

shall be henceforth my children, and my life shall be devoted to their happiness."

"So confident had Mrs. Harper felt of my acceding to her last wishes, that she had given all the necessary orders for the embarkation of her children, as soon as circumstances would permit of their leaving Bombay. At the time I received this letter, my adopted family were on their way to Liverpool. Ample funds had been left for the maintenance of the children, the whole of which had been placed under my entire control, so great had been the confidence reposed in my honor by their poor mother. And I did not abuse my power, or neglect my trust."

"I hurriedly imparted to my cousin Martha my determination of receiving my adopted family under my own roof; and bade her at the same time lose no time in making the necessary preparations for their future comfort."

"I shall never forget the air of consternation that sat upon the rigid face of my poor old relative. At last she sunk into a chair, and folding her bony fingers together, gasped forth:

"Charles Joliffe! Cousin Charles! are ye mad, doting? You fill your quiet house with a pack of noisy, wayward brats! If ye mean what ye say, ye are indeed preparing a bitter rod for your own back. Think what the world will say. Nay! but it is a scandal, Charles, that such a fool's scheme should have passed through your head."

"I bade her be silent, and leave me to commune with my own heart, but I found no change there. The die was cast, and my selfish regrets were all to be sacrificed on the holy altar of buried love."

"It was a noble resolution, and worthy of you," I warmly exclaimed; "and I trust you were well rewarded by the grateful affection of the children for whom you sacrificed so much."

"In the end I was; but, my dear young lady ask yourself how could young children appreciate motives of action they could not have comprehended, even had I condescended to explain why I had undertaken the irksome task of guardianship over them. At first every restraint imposed upon them, every task enjoined, was regarded by these high spirited children as an infringement upon the unrestrained liberty they had hitherto enjoyed. For my part, I considered that authority and unlimited obedience were the first objects to be attained. A stranger to the ways of children, I reasoned and argued, and reasoned and argued wrong; perpetual warfare was going on in my formerly peaceful dwelling, and sometimes my courage was well nigh failing me, but for a certain bump of obstinacy which some folks call determinativeness. I should have con-

tented myself with sending my troublesome family out to suitable schools, and the baby to nurse, and then have rectored quiet and order to my house."

"And cousin Martha,—how did she bear the noise and worry of the children?"

"Wonderfully well; there is a spirit of patient conformity to circumstances, which belongs peculiarly to females. Cousin Martha grumbled a little at first, and then yielded without further remonstrance to her fate—but more than this, a deep mine of hitherto unawakened tenderness was opened in her woman's heart."

"Cousin Martha had lived a life of celibacy, not from choice, but from circumstances. Women naturally seek some object on which to lavish that affection, which, I believe, is born with them—and belongs to their characters as wives and mothers. The female child dotes upon its imaginary baby in the form of a doll,—the old maid lavishes her unappreciated love upon some creature, as lap-dog, cat, parrot, or monkey—it is well if it take the more natural bent of nephews and nieces,—but such my poor relative had not—for, as I said, we two were companionless and alone, saving each other, till the arrival of these children. It was the sight of the delicate, helpless, lovely little Blanche Harper, that was destined to make a revolution in the feelings of cousin Martha. She took the orphan babe to her heart, and shielded her there from every storm that could assail her infant state, with more than even a mother's love."

"But it was not the addition to my household in the way of my four wards, that alone perplexed me, I was still more puzzled, what to do with their attendants, which consisted of two Bengalese boys, of twelve and fifteen, a little Hindoo nurse, a great blue macaw, and a large ape. Now the native servants were perfectly intolerable,—servile and obsequious to a degree, but cunning and revengeful,—acting upon the passions and prejudices of the two younger boys, and instigating them to every species of mischief that could possibly serve to annoy and irritate me. Nor were the tricks of the ape, or the screams of the macaw, likely to add to my peace of mind.—However, these last torments I speedily got rid of, by sending them to a distant relation of the children's, and hearing of a gentleman about to send his sons to India as cadets, I managed to rid myself of Messrs. Hassan and Sulek; at the trifling cost of paying their passage out; glad indeed to see them depart; but not so, Edward, Charles and Henry, and for some days after the departure of their allies, a sullen silence was observed, interrupted only by some naughty obser-