Voyages

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Chapter I

Fiction, however wild and fanciful,
Is but the copy memory draws from truth;
'Tis not in human genius to create;
The mind is but a mirror, which reflects
Realities that are; or the dim shadows
Left by the past upon its placid surface,
Recalled again to life.

S.M.

We are all more or less, the creatures of circumstance. Human vanity may rise up in arms and contradict this assertion; but it is nevertheless true. Others have formed links in our destiny; and we in our turn, form links in the destiny of others. No one ever did, or could live for himself alone. We talk of originality of thought. Can such a thing in this stage of the world’s history exist? Our very thoughts are not our own: they have swayed the minds of thousands and millions before us; and have taken a coloring from the location in which we were born, and from the opinions of those with whom the first years of our existence were passed.

The quiet rural beauties of a rich agricultural district; or the bold rugged grandeur of a mountain land, leave their abiding traces upon the ductile heart of youth, and often determine the future character of the individuals, born and
educated amid such scenes. A taste for peaceful and elegant pursuits, will mark the one, while a spirit of enterprise, and a stern desire for military glory will predominate in the other.

The unconquerable love of freedom which has marked the mountaineer of all ages and countries, is doubtless derived from the sublime objects which surrounded him in childhood. The difficulties and dangers which beset his path, and the boyish pride he felt in surmounting them, mingles with all the after contingencies of life, supplying him with that energy and coolness in the hour of peril, which constitutes true courage. The image of the lofty mountain still remains upon his mind; and he owes to his early association with the hills, greatness of mind and energy of action. In like manner, the pursuits, mode of thinking, nay, even the prejudices of those with whom we pass our early years, mingles with, and often forms a part of our own character.

Thus it was with Rachel Wilde. She was the youngest of a very large family, mostly composed of females. This sisterhood, were girls of extraordinary capacity; and like most children of this class, brought up in solitude, and educated at home, their amusements and pursuits were chiefly of a mental cast. They told stories, wrote poems, and acted plays, for the mutual benefit; and the infant Rachel soon imbibed a strong taste for these literary pursuits, which displayed itself in a thousand vagaries.

The father of Rachel was a man of great scientific and literary acquirements. He was a vigorous and independent thinker, and paid little regard to the received prejudices and opinions of the world. He acted from conscience, and the dictates of a powerful mind; was an excellent husband and father — a generous master, and a kind neighbor. The poor loved him, and the rich, whom he could not flatter, respected him; to be brief, he was a good and just man, and his family regarded him with a reverence only one degree less than that which they owed to their Creator. The memory of such a parent never dies; it lives for ever in the heart of his children. In after-life they are proud to echo his words, and maintain his opinions.
Mr. Wilde had lost a large fortune in entering too deeply into commercial speculations; and retiring from the city, he purchased a small estate in the country, determined to spend the rest of his days in rural occupations, and devote all his spare time to the education of his large family.

Mr. Wilde held all public schools in abhorrence, and his mode of tuition was the very opposite to that pursued in the seminary. Lessons were seldom committed to memory. He read, — he explained, — he argued with his children. He called their attention to the subjects which he selected for their information, and set them thinking. They were allowed freedom of discussion; and they were never suffered to abandon a point until they understood its meaning. History, which is rendered so dull and distasteful to the young, by being dunne into them as a task, was a delightful recreation to the little Wildes; and they ransacked every book in a well-furnished library, to make themselves masters of all the histories, and biographies which it contained. From this source they drew all the impromptu subjects for their poems, and heroes for their dramas. They lived with the mighty dead of all ages, in a world of history and romance. The little Rachel listened with eagerness to every word which fell from the lips of her elder sisters. The jumble of history, travels, biography, and poetry, mixed up in her infant mind, produced a strange combination of ideas, and made her see visions and dream dreams — which greatly amused the good father and the young sisterhood. Every morning she related her adventures of the night, to her father, as she sat upon his knee at breakfast.

