdom is centered in the ancients, and that a knowledge of Homer, Virgil, Terence, or any other author you may read, will constitute you a respectable character, is a mistake which can only arise from ignorance.

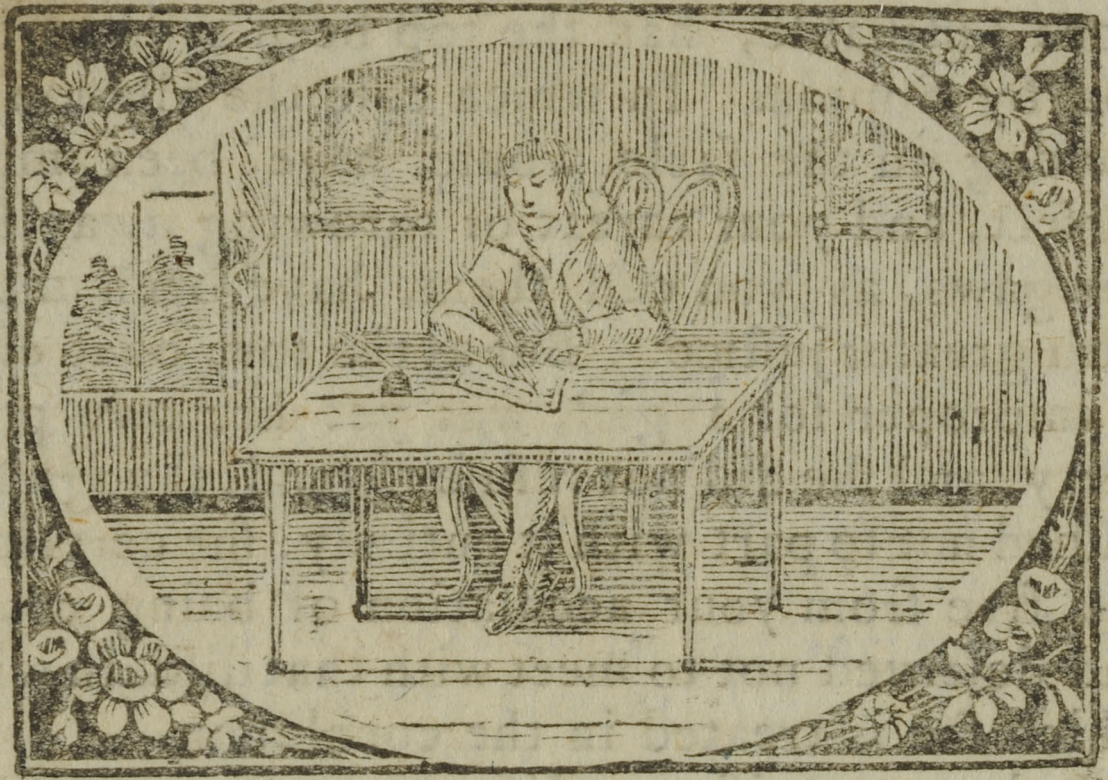
The true use of learning is to improve the understanding, and enlarge our ideas: that is, to show the reader in the example of former times, what virtues made a man useful to society, and acquired him reputation; and what vices rendered him hateful to others, and unhappy in himself. If therefore you neglect to make this use of your studies, you have but little reason to be proud of the advantage of a good education, since learning is to little purpose, if it will not teach you to govern your temper, and to behave with honour and justice upon all occasions.

As to the verses which occasioned me to speak to you upon this subject, they would have been



more justifiable, had the top been taken from you by Sophia. In which case the allusion to the dog in the fable would have been more perfect, and your threat of throwing away her gewgaws, as you call them, have been made with greater justice. But as the toy, be it ever so improper for a girl, was yet her own property, and she did not refuse to lend, though she wished not to part with it entirely, she certainly was free from your accusation of being cross, and deserved not to meet with that disdain with which she is treated in the conclusion.

I do not wish to discourage any attempt which your genius may incline you to make of writing, either in verse or prose, but I would advise you to let your subject be better chosen, and never to support your cause by ridicule, when you cannot maintain it with reason and truth. I believe, continued he, I have got a copy of verses that your friend Charles Goodwin sent to his sister, in answer to a letter, in which she expressed herself afraid that her correspondence might be troublesome, and that he would disdain to take notice of a sister, who could not boast of equal knowledge with himself. The poetical merit of the lines is small, but the tenderness they manifest, and the grateful remembrance of her past attention, which they imply, make them worthy of your imitation.



