

THE RESCUED CHILD.

A DOMESTIC INCIDENT.

[WITH AN ENGRAVING.]

BY EDMOND HUGO-MONT.

A Mother sits within her cottage porch,
 A bower affection's simple art had rear'd,
 With woodbine and with clematis o'erarch'd,
 From which the fragrant flowers in rich festoons
 Fall gracefully around—a sylvan shade:
 Some task of busy housewifery employs
 Her active fingers: but her eyes are bent,
 With fond anxiety, within her home,
 A smile of heart-felt happiness while
 Beaming upon her placid countenance,
 Let us within!

In truth, a glad some scene!
 Say! how can it be else, when light-soul'd youth
 Is here the guiding spirit—when the laugh
 Of merry childhood rings throughout the room,
 And its sweet presence rings a halo round—
 An atmosphere of joy! Mark with what care
 That little urchin, midst his boisterous sport,
 Attends his little sister! She the while
 Laughing with glee—she scarce indeed knows why—
 Looking up with confident security
 To his experienced age and proud protection,
 Her reverent seilor by full fifteen months!
 Sweet little rose-bud! Ev'n that noble dog,
 The pleased companion of their childish sports,
 Seems, by his softer step and gentler mood,
 To pay due homage to her helplessness—
 Kinder and more affectionate in instinct
 Than many of our fellow-men—(alas!
 That we must say it)—in the strength of all
 Their boasted reason—often boasted most
 When most unreasonably used.

But now
 Sleep waves her downy pinions o'er the babe,
 And sheds her drowsy popples on her head,
 The mother's vigilance detects, ere long,
 The languid step and gently closing eye:
 And soon at rest the little slumberer lies,
 The tender parent watching by her side.
 With curious eye the urchin stands a while
 Beside his sister's couch, and marks the smile
 That, even in slumber hovers round her lips:
 But, too impatient for that noiseless spot,
 He leaves a kiss upon her peachy cheek,
 And softly stepping past, he whispers low,
 "Mother! I must return ere long—Come, Neptune!"
 What, as he hastens through the porch, thus takes
 His hurried glance and checks his eager speed?
 'Tis his rude skull, late thrown neglected by,
 A toy his busy hand one morn had framed
 —Some cast-off shoe the scarcely floating hull,
 The mast a splinter, and the sail a rag!
 Seizing his prize, away the youngster speeds
 To launch the bark upon the neighbouring stream,
 His brute companion coursing by his side,
 With rough caress and joyous gambolling.

Could we interpret now the reverie
 That fills the mother's breast with placid joy,
 —Singing the while her simple lullaby—
 What dreams of future bliss might we unfold!
 Through the far vista of succeeding years
 Her mental vision traces out a world
 Of calm enduring happiness. Perchance

She sees her son—train'd up in virtue's path,
 Attain, spite of the world, the world's applause.
 She sees him in some mart of commerce, 'midst
 Its merchant princes, honoured and revered
 For his integrity and worth, or else,
 High in the ranks of science and of art
 She sees his name inscribed—a name illustrious,
 Recorded in his country's history.
 Perchance she sees him—his lofty still,
 And dearer far to her maternal pride—
 A favor'd servant of the King of Kings—
 (Man's noblest occupation here below,)
 Urging his fellow-men, with sacred zeal
 And eloquence sublime, to thoughts and deeds
 Of faith and holiness. But still amid
 All various changing fantasies, he seems
 Ever the same—kind and affectionate,
 The stay and solace of her waning age,
 As once the darling of her earlier years—
 Tending her tottering steps with gentle care,
 And smoothing down her pathway to the grave.
 And she—the little sleeper by her side—
 Shall she not shine in beauty and in grace,
 And form the pride—

But hark! a shrill-voiced scream
 Of terror and alarm dispels her vision:
 A scream whose childish tones strike to her heart,
 Known by a parent's instinct—Hark! another
 Answered again, though all unwittingly,
 By the affrighted mother. Forth she flies,
 And guided by the faithful dog's deep bay
 She seeks the river's brink. Ah! should it be
 That all her hopes of earthly happiness—
 All her dear visions of felicity—
 Are thus untimely and forever quenched?
 Beneath the thought, her reason almost reels—
 Swift—swiftly on she speeds, until ataining
 The eminence's brow, a single glance
 Displays her child, upborne amid the waters.
 By his loved Neptune—answering now at need
 The thousand petty acts of kindness—
 The thousand fond caresses—that had won
 His rough affection. With a shriek that seem'd
 To give relief to her oppress'd heart,
 She cried aloud: "MY CHILD! MY CHILD IS SAVED!"
 And frantically yet joyfully rushed on.

Another moment and her child is held
 In safety in her arms—a sunny smile
 Breaking through all the shadows fear had trac'd
 O'er his pale countenance; whilst his preserver,
 With wagging tail and almost speaking eye,
 Looks up to meet his mistress' thankful glance—
 Nor looks in vain.

Oh! how can words express
 The tenderness that in the mother's heart
 Gushed forth resistless? Who can picture forth
 The speechless gratitude, that in her eyes
 Beam'd with a holy lustre? as she knelt
 Upon the sod, with her recover'd treasure
 Clasp'd to her throbbing breast convulsively,
 —As if she almost fear'd the rescued stream
 Would yet arise, and rend his rescued prey
 From her encircling arms.