Her novel descriptions of what she had seen, in the realms of fancy, were received with peals of mirth; and the little creature was encouraged in her fancies, by the applause with which they were greeted.

As she grew older, and learned to read, she fell in love with all the heroes of antiquity. At seven years old, she had read Shakespere, and knew most of the Iliad of Homer by heart, and was ready to do battle for Achilles and his favourite, in opposition to her sister Ann, who always espoused the Trojan cause.
Her first essay in the gentle art of rhyming, was so ludicrous, that I cannot refrain from mentioning it here.

Her father, who loved to see his little girls innocently employed, had given to Rachel, and her sister Dorothea, two rather extensive flower borders, which were separated by a broad gravel walk. — These, they were enjoined to keep in good order, and to strive which could produce the prettiest shrubs, and flowers.

The little girls received their charge with delight, and all their spare time was devoted to the care and culture of their gardens.

The first song of the birds, awakened them to their task, and they sang and worked away at their borders with joy in their eyes, and health upon their cheeks. Their shoes were saturated with the morning dews; but they were too happy to feel the least inconvenience. Those were the days in which love, hope, and innocence, formed the prism in the rainbow of life.

One morning Rachel communicated to Dorothea, who was scarcely two years her senior, the bold scheme she had formed of writing a poem in praise of their favorite flowers, which she intended to suspend round the neck of each, in order to draw the attention of the family to the merits of her proteges. "It would be beautiful," she said, "to see how Lodge, the gardener, would stare; and to hear how papa would laugh, at all the fine things she meant to write." Dorothea entered with heart and hand into the scheme; and to work went the happy pair; and as they were too young to write a readable hand, they printed their doggrels with a pen, upon some old parchment, which had long been consigned to a lumber room, in company with all the musty magazines of the last century.

Mid hearty bursts of laughter, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, the children produced their first attempts at poetry. When a lap full of these stray leaves from the "Mount Divine," were committed to the yellow parchment strips, upon which they were destined to figure, the little girls ran down to the garden, surrounding the delicate stems of their victimized flowers with huge halters of
the unpliable material which contained their highly prized verses.

I will give my readers a specimen or two, from this joint-stock company of bad rhymes: —

On a double scarlet catchfly:

Of the flowers of yore
I can tell nothing more,
But that I
Am a catchfly!

On a choice young apple-tree, and as if addressed to unwelcome visitors:

If you touch a single apple,
You and I shall surely grapple.

Two double red stocks stood boldly forth, presenting to the astonished reader, the following ridiculous announcement:

Here stand two famous scarlet stocks,
So pray good people move your *bocks*!

This by the way, was a composition of Dorothea's, and both the children thought it excellent. They knew not, poor light-hearted little ones, that such a word as *bocks*, was unknown in the vocabulary of Apollo, if his Godship of the lyre, needed such a useful article.

A primrose and a pansy,
Growing side by side;
Of all the buds that blossom,
The glory and the pride.

And

My pretty, modest, pink-edged daisy,
Your beauty sure will drive me crazy.

Tulips were no favourites with the children, and were thus apostrophized: —

Oh tulips! you look proud and bold,
Your streaks have more of brass than gold.
Then to the wind-flower, that beautiful child of April's varied skies, the very recollection of which, brings the tears to my eyes; and recals the lovely gardens of England, in all their rich array of evergreens, and gay parterres.

Anenomies, red, white, and blue,
The rose alone, surpasses you.

Dear rose, we love you best of all the flowers,
Our chief delight, to tend, and call you ours.

The lily is so graceful, tall and white,
We love her, as the fairies love moonlight!

