

HALIFAX PEARL,

A VOLUME DEVOTED TO POLITE LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Published every Friday evening, at Fifteen Shillings per Annum, in advance.

VOLUME TWO.

FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 14, 1838.

NUMBER FIFTY.

STANZAS.

I care not for the sunlight,
Unless the sunlight lay
On forest-trees, and meadows green,
From cities far away.

Nor do I love the moonlight,
Unless the moonlight sleep
In rocky glen and quiet dell,
In silence calm and deep.

Nor care I for the morning breeze,
Unless it rustles by
When I am laid 'neath spreading trees;
And gazing on the sky.

For then I feel its quiet glide
So gently through mine eye,
As though it were a soothing draught
Of silent poetry.

And then I seem as tho' I were,
Of Nature's self a part,
And that I had her glorious pulse,
And felt with her own heart.

'Tis then the ocean-billows rise
With playful mirth, before
My half-shut eyes; 'tis then I hear
The waves beat on the shore.

The waves make music to the shore;
The shore awakes the hills;
The hills arouse the mountain-streams,
And their top thousand rills.

The rills flow down into the sea,
With a soft and pleasant sound,
And thus sustain the wondrous song
Of Nature all around!

JUVENILE MONITOR.

THE LOST HALF-CROWN.

BY C. A. HALSTED, AUTHOR OF "INVESTIGATION," ETC.

The tear, down childhood's cheek that flows,
Is like the dew-drop on the rose;
When next the summer breeze comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry;—
But summer months bring wilding shoot
From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit;
And years draw on our human span,
From child to boy, from boy to man.

Rokeby, Canto IV. St. 11, 12.

"What! Ellen in tears! This is something quite new," exclaimed a gentle and sweet-toned voice, to a lovely little girl, who, kneeling before a rustic seat, with her head resting on her arms, was crying bitterly. "Why do you weep so my child? What can have occurred to make you so very unhappy?"

"I have lost my half-crown, my own, my very own half-crown," said Ellen Campbell; "just too as I was going to be quite happy, and spend it with Mamma at the fancy-fair. I have been so very careful, that I scarcely ever took it out of my crystal-box,—except sometimes for a minute, just to look at it, and consider what I should buy; only, this morning I thought, as I was going to spend it, and when it would not be much longer mine, I would play with it a little while for the last time. But, as I was running to the arbour with old Rover (here Ellen's sobs almost impeded her utterance) my foot slipped, I fell down, and my half-crown rolled out of my hand! Where it went, I cannot tell; but it is gone; and now the pleasure I have longed for, for such a great, great while is all over! Oh! how I wish I had never taken my half-crown to play with—for I cannot even buy you a keepsake now, as you know I meant to do!" and poor Ellen again covered her face with her hands, and burst into a fresh flood of tears.

"You will gain wisdom by this mischance, my little girl," said the same soft and soothing voice. "You will hereafter, believe me, find that your half-crown is but an emblem of those sudden and severe disappointments, which, in future years, will often check your fairest anticipations of happiness. And it will also teach you caution, in the abuse, or even too free use, of treasures which seem unalterably your own. Had you left the half-crown in your bonbon box, and played with your hoop or ball, your enjoyment at the fancy-fair would still have been in store for you, even had you lost your ball, or broken the hoop, by your unlucky fall. But—do not cry so very piteously," continued her kind friend, lifting the sobbing Ellen from the ground, and

kissing affectionately away the large tears which, in quick succession, chased each other down her swollen cheeks: "I know that the recollection of this adventure will frequently be of service to you; so we will not at present, talk any more on the subject,—and here is another half-crown,—so that you may still go to the fancy-fair, and still buy me a present!"

Ellen smiled through her tears, but it was a smile rather of gratitude than of pleasure. The same sum was there, but it was not the same half-crown which had been hoarded for so many months by its juvenile possessor, who had, with child-like impatience, watched the growth of her accumulating store, from a silver fourpence on her birthday—to sixpence—one shilling—two shillings—until it had reached, what to her imagination was great riches, a substantial half-crown! No! the sympathy and kindness of Gertrude Neville had checked her sobs, and called up a momentary smile; but vain were Ellen's efforts to speak; for though her countenance beamed with grateful affection, her little heart was much too full for utterance. Like the effect of a summer shower on the fairy rose, which so bends the fragile stem, and overwhelms the blossom, that even the genial warmth of the quickly retreating sun fails to raise its drooping head, or restore the delicate plant to its wonted beauty.

Ellen Campbell was a child of acute sensibility, and of reflection beyond her tender years. Young as she was, she felt that she could only blame herself for her loss; and consequently, her new half-crown was destitute of the interest attached to that which was gone.

And these feelings which so subdued little Ellen were but the first germs of similar sentiments, which after having been corrected by experience, had gradually ripened into salutary habits of self-discipline, in her who had so affectionately and judiciously reasoned with the weeping-child.

Gertrude Neville had passed that first spring of life, when the world appears one verdant meadow;—where eye-bright, and scented thyme,—golden cups, and native hearts' ease—are alone behind; and where the hidden nettle has not attained sufficient height to sting the fingers, which so eagerly and incautiously grasp those bright blossoms that are spread by Nature in such rich luxuriance before the vivid imagination of youth. Gertrude had passed that spring; nay, she had lingered long enough amidst the roses of summer, to learn,—as all on earth one day learn,—that thorns mingle with the sweetest flowers! Well, therefore, did she know, that Ellen's adventure with her half-crown, was but a varied form of the same check-string, which, in some shape or other, is continually arresting our career, bringing home to us the conviction of the uncertainty of all earthly possessions; and abating the ardour of that overflowing joy which beams so beautifully on the face of happy infancy; but which would be productive of continual disappointment in after years, unless thus early moderated by warnings, conveyed by incidents as apparently trivial, as the loss of poor Ellen's half-crown.

