



It happened that a grand lady stopt her carriage to enjoy the sight of a parcel of young girls sporting on the village green. It was a sweet evening, and the level rays of the sun just tipped the steeple with gold. Labour was over, and the light heart and bouyant spirits, were putting every limb into motion. Care had not begun to becloud the brow, nor crime to render the countenance murky.

Herself a mother, and having warm

feelings for childhood, she called some of them to ask them a few questions, and to discern, if she could, some opportunity for her benevolence; not that bounty which freely parts with money merely, but that which in so doing, aims to instil a principle, or call some benign virtue into exercise.

Her first inquiry was, *Who can read?* Several were about to step forwards and avow themselves readers; one foot was extended, but modestly drawn back again, lest they should appear as too promptly or too proudly claiming a distinction to which others had an equal claim. The distinction was better made by another process; for such as were not able to read, stepped backwards in an awkward sort of dismay, and left the readers clearly separate and prominent before the rest of the company. I suppose to be obliged to retire and confess ignorance must have been felt as a disgrace, especially as now-a-days, any child

may learn to read who will take the trouble to attend at the Sunday school.

The lady remarked this difference, and gently remonstrated with those who withdrew, desiring them to think of it, and not suffer themselves to grow up so ignorant, and of course sink so much lower in society than their play-mates.

Having dispensed her reproofs to some, she began to think of giving rewards to the others who were nearest to her, as being better principled, or better disciplined, or more industrious. She had a Bible with her, and called several to read a few verses, that she might judge of their proficiency and comparative skill. When she first said, 'Let me hear some of you read,' two of them pulled out their books, one a hymn book, and the other her catechism, which they carried in their pockets in order to improve every spare minute to learn a portion by heart, which might be repeated to their tea-

chers next Lord's day. This pleased the lady much ; she commended their diligence and marked them for reward.

She found two more whose reading in the Bible pleased her. Several who were stepping forwards, stepped, back again, when they perceived that the lady intended making such a trial of their progress. When she had satisfied herself, and had dealt out her commendations as she felt requisite, she gave them a shilling as an expression of her satisfaction and approbation, to be divided equally among the four whom she had selected. Each of them made her as many curtseys, at least, as there are pence in the shilling, when she drove off.

What to do with the money became now the subject of a long consultation, for they had been charged by the lady each to spend it as she liked best.

‘What shall you do with yours?’ and ‘What shall you do?’ went round several times; each unwilling to speak

first, and indeed each herself rather undetermined. Betsey — was silent; and when they turned to her for her answer, they found she could not speak, her mouth being full of gingerbread, one penny of her money having gone already at the shop. Those who had only looked longingly at the gingerbread, and had not actually bought any, now exclaimed against her gluttony; and this appropriate exposure completely prevented any more of their money from going that way.

Helen — said, that she had been saving up money to buy a new ribbon, and this would just complete what she wanted; so she was very glad she was on the green and met the lady. And very glad too that she could read, as it was of more benefit to her than she had expected. The mention of the ribbon had made the rest of the party smile, with a sort of wish for similar adornment; but the latter part

of her speech had shocked them, as it was forgetting the true use of the Bible, and regarding it only as it might enable her to get money or dress fine. That scheme was presently given up by her companions.

Charlotte — was found with a tear in her eye, yet her smile showed that it was not grief, but joy. She had destined her money to her grandmother, who was now in the workhouse. ‘She has given me many a penny,’ said the child, ‘when she lived in the lane, but now she has not a farthing to call her own. Since she became so lame that she could not go to the town on errands, she has been obliged to apply to the parish; so the overseers took all she had, and then put her in the workhouse. And though she has every thing provided for her, as they say, yet there is many a little thing she wants; and I know this threepence will be as much to her now, as ever it used to be to me at the fair.

Patty —— coloured like scarlet, when they turned to her for her opinion, and was very loth to speak. However it came out, that at the last reward day at the Sunday school, when she ought to have had the Magazine given her, she by coming too late one morning, lost her chance, and another girl got the prize. Now as she had all the rest, she was determined to buy one of that number to complete her set. ‘Else you know,’ said she, ‘I could not make up my volume at the year’s end, which would be a pity, as I have got all the others, and all the former years are put together in so many volumes on my shelf, in the corner of my bed-room.’

So now, my little readers, I am not going to tell you which you ought to approve, nor what you ought to do with your money. Judge for yourselves, and do as you think best with the next money you have. Buy gingerbread if you choose ; gingerbread

is very nice, but the gratification is soon over, then all your money is gone and your gingerbread too. If you want to be fine, you will try for it, let me, as often as I will, say, ‘Neatness is better;’ so buy a new ribbon, and be envied by some and laughed at by others. Undoubtedly *she* shewed a kind heart who loved her grandmother and tried to return her kindness. The God who says “Honour thy father and mother,” will be pleased with such freewill offerings. But if Patty had no such claims upon her, I think she spent her money well in that which may instruct her mind, perhaps lead her soul to the Saviour. At any rate she can enjoy her threepence again and again, by taking down her book from her shelf and reading in it every now and then; and what a library of her own she will have in a few years if she saves them all up!

FINIS.