Oh, that the sister florists thought so pretty, and themselves so clever for having invented; that we will leave them here, and merely tell, how the gardener Lodge, discovered the huge labels, hanging from the stems of the poor drooping flowers; crushed beneath the weight of flattery, which bowed their simple beauties to the earth; and which like the human flowers to whom the same treatment is applied, sadly marred their native charms. How he ran with his hands full of these curious tickets, as he called them; to his master; and how the good father laughed at the whimsies of his eccentric children; and at his death, which happened some years after; these papers were found carefully tied up, and labelled in a corner of his desk. Ah, human love! parental love! how dost thou treasure up in thy inexhaustible store-house trifles like these. Ridiculous as this beginning was in the art, "unteachable untaught," there was now, no end to Rachel's attempts at rhyming; all her thoughts whether grave or gay, ran lilting into verse; and burst forth extemporaneously, to the great edification of her playmates, who generally called upon her to invent plays, and tell stories. — One of these impromptu dramas, met with rather a melancholy termination for the juvenile author and manager; and for a time, checked the vivacity of the little Rachel's genius. It was an interlude in one act, to be called the "wood Demon." The scene, a beautiful meadow, which opened into the flower garden; and which said meadow, terminated in a deep, romantic dell, planted with
flowering shrubs and overhung on all sides by tall forest trees. The characters in the piece, a brave knight and his lady, personated by Dorothea, and her eldest brother. This knight and lady fair, were the parents of one lovely child, a little boy on whom they doated, as all fond parents always do, and whose part fell to the share of Rachel's youngest brother, a fat, rosy, peaceable little fellow in frocks and trousers. This child, the wood Demon, (Rachel herself) was to carry off and hide up in his den, a sand-pit in the afore mentioned dell, where a gallant page, belonging to the lady, was to find him, kill the "wood demon," and restore the child to his distracted parents.

Now, this in Rachel's opinion, was a glorious plot. The acting commenced under the most happy auspices. The month was June, the day, one in which nature appears conscious of her own beauty and revels in the excess of light and loveliness. — The air was full of the warblings of birds, of the scent of flowers, and the music of gentle breezes. The lady led her little boy into the centre of the meadow, and bade him amuse himself among the flowers. The boy was busy filling his cap with "daisies pied, and hare bells blue" — when a yell from the dark grove, made him start and look up; and lo the wood demon, crowned with bits of yew, and poisonous briony, rushed from his hiding place, and with frightful yells, seized upon the terrified child. But, just as he is carrying him off in triumph, Miss Wilde, alarmed by the outcries, issues from the house, and shocked at seeing a carriage drawn up by the meadow paling, and a gentle man and lady enjoying the pastime as much as the poor actors, gives a cuff to one, and a shake to another; and the poor wood demon, vanquished in the very moment of victory, returns weeping to the house.
Chapter II

Rachel was yet a child, when a lady came on a visit to the family. Miss Long, was the daughter of a very old friend of the father’s; and she was treated in every respect like a friend of his own. — During her long stay, a great attachment sprang up between her and the little Rachel; and when the time of her departure drew near, she begged as a great favour, that the little girl might be allowed to accompany her, to her distant home.

Rachel was a sickly, consumptive child; and it was agreed upon, on all hands, that the change would be beneficial to her health. Rachel heard the decision with unmixed delight; and listened with eager attention, to the many consultations held upon this important subject; and stood still and patiently, to be fitted with the few additions which were necessary for her equipment; and thought herself as rich as a queen, in the possession of two new frocks, a gay scarlet pelisse, a cap of the same material, with a gold band and tassels. Such a theatrical costume, was fashionable in those days; and poor Rachel, who was not the first of her sex, whose head had been turned by a scarlet coat and a gay feather, felt as proud as a peacock, as she strutted about in all the dignity of her new finery.

At last, the preparations come to a happy termination. Our little one had received the last kiss, and the last blessing, from her kind parents; had been hugged and kissed, and wept over, by the young sisterhood, who individually charged her, not to forget them; and in a few minutes after, she found herself seated beside her friend, Miss Long; and rolling along the London road, in a neat post-chaise.

It was the first time Rachel had ever lost sight of her home, and she wondered why her heart swelled; and tears blinded her eyes. It was the hand of nature knocking at her unsophisticated heart, and demanding the sympathies, which had been planted and fostered, by the divine mother, unknown albeit, to her thoughtless offspring. The tears of childhood are holy things; showers from heaven, which fall from angel eyes, to refresh and vivify the souls of the...
children of earth. A thousand mental graces spring up and flourish under their influence. There is no sorrow in such tender emotions, they may truly be termed, the joy of grief.