And who amongst us has not felt these salutary warnings? Who has not, tossed his ball too far—or suffered his kite to fly too high? Who has not mourned the disappointment of seeds which have never sprung up, and plants that have withered and died? Seeds and plants bought with such pride for the first garden, and with silver out of the first purse, but which childish impatience caused the rake to scatter, or the spade to demolish—thus rendering futile the gardener's judicious instructions! Our entrance into life bears indeed a close analogy to our infant gardens; for the mortifications we early experience may oftentimes be traced to that impetuosity which scatters the seeds, and to those headstrong passions, which injure the roots, of flowers with whose blossoms we might eventually have been rewarded, had patience, perseverance, and self-control been early inculcated, and steadily practised.

And if the lesson learned has not always been as dearly purchased, as was little Ellen's with her half-crown, have we not all our warnings—in all ages—and in all stations?—warnings which continually teach us to control that exaggerated expectation of perfect joy which is not allotted to mortality. Ask the school-boy, if any day in the vacation equals the unrepressed and irrepressible joy of the day that ushers it in—the day of "breaking up;" or whether the actual delight of his holidays ever approaches to the gay colouring with which anticipation had decked them. Ask the fair-haired girl, the youthful debutante of seventeen, if her first ball—her "coming out" was in itself as delightful as the bright visions which heralded, that much-wished-for and all important period. With some few glad hearts, indeed, the sunshine of life may remain for a longer time included;

but many an ingenuous mind will acknowledge, that the result of their anticipated joys was as chilling, and the allusion as brief, as would be the effect of first contemplating, through amber-coloured glass, a tame prospect, on a gloomy day: the beholder of which, on lifting up the window, and surveying nature in its true light, seeks in vain for the sunny spot, and bright scenes on which a few minutes before he had dwelt with such unalloyed pleasure and delight.

Gertrude was an orphan. She had loved, and been beloved by the tenderest of parents. She was their pride, their hope, their treasure—the object of their fondest solicitude,—their most fervent prayers; and she repaid their anxious affection by a devotion which proved they were "all the world" to her. And when those loved beings were taken from her, Gertrude felt, as did Ellen with her infant riches, that she had not sufficiently appreciated her blessings, while they were here—and that she had trifled with her felicity.

Gertrude too, had again loved. The fountain of her affection, which seemed to have been closed up when her parents died, had subsequently welled forth at the voice of one whom she had first learned to regard from her parents' estimation of his character, and then to love with enthusiasm, because he had been the comforter and soother of the orphan's grief. He had revived the joys which death had blighted. The parents she had wept for—the home she had lost—all seemed about to be restored to her; and, in contemplating an union with the idol of her affections—the object for whom her heart beat with new love, new hopes, new joys—Gertrude almost forgot the past, and lived only in the happiness of the present. But alas! a sadder lesson waited her, and which Ellen's misfortune now recalled in full potency to her recollection. The being to whom she was on the eve of being united, led away by the ignis fatuus of golden dreams, and making too sure of hereditary wealth—which, like Ellen's silver piece in the crystal box, had hitherto remained in quiet security, gradually increasing for many years, had, in an evil hour, been induced to remove his treasure—and to traffic in the fancy-fair of life. He embarked his all in a vast, but hazardous speculation, which ended, like poor little Ellen's fall, in the loss of all his worldly possessions. The blow to Gertrude was a heavy one; for she had not thought of the future. She had loved with woman's first love—the love which never can be equalled—and she had mourned over her blighted prospects, and withered hopes, as woman only can mourn! In the depths of her aching heart, were her sorrows hidden from the observation of those around her; but in the retirement of solitude, she yielded to the anguish of her soul, whilst dwelling on the dangers, difficulties, and deprivations, which the object of her attachment was possibly enduring in the voluntary exile which he had imposed on himself, with the hope of retrieving some part of his shattered fortune. But Gertrude, although fond and confiding, and gifted by nature with the warmest feelings, was no worldling. She was often a mourner, but never a murmurer. She had been early tutored to feel, that the severest trials may be blessings in disguise, and that worse calamities may be averted from us, even by means of those very afflictions which seem to deprive us of all our hopes and happiness in this world.

In the long-proved attachment of an estimable friend to her parents, to whose tender care, on their death-bed, they had especially confided the almost heart-broken object of their earthly affection, did Gertrude Neville again experience sympathy, comfort, and support,—whilst cherishing in tranquil endurance, and patient submission, the hope of brighter and happier days. This excellent friend was Ellen's mother; and on the child of her affectionate guardian did this amiable and gentle being avail herself of every incident and occasion to enforce those habits of reflection and self-denial, which had formed her own staying support in many a trying hour—had enabled her to view the chequered events of life in their true light,—and neither to over-rate prosperity by a too eager anticipation of fancied joys, nor to sink beneath the weight of despair in that adversity which she knew to be, at all times, the possible lot of the most highly favoured. Her love for her little favourite, and commiseration for her sorrow, checked Gertrude's reproof in the arbour, when, trying to smile amidst her fast-falling tears, the weeping child showed, by her intelligent look, that she had derived a salutary lesson from the loss of her half-crown. In silence did her judicious monitor lead her back into the house. Farther reproof would, at that time, have been misplaced, nay, almost unkind; for she felt her little hand tremble, as she endeavoured to check her tears—which nevertheless sprang unbidden to her eyes, and hung about