

received from her father, after his day's employment was at an end, what instruction he was able to give. Thus passed their lives, in such contented happiness, that they thought themselves favoured by heaven with every earthly blessing.

A circumstance, that took place when Maria was eleven years old, promised to compensate in some degree the injustice of fortune, by a wakening and improving those latent seeds of genius and fancy that lay hid in her mind, and which her situation had obscured, but not extinguished. In the romantic and beautiful village of Eyam, that stretches its little street, intersected with clumps of verdure, on a natural terrace along the side of high and sheltering mountains, and presiding over its venerable church, that shaded by aged yew trees, and surrounded with the memorials of mortality, evinced the piety of its inhabitants, resided Mr. Courtenay, the curate of its venerable and esteemed rector. He was an accomplished gentleman, an elegant poet, and a sensible divine. Those who could judge of his talents and attainments, would pronounce him placed in a situation unworthy of him; but his value was not unappreciated by his unlettered hearers: ignorant or uninforming as they might appear to the inhabitants of cities, yet many of them possessed minds of no common endowments. Traits of genius, and deep powers of research, often characterize the natives of mountainous countries; the soul appears to keep pace with the grandeur of the surrounding objects;—nothing is puerile that meets the eye; the mind expands amidst the great wonders of nature; and when she descends from the sublime, all that she presents is beautiful. The names of Brindley, Flamstead, and many others, natives of this Alpine county, will evince that it is not to refinement alone man owes his dignity. Eyed the lighter graces of Mr. Courtenay's mind lost not their charm: never was there a

brother, a sister, or tender relative interred in the rural churchyard of Eyam, without an application to Mr. Courtenay for "a pretty verse," to be put on their humble tomb-stone. Excepting an intercourse with one or two families, which lay several miles apart, he was almost shut out from society; and as he was seldom engaged in his parish duties but on Sunday, he would ramble several days together over the hills and amongst the dales of this interesting country; the rustic inhabitants of which were always glad to offer him refreshment, or accommodate him with a bed. The sylvan beauties of our little valley had always peculiar attraction for him; and it was here, one sultry summer's noon, that he overlooked Maria returning with the empty basket that had contained her father's dinner: the child was loitering on the banks of the stream, reading the simple ballad of the "Children in the Wood," that one of the cotton-spinners had lent to her. Mr. Courtenay loved children, and was intimately acquainted with those of the surrounding country; and it was impossible he should overlook such a one as Maria; her coarse straw hat hung at the back of her head; her dark brown hair curled in clusters round her face, which was fair and delicate, and unlike the peasantry of the country, yet her little scanty coat and striped linen frock bespoke her one of them. "What is your name, my child?" said he, taking her hand. "Maria," she replied, making her rustic courtesy. "My father is, Walter Jones; he lives a little higher up the dale—you cannot see the house for the turning of the road; but as soon as we have gone round that rock, we shall be there; and if you are tired, you may rest yourself." The little hand still remained in his, and they walked on together. Maria was a prattler; and she continued to talk, without the bashfulness that children often possess.

(To be continued.)