

THE GARLAND.

"TO RAISE THE GENIUS AND TO MEND THE HEART."

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POPULAR TALES.

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REWARD OF VIRTUE.

There is something so intrinsically estimable in a virtuous course of conduct in life, apart from the praise ever thrown in brightness around it by the light of religion, that let it exist where it will, the nature of man seems to stamp an indelible worth upon it, and the mysterious hand of Providence in the course of time, to exalt and reward its possessor. It is not to inspired religion that we are indebted for this unerring estimation of virtue among all nations of men: it is held up as the triumphant rival of vice and sin, and the valued idol of nations who despise the Christian and Jewish religion, as well as by those who never have heard of their existence. Although I professedly believe the savage, whose mind is vacant and void of thoughtful reflection, similar to the new-born babe's, to have no just conception of good and evil, or innate sense of right. Still all nations, by social intercourse and civilization, smoothed in their manners and given to reflection and thought, never are exempt from a distinguishing appreciation of right and wrong, or vice and virtue. So beautiful is virtue! So glorious are the beams of her never-fading face! She, alone, is the best companion of the departing soul upon the bed of death. He alone, can die with smiles upon a frowning world, whose conscience tells him with departing sweetness, "I came into the world for a purpose, which Providence thro' reason, kindly learned me to perform. I have done my duty to the world, to my fellow-men, and created things; and now, O death! where is thy bitterness! I heed thee not! I smile upon my fate, and let my soul return to the hands of that Almighty Being and disposer of all things, who first bade me smile in consciousness upon his adorable creation." This is merely annexed as a prologue to the following story, to give the reader an idea of the intention of the author in writing the tale. It will always be my plan to instil into the minds of my readers useful knowledge, rational morality, and things of common sense.

The age of petty novelists and enchanting romances, who awake the mind to every distressful feeling, and ruin by empty imagination, the ideas and conceptions of life, of persons who before touching their baneful witchcraft, were rational and just in their views of things. I mean by no means to condemn all the novels of the age; for many of them may be useful, particularly those of a modern date,

which border more on common-sense and morality, than the extraneous glittering and bombast of older novelists. Sir Walter Scott, the greatest novelist of modern times, although in many of his novels he has mingled the history of many nations of Europe in the middle ages, which circumstance adds greatly to their otherwise, inutility, would find could he visit the world a century hence, that posterity valued his imaginative pages as little as our moderns of fashionable taste on the contrary, were assiduous in devouring their glittering emptiness, he would then say, had he written half a dozen books of the knowledge of the world—had he embodied all his studied characters and ideas of man, in laying down which many exultingly say he so much excelled, in one volume, the libraries of posterity still would have glittered with their presence, and time could never efface their worth. An author who writes for money, never need expect the hands of posterity to handle his venal scraps.

But to return to my subject, there lived in the neighborhood of one another, two cousins; who, after marrying, had emigrated from England to a certain part of America. They were both persons of respectability and fortune, and had always been on the most intimate terms. In settling, therefore, in a foreign land, they pitched upon quite adjacent estates; in this way they lived happily for many years, hoping in young families and increasing fortunes, a bountiful share of worldly happiness. But, alas! such hopes are often too vain; an unforeseen event,—a malignant fever—cut off, in the bud of life and in the midst of prosperity, Mr. Clayton, his wife, and youngest child, a daughter, who were all buried in one day. They left behind, to deplore their loss, two sons, George and Henry, at the tender age of six and eight. The cousin of Mr. Clayton, Mr. Walton, was made by the deceased father, the guardian and sole executor of his children and property, which was large. It was the last and dearest duty a friend could call another to accept and fulfil, and it was one which Mr. Walton cheerfully undertook and performed for many years, with the strictest justice and impartiality. He made the two young children a part of his family and educated them as his own children. After years, however, are to reveal a tale in which I hope a moral lies. The reader will easily tell whether any blame is to be attached to the guardian or not.

Some six years after the death of Mr. Clayton and his wife, Mr. Walton met with a serious loss in the death of Mrs. Walton, who di-