### To Miss G——.

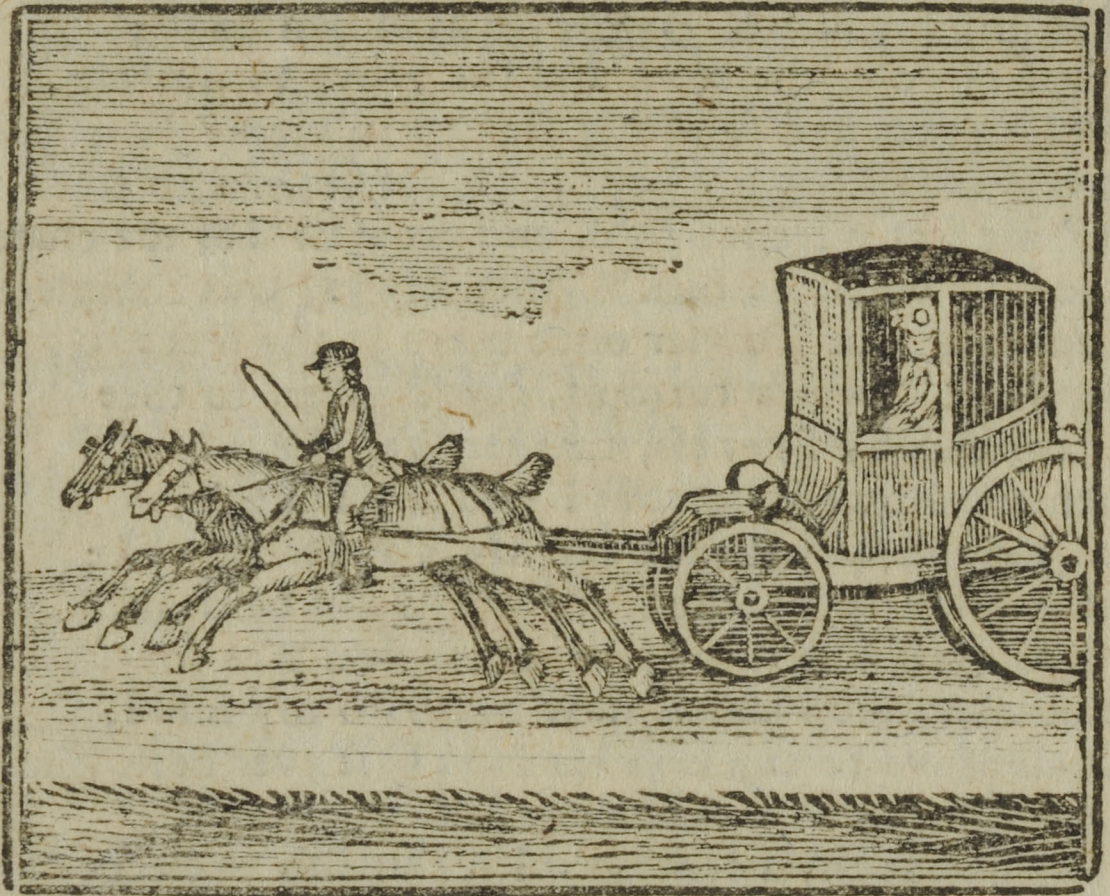
THE letters, my Harriot, you design for to send,  
 With joy I peruse, and with pleasure attend;  
 Delighted the day to receive them expect,  
 And till they arrive each amusement neglect.  
 Then say, from what cause are you ever inclin'd,  
 To think that your image is banish'd my mind?  
 Why imagine, that as I in learning improve,  
 My heart must grow cold to the sister I love?  
 Those examples which history points to my view,  
 I think, my dear girl, will be models for you.  
 My Harriot, (with joy to myself I exclaim)  
 My Harriot will shine in the annals of fame;  
 Like Penelope, faithful, industrious, and kind,  
 Be polite in her manners, with sense most refin'd;  
 Or like Hector's fair consort her virtues shall rise,  
 For who but must gentle Andromache prize!

Thus, when of past times I the records peruse,  
 Whate'er be the subject or author I choose;  
 If more masculine virtues with pleasure I trace,  
 And think nought shall the sacred impression efface;