Rachel wept silently for a few moments, but, hope and expectation, soon dried her tears. The present, to children is the only period of enjoyment. They are too young, too unacquainted with care, to anticipate the future; and the past, however sorrowful, is quickly obliterated from their memory. The moment which dries their tears, spreads a blissful veil of oblivion over the cause from whence they flowed; and Rachel, when she recovered her spirits, marvelled to find Miss Long, still sad and dejected.

Miss Long was in love, and had just parted with her sweetheart; but Rachel, poor child, was ignorant of all this. She knew of no love, beyond the love which a child feels for its parents, and brothers and sisters; and the friends who are kind to it. She would have esteemed the love she bore for her cat and dog, as a superior sentiment, to the passion Miss Long felt for her lover. She thought that her dear Lucy was cross and sulky, because she would not tell her stories, and talk and play with her, as usual. All the observations she could draw from her companion, were as uninteresting as the following:

"Bless me, child! how you tease! Can't you sit still and be quiet. Will your tongue never tire. You will be out of the carriage window and break your neck."

"Dear Lucy," said the incorrigible Rachel, lolling across her lap, and looking beseechingly in her face. "How cross you are to day."

"You are a spoilt little girl," she returned, kissing her. "There, you may stand at the window, and look at the Highlanders."

Oh what a grand spectacle was that for a child of six years of age. The gallant —— Highland regiment was marching past to embark for the continent. Rachel screamed with delight at their waring plumes, gay tartans and rich accoutriments, until the sight of their naked knees, threw the volatile child into convulsions of laughter.

"Look, Lucy, look! Their stockings are all too short.
for them. How cold they must be with their knees bare!"

As the carriage drove slowly through Chelmsford, Rachel's excitement was increased, by a curious incident. The officer who commanded the detachment, was a remarkably handsome, dignified looking man. His stately figure and soldier-like bearing, impressed her with a species of awe; and she insisted that he must be the king, and refused to be undeceived by Miss Long. As the regiment was marching past a range of mean-looking houses in the suburbs of the town, an old woman rushed suddenly from the door of one of them; and flinging herself upon her knees before the gallant officer, she cast her withered arms about him, kissing his knees with the utmost devotion, between broken exclamations in her native tongue, sobs and tears.

The officer smiled good-humouredly, and raising the venerable dame from the ground, shook her heartily by the hand, into which he slipped several bright looking pieces of money, answering her passionate appeal to him in the same strange dialect.

The regiment marched forward, but the old woman remained standing upon the same spot till it was out of sight. Her white hair streaming from beneath her coarse cap, her eyes shaded by her withered hand, and the tears rolling fast down her furrowed cheeks. For years, that picture of humble attachment haunted the memory of Rachel Wilde; and she longed with intense curiosity, to know something of the history of these passing actors in the great drama of life. Perhaps that ancient woman had been foster mother to the princely-looking warrior.

At Chelmsford, our travellers put up for the night. The window of the little back parlour of the Inn which for the time being, they were to consider their own, looked out into a spacious yard, which was fast filling with a party of Dragoons, who were leading out their horses from the stables that surrounded the court, preparatory to their departure for the seat of war. Seated upon the table by the window, which commanded a view of the Inn-yard, Rachel was soon deeply engaged in watching the movements of the
soldiers with eager curiosity. She did not admire them so much as the Highlanders; but, to a child, there was something wonderfully imposing in the high fur caps, and scarlet coats, of the dragoons — and then their horses; from her cradle, Rachel had always admired those noble animals, and these were so sleek, so handsomely caparisoned, that they looked worthy to be the bearers of the brave fellows who bestrode them so gallantly.

Just opposite to the window where Rachel was perched, a tall, pale young man, mounted upon a splendid black charger, was stooping from his saddle, holding by the hand, the pretty waiting maid. His voice trembled, as he said, “Eliza you will forget me, when I am gone.”

