

mansions, and that he has gone before to prepare a place for his people!"

LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.

"What are you thinking of so deeply, Fanny?" said Anna to her sister, as they were retiring to rest.

"To tell you the truth, my dear, I was thinking of you. I was rather surprised to see you in such high spirits, after having been in disgrace."

"O! but you know Fanny, I have been forgiven and therefore, that is all over. Surely, I need not be low spirited, on that account now."

"Not absolutely low-spirited, perhaps, dear; but do you consider it all over as though it had never been?"

"Yes, certainly, Fanny; Mrs. D. will not tell me of it again."

"No, my love, I know she will not; I have no doubt that she has forgiven you with all her heart, or she would not have assured you of her pardon. But I was fearing as this has occurred several times lately, that you would gradually lose her good opinion, and consequently her love, unless you are more circumspect in your conduct. I should be sorry for you to change her regard for you into pity."

"But how can this be, when she has forgiven me, Fanny? She won't think any thing more about it, will she? I shan't."

"That is the very thing I fear, my dear, that you won't think any more about it, and therefore, will rush into the same faults again, forgetful that every act which needs pardon, is an act which lessens your character. Right actions need not forgiveness. Good persons will forgive even the faults by which they are injured, but they cannot esteem those who commit them. And how much better is it to be esteemed and valued, than to be contemned and pitied. You will understand this difference better if you will just look into your own mind, and think of two of our companions, Harriet and Susan. You have forgiven Susan's behaviour, but which do you love best?"

"O! dear Fanny Harriet to be sure. Consider how different they are, not only in their behaviour towards me, but in every thing. I do forgive Susan's conduct certainly, but who can love a girl that is always making herself so disagreeable, and is so inattentive to her duties? She is almost constantly turned back in her lessons, and is always ill tempered about any thing that is at all difficult. I am afraid sometimes I almost despise her. Then Harriet is always kind, always ready to oblige, and so attentive to her studies, that I quite respect as well as love her."

"You see then my dear, that it is by our general conduct, that the opinions and feelings of others towards us will be regulated. And let me ask you which you would best like to have cherished towards you? Those feelings which you entertain for Harriet, or those you feel for Susan?"

"There can be no doubt on that subject, Fanny. But at all events it cannot be very important what is thought of me now? I am but a school-girl you know, and when I am grown up and go out into the world all this work will be forgotten."

"There you are quite mistaken Anna. You will always find that persons who are grown up recollect distinctly the characters of those with whom they went to school. I once heard a

gentleman ask a lady the character of another. She said, I have never seen her since she left school; I remember what she was then.' 'Depend on it she is the same now,' replied he, and proceeded to take her opinion accordingly. I thought this rather strange, but mamma said that it was too often the case. The faults we indulge in childhood generally go with us through life. She therefore thought the gentleman's sentiment a just one. Do not then fancy that the impressions you now give of your character will be effaced, or that they will never effect you in future. Besides, dear, the habits you now form will continue and grow stronger and stronger, and do you think they will not be seen when you mix with grown persons as well as now you are with children! Don't you think mamma can see the differences in the persons with whom she associates, as well as you, in your companions?"

"O! Fanny I shan't behave when I grow up as I do now."

"Look back, my dear, for the last twelve months and tell me whether your faults at the end of it have not been the same as at the beginning; and then look within and tell me whether you do not find it quite as difficult to conquer them now, as you did a year ago. You acted then from the whim of the moment, instead of acting according to the dictates of the Bible, and what your conscience knew to be right. You got into disgrace. Shame and sorrow followed. Your kind friends forgave you; but has this mode of conduct procured you inward happiness, or the esteem of your friends?"

"No! Fanny, I have often been very, very sorrowful, and I am sure I have not gained the approbation of those who thoroughly knew me, though they have, as you say, forgiven me, nor have I gained any power over my whims and caprices."

"As it has been in the last year, Anna, so it will be in succeeding ones, unless you act on an entirely new plan. If you act from caprice now, you will not be able to lay it aside and adopt the restraints of principle just when you wish it; and I shall be sorry, indeed, to see my dear sister an object of contempt to some, and pity to others, when she might be a source of comfort and delight to all. Think of dear papa and mamma, and what they will feel if we disappoint their hopes."

"But what can I do, Fanny? I act so foolishly before I am aware, not thinking, how sorry I shall be afterwards, and, till you now put it into my mind, it never occurred to me that it would fix my character."

"My dear, we have as yet talked only of the least important part of the business, for however desirable present peace of mind, and the love of others may be there is something of infinitely more consequence than either of these—I think you also forget in these unhappy moments that there is One who keeps an account of our words and actions, and who will bring forward that account at the last great day. Yet this same gracious Being, like the friends around us, entreats and commands us to change our ways, and be happy here and hereafter. What did He, when on earth, tell his followers to do, to avoid falling into temptation?"

"I don't recollect to what you allude, Fanny."

"To watch. We should watch against the first risings of evil dispositions, whether indolence,

impatience, peevishness, pride, or whatever sin it may be that wants to rise and reign."

"But, Fanny, I cannot always be watching. Dear! I scarcely ever think of any thing of the kind, unless it is when we are employed about something strictly religious."

"This still more shews the necessity of it, as it shows the power of sin in your heart, in making you so utterly negligent in distinguishing between your friends and foes. One would think, love, to hear you talk, that you considered sin as your friend, and necessary to your happiness, as you so seldom think of what is good."

"No, indeed, Fanny, I don't think so—that is, when I think at all about it, and I heartily wish I were as good as dear mamma. She always does right, and every body loves her, and I have no doubt God loves her too, while I do just as it happens to suit me, unless I am with any particular persons whose good opinion I wish to gain. And I begin to think, from what you have said, that many of those, from whom I wish to conceal my faults, can see them though they don't tell me so, for I know they sometimes see the faults of my companions."

"You may depend on it, my dear, you are right. And you will never gain the love of the valuable part of society, but by the same qualities that God requires of us. But you were saying you could not watch. There is another direction our Saviour gave, by which you may obtain strength to watch."

"What is that, Fanny?"

"Pray—Pray for grace and strength, to watch—pray to be taught how to pray. This is the way to obtain a strength greater than your own; and you will find, that good as well as bad habits acquire strength by use. The more you strive against your faults, the more easy you will find it to overcome them. And, Anna, you should remember to pray when you read the Holy Scriptures. They contain rules for our conduct. But such is the depravity of the human heart, that we too often find the reading of them a weariness, and the strictness of their precepts burdensome; and such indeed is our ignorance, that we are incapable of understanding the spiritual parts of God's word. But David, you know, used the means I am recommending to you. He prayed for power beyond his own. 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' If so eminent a saint as David felt his need of a higher influence, is it not the height of presumption for such poor ignorant creatures as we are to read the Holy Scriptures without seeking assistance?"

"Certainly, Fanny; but I have never been used to think, and it seems so difficult and gloomy a thing, that I fear I never shall."

"Do you know what you are saying, my dear? Do you recollect that you have an immortal soul, and that if you do not think and see God in time you will be miserable for endless ages. It is by consideration that Satan gets so many victims, and therefore, we find the prophet so pathetically calling on the house of Israel to 'consider their ways.' As to gloom—Look at our religious friends, and say, whether they are gloomy. No! Anna, God has mercifully connected our happiness with our duty. Harriet thinks aright, and so acts properly, and which is most happy, she or Susan? The one enjoying peace of mind, and the love of those around her; the other, the constant subject of vexations and disgrace.