Each action heroic my breast doth inspire,  
 And emulous kindles the ardent desire,  
 To reach that perfection, that recompense find,  
 Which is ever the mead of a generous mind.  
 Oft I think on the days which in infancy fled,  
 When thy lap, my lov'd sister, has pillow'd my head;  
 When soft in thy arms I have sunk to repose,  
 And sooth'd by thy cares, have forgotton my woes.  
 For dost thou not, Harriot, remember the day,  
 When my favourite, Towser, was stolen away;  
 How I ran o'er the lawn and the grove to pursue,  
 A dog which had suddenly started in view?  
 How his footsteps my hopes still determin'd to trace,  
 Tho' my feet were fatigu'd, and grew tir'd of the chase?  
 At length when he turn'd, then my joy was complete,  
 I expected poor Towser once more at my feet;  
 But, alas! 'twas a turnspit, my Towser, to thee  
 For thy shaggy likeness, I never shall see.  
 Then returning in sorrow I told my sad tale,  
 And thou didst with me for my Towser bewail;  
 The kindest compassion thy words did bespeak,  
 Thy soft hand with pity thou stroak'd o'er my cheek.  
 A thousand such scenes now occur to my mind,  
 Which prove to thy Charles thou hast ever been kind;  
 Then think not he ceases thy love to respect,  
 Or will treat thy attention with churlish neglect!  
 He remembers the minutes, and reckons them o'er,  
 Which again to his sister her Charles shall restore.  
 Then Eton! thy shades he will quit with delight,  
 For a time to enjoy the affectionate sight,  
 Of those friends, who, tho' distant, still dwell in his heart,  
 Who are near his regard tho' in person apart.

This performance, continued Mr. Jackson  
 when he had read to them the above mentioned  
 verses, I do not recommend as a model in any

respect, except in the good-natured intention with which it is manifestly written: but come, added he, I see the coach is ready, and your mother is waiting to accompany us to London. So saying, he went out of the room, and Edward took me up, and putting me into his pocket, accompanied his father and brother to the carriage.



Nothing worth recording occurred till we reached the metropolis, when a cart laden with wine stood opposite to a tavern, and hindered our progress for some time; as on account of a fire which had lately happened, the ruins were inclosed, and the street was too narrow to make room for two carriages abreast. The young gentlemen showed their impatience at this delay, by kneeling upon the seat to look thro'

the front glass; then putting their heads out of the side window; and Edward taking me out to beguile the time, expressed his uneasiness that the coachman would not proceed. At length an affair, which happened on the pathway close to the place where they were detained, engrossed their attention, and furnished them with a subject of conversation for the remainder of the day.

An old woman in a red cloak and tattered gown, was selling oranges, apples, and chefnuts, on a wheel-barrow; some of which were roasting in a little fire-pot contrived for the purpose: when two genteel looking boys came up and demanded the price of some golden pippins. The woman, as she was going to answer them, discovered that her child, who had been sitting by her on a little wooden stool, had wandered to some distance, and was just going to cross the street by itself; to prevent which, she ran immediately to overtake it, and in the mean time, one of the mischievous boys, with a kick overset her wheel-barrow, and tumbled its contents into the mud.

The laugh of exultation which these young miscreants set up on the occasion, and the sight of the rolling oranges and mashed half-roasted apples swimming down the kennel, exceedingly diverted my master and his brother; till the unfortunate owner at her return, began her

pity-moving complaints. A crowd having gathered round her, many of them laughed at the accident, and some ran away with the spoils, and began peeling the oranges they had picked up. Others blamed the unlucky monkey, (as they called the boy) which had occasioned the mischief.

Matters, however, being once more quiet, Mr. Jackson called the poor woman, and inquired her situation. Why, Sir! said she, I will tell you the truth! You see me reduced to the last farthing I have in the world: for this morning I laid out four shillings, which was all the money I was worth, in these oranges, apples, and chesnuts, and I declare I have taken but threepence to day; and I have three children, the eldest but six years old, besides this little one, whom I was going to run after when that wicked boy kicked down my barrow. It is a hard case, Sir! said she, the tears running down her cheeks, which she wiped off with an old rag of a coloured apron; and I owe for my rent, Sir! and shall be turned, with all my babes, into the street, as I have now lost the two shillings, which I promised to carry home to my landlord: and he told me before I came out, *that* should be the case, as he could not trust me any longer. But it is a shocking thing to see my children cry for a mouthful of victuals, and not have it to give them, and so I bought

last night a quartern loaf, instead of paying him, which I did intend, but now I have nothing to give him; and we must go to the parish, after all my labour to get an honest livelihood, having endeavoured all my life not to be a burden to any body.

Mr. Jackson, however, made up her loss, and the coach once more proceeded on its journey. Frederick declared, he thought the boy was to blame to injure the woman; but added, that he could not help laughing to see the distance to



which some of the pippins had rolled, and the scramble which they occasioned among the mob; that a chimney sweeper had slipt down over an orange, which he had kicked away to prevent a girl from seizing; and, with his bag of soot, had fallen against a lady in a white jacket, and made

her as black as himself; and that the gentleman who was with her had rapped the boy's head with his cane, and set him a howling like a cur.