“Oh, never, never!” returned the fair girl, looking demurely down. “If you should be killed in the wars, it would break my heart, I know it would,” and she hid her face in her apron and appeared to weep, for her frame shook and trembled; but we, the chroniclers of this event, much fear that the jade was only laughing.

The tear was in the young soldier’s eye, as he pressed her hand devoutly to his lips and heart. — “Adieu dear, dear Eliza, if ever I live to return, I shall claim you as my wife.”

“And we shall be so happy,” murmured the chamber maid. The word to march was given by the officer in command. The lovers parted, and the Highland regiment filed into the spacious yard in an opposite direction.

“Is it possible!” cried Miss Long, who like Rachel, had witnessed the parting scene from the window. “Can that be Eliza, who is flirting away with the handsome Highland serjeant, with sparkling eyes, and checks glowing with blushes. The poor young Dragoon! She has verified the old saying: ‘Out of sight, out of mind.’ The street has scarcely ceased to echo the trembling of his horses hoofs, and he is already forgotten.”

Rachel was too young to moralize upon these scenes then; but they formed themes for after reflection. Yet, it was at that window, and while witnessing the parting of that soldier and his betrothed, that she first learned the meaning of the word, love!
“Why did the poor soldier cry, Lucy, when he bade the girl good bye?” she asked of Miss Long.

“The young man is in love with her,” was the reply, “and that occasions the grief he feels at parting with her.”

“And does she love him Lucy?” said Rachel, not exactly satisfied with the flirtations of Eliza.

“I should hope so.”

“Ah, no, she does not love him,” said Rachel, thoughtfully, “or she would not be laughing with the Highlander yonder. How vexed the poor redcoat would be, if he could see her.”

Miss Long glanced at the window, and shrugging her shoulders muttered, “yes a true woman.”

“Do all women behave so to their lovers?” asked the innocent Rachel. Miss Long laughed, pushed her from her, and told her, “that little girls should not ask such questions.” But though little girls are forbidden by their elders, to ask such questions; when once their curiosity is aroused, they will think upon the subject of their enquiry with more intensity from the very prohibition; and they generally contrive to puzzle it out of their own heads at last. This is human nature, and Rachel, at that period, was a child of nature, and listened to no other teacher.

The home to which our travellers were journeying, was the pretty village of S ——, in Kent, about six miles from the old town of Rochester. London lay in their route. They entered the metropolis after dark; and the long line of lamps, and the splendidly illuminated shops, reminded Rachel of the fairy tales told her by her nurse; and Miss Long laughed heartily when the little girl demanded of her, “if she were awake, for it looked just like a dream?”

“We shall stay here a week,” said that lady, “with my uncle, and I will take you Rachel, to see the play, and many other fine sights.”

Now, be it known unto our readers, that Miss Long’s uncle, kept a tallow chandler’s shop on Ludgate Hill; was a wealthy Alderman of the great city of London, kept his carriage and had a fine country house at Clapham, and looked upon himself as a very respectable and substantial personage,
as in truth he was. But Rachel was the daughter of a poor gentleman, had been brought up with very aristocratic notions, and the sight of the shop, called all her pride into active operation. She drew stiffly back from the entrance, and with a curl of her lips, exclaimed: "I don't mean to stop here. Papa never visits with tradespeople."

"Nonsense child! none of these airs if you please," said her wiser friend, pushing her forward, and accompanying the action with a smart box on the ear. "My uncle is rich enough to buy your father's estate with one year's income."

"But he is not a gentleman," said Rachel, stoutly resisting.

"Phoo! you know nothing about it. If you do not behave yourself, I will whip you, and put you to bed without your supper."

Such conduct from Miss Long, appeared outrageous. She who had been all smiles and good humor at — hall. Rachel could scarcely believe her own senses, as she doggedly remained in the half open door, without advancing a step. It was now thrown wide open, and the dazzling light which streamed forth from the colored wax-lights which adorned the spacious shop, almost blinded her, and a good natured old man took her by the hand. "Is this your young friend Lucy — a nice child — will you give me a kiss little one?"

"No," muttered Rachel, sullenly struggling in his embrace, "you keep a shop."

"Ha, ha, ha," burst from the old gentleman, like the explosion of a gun. "A sprightly lass this. — Yes my dear, I do keep a shop; and you and I, will have fine fun together in the shop yet," and snatching her up in his arms, he bore her in spite of her kicking and screaming, into a handsome-ly furnished apartment, where two fine young women, (his daughters,) were waiting tea for the travellers.

Now though Rachel felt very sulky and angry, she happened to be very hungry, and the sight of the hot toast and nice plum cake, which graced the table, went very far to reconcile her to the shop. Mr. Pearce took her upon his
knee, and supplied her plentifully with these dainties; and Rachel began to feel half ashamed of her ungenteel conduct; but, soon dropping to sleep, she forgot all about the insult which her dignity had received, until the morning.

Chapter III

The next day, Miss Long and her cousins went out shopping, and not wishing to be bothered with the company of a child; they left Rachel in charge with the housekeeper. The old woman was kind enough; but she was very ugly, and very deaf. Rachel could not bear to come near her. Instead of trying to amuse her, by telling her nice stories, the little girl had to bawl in her ears at the very top of her shrill treble, to make her comprehend her wants; and even then, her utmost exertions, often produced no effect; and the provoking old creature, only put up her withered hand to her ear, and with a most abominable squint, exclaimed, "Eh! Bless my soul! I'm so deaf, I can't hear." Rachel wondered, what use she could be in the house, and ran away from her into the parlor, to seek for amusement.

The book-case was locked — the pictures that loaded the walls, were beyond her reach; and there was neither cat nor dog to play with, or to help dissipate the intolerable weariness of having nothing to do. Rachel felt horribly dull, and had wished herself at home with her brothers and sisters for the hundredth time, when she perceived a door which she had not noticed on the preceding evening.

With a cry of delight, she sprang from the floor, and peeped into a long passage, at the end of which she discovered another door, which some one, had neglected to fasten. On the que vive for adventure, Rachel softly stole out of the room, determined to explore the unknown regions which lay beyond. Walked boldly down the passage, and reconnoitered the premises through the aperture. It was the shop. She drew back in disgust. "What a greasy smell." (They were boiling fat in some of the outhouses.) "The nasty shop!"

"Who's there?" asked a kind voice. Rachel slunk
behind the door, but not in time to escape observation. Mr. Pearce ran forward, and caught her by her hand.

"So, so, you have come to see me, after all?"

"No, no, let me go."

"I have caught you on Tom Tickler's ground, and you can't get away. Besides, I will give you such pretty wax flowers and a doll, half as big as yourself."

"Are you sure," said Rachel, beginning to feel interest getting the better of inclination.

"Yes, quite sure — come and see."

Rachel was soon perched on the large counter, admiring the fine ornaments for the gay wax candles, while the good old gentleman sent one of his people, to buy a large doll. Rachel was transported into a paradise. The shop suddenly lost all its terrors. The wax trees and flowers, appeared to her, as beautiful as the wondrous fruit trees in Aladdin's magic garden.

"Well, what do you think of the shop now?"

"I don't know."

"Oh yes you do — you think it a very nice place."

"It is better than the parlor, or shouting to old Sarah. But I am going to the play to night. Oh, that will be grand."

"Humph!" said the old gentleman — "not a very proper place for a child. But my niece is a goose."

Just at that moment, a handsome lad of sixteen, stepped up to the counter.

"Good morning Lewis," said Mr. Pearce, shaking the new comer cordially by the hand. "How is your mamma, your sisters, and your grand father?"

"All quite well. But what a dear little girl you have here. Is she, your grandchild?"

"No," returned Rachel, drawing herself up with a pretty air of disdain, and answering for herself — "I do not belong to the shop." This sally, was received with a burst of merriment; even the shopmen laughed at Rachel.