In short, continued he, it was rare fun! and I think had not the woman been so very poor, it was worth the money to see the confusion which it occasioned.

I am sorry, replied his father with a serious air, that the pleasure with which you surveyed that confusion, has made you forget the sufferings which it might have caused to the person, whose living depends upon the success of her little trade. Every one has a right to justice, be their situation in life ever so low: and it is an additional degree of guilt to injure those, who stand most in need of protection. It cannot, therefore, in my mind, be considered as any proof of cleverness or wit, to see a boy throw down a barrow of fruit, overset a stall of gingerbread, trip up an old woman's heels, or perform any of those feats of dexterity, which are apt to afford mirth to the giddy and inconsiderate; since to do a fellow-creature a material injury, for the sake of sporting with their misfortunes, is to be wicked and inhuman; but it is by no means entitled to commendation and applause.

If you had been one of the children who was to be turned out of doors, or to lose your day's victuals in consequence of this witty exploit, I am apt to think you would form a different



judgment of its merit, and be ready to execrate that wantonness of invention, which can so unthinkingly sport with the uneasiness of others. Never, therefore, let the fun or entertainment of such jokes make you insensible to the serious mischiefs they may produce; and remember, that what like the fable of the boys and frogs may be play to you, is misery perhaps to those whose property you so abuse. I recollected, added he, an instance of this kind, when I was at school, which produced such a dismal event as I shall never forget.

An old woman who lived in a cottage in the neighbourhood, and whose character was as quiet, and inoffensive as you can imagine; was nevertheless, singled out by the boys, as a proper subject for their fun. She was very short, a little crooked, bent down with age and infirmities, and was guilty of the shocking crime, of wearing a high crowned hat; which had, perhaps, been in vogue in the days of her youth. This was so high an offence, that they gave her the appellation of the Old Witch, and by this name she was stigmatized with an epithet of derision, they thought there was no harm in making her life unhappy, by every art which their invention could devise. They broke the only window of her cot, and as soon as it was repaired repeated the offence.

A couple of the asses which she kept to supply

the neighbours with milk, and which were her chief support, they drove every day to a distance, into such places as they thought she would least



think of searching for them; and this, as she was lame was a constant uneasiness to her. Several times they nailed up the door of her hut, and when she was absent, would pile up all the rubbish they could procure, to obstruct her entrance; and when she made any complaints of these insults to their master, they considered it as an unpardonable provocation, and vowed their vengeance for her ill-nature. At length they determined on a scheme, which they thought would effectually frighten the Old Witch, and make her fears afford them a subject of mirth.

This was after she went to bed, (which was

usually at an early hour) to make a bonfire before her window; the flames of which would confirm her in the apprehension, that her dwelling was on fire, as they intended to make an outcry to that purpose. Accordingly the poor creature, who had fatigued herself in the day with washing, was soon asleep; and they came with much satisfaction to execute their project. The fuel they had brought was soon in a blaze; and several of them knocked with violence at the door, and cried out that she would be burnt to death if she did not make her escape.

She immediately jumped out of bed, and in her haste and surprise stumbled over a small washing tub, in which she had left some unfinished clothes; by which accident she broke her leg, and was so ill in consequence of it, that though she lingered above a twelvemonth after it, it was thought to be, in some degree, the cause of her death.

The design of these boys, by no means extended so far as to do her a real injury: but there is no certainty that a mischievous intention will stop exactly where it was projected; and therefore a good-natured disposition, will rather lose the enjoyment of a joke, than run the hazard of hurting a fellow-creature.

As Mr. Jackson concluded this sentence, they arrived at the end of their journey. They were immediately introduced into a handsome drawing room, where a large party was assembled:

among which was a boy about the age of master Edward, with whom he and his brother then quitted the apartment, and retired to the dining parlour, where I was produced, with great praises of my merit. But a difficulty now arose, as I could not spin upon the carpet. This, therefore, they agree to turn back, and without considering the holes my peg would make in the floor, they began to spin me by turns, and continued to entertain themselves, till a footman came to lay the cloth for dinner. He blamed the young gentlemen for the liberty they had taken, and said, his mistress would be much displeas'd, and insisted upon their finding a more proper place for their amusement. After debating the matter some time, they agree to adjourn to the library; where, as soon as they arrived, I was laid on a writing-desk, as their attention was engaged by the pictures of a folio which was open on the table. The pleasure they found in this examination made them forget me; and when they were summoned to attend the company, they, in their haste; left me behind; and the leisure I then enjoyed, suggested the idea of communicating an account of myself to the world. Whether the recital will afford any satisfaction to the youthful readers, I must leave with them to determine.

FINIS.

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