"And who do you belong to, my little dear?"

"My papa, is a gentleman. He has a fine house in the country, and such beautiful gardens."
“And what brought you to the shop?”

“To see the play,” said Rachel; whispering to him confidentially, “Papa don’t know of my being here, or he’d soon send for me back again.”

“Will you come and see me?”

“Yes — if you don’t keep a shop.”

“I am too young for that. But I have two dear little sisters, who will be so glad to see you; and if you will come and play with them, I will call for you at six o’clock. I will shew you such beautiful pictures: and we will have a good game of romps together.”

Forgetting all about the play, Rachel exclaimed in an extacy of delight, “I will go — I will go. But may I take the doll?”

“Yes Dolly shall go too. I will carry her.”

Thus had Rachel made an appointment with some person of whom she knew nothing; but as Mr. Pearce seemed very willing to recognize the engagement, we will suppose, that the young gentleman was not unknown to him.

The rest of the day, passed heavily along. At four o’clock, the ladies returned to dinner, and Rachel was lifted upon the table, to give her opinion of lots of ribbons and artificial flowers, which had made a part of their purchases.

“This pretty sash, is for you Rachel,” said Miss Long. “It will fasten your frock when you go to the play with us to-night.” Rachel had forgotten the play.

“Rachel is going to drink tea, with Lewis and his sisters, to-night,” said Mr. Pearce.

“How fortunate!” exclaimed the three ladies, in a breath. “We shall not be bothered with her.”

“I will go to the play,” cried Rachel, bursting into tears. “I will not go with that strange boy.”

“You must not break your word, Miss. It was your own doing. You shall go!” said the unkind Lucy. A sullen, “I won’t,” was all the answer given by the indignant Rachel, to this speech; and she cried and screamed until she was hoarse; but all she got by her violence, was a sound whipping and a corner of the dark passage, until her unknown
friend called for her. His entreaties to get her to stir one inch from her position, were all in vain. The spirit of resistance had been aroused in the little creature, and she absolutely determined to remain where her friends had placed her. Lewis gave her a large paper of sweeties. She flung them upon the ground. He took her in his arms and kissed her. Oh, horrible ingratitude — she returned his caresses with a bite.

“I have it now,” he cried; “the doll shall go with me, instead of you.” He seized the doll, which had never quitted Rachel’s grasp, since the morning, and hurried off with her. With one bound, Rachel overtook, and caught him by the leg.

“Give me my doll!”

“She was invited to tea with you. She is a good girl. She shall go.”

“What go on my bonnet, and I will go too.”

“I don’t know that I will take you. I don’t like naughty girls that will bite.” But as he said this, the good-natured fellow tied on her bonnet, which one of the ladies supplied, and in a few minutes, Rachel was alone with her young protector, in the wide street. But turning to Rachel’s manuscript, which is now before us; we will cease to play the editor, and give her recollections of this lad, in her own words.

“Friendly reminiscences of that handsome boy, have haunted me all my life. He must have been the most good-natured of good fellows, to put up with all my wayward caprices, my petty tyrannies. His name Lewis, is all I know of him. — Who, or what he was, I never learned; and the adventures of that evening spent in his charming family, is still hoarded amongst the most pleasing recollections of my early years.

“I still smile at the mysterious awe, which crept over me at finding myself, young as I was, alone with him, in the vast crowded streets of London. The rattling of the carriages frightened me, and he carried me in his arms. He stopped at length, in a less busy street, before a large store house; we ascended several steps and were admitted by a
servant in livery, into a large hall, and my young friend led me up stairs into a handsome drawing room, in which I found a mild-looking, middle-aged lady, in a widow's dress; two fair young girls, of nine and ten — in dress mourning, and a dear venerable white haired old man in a uniform coat, which in after years, I knew to be the dress of a Naval officer.

"The old gentleman received me with a smile, and lifted me onto his knee. He had lost a leg, and he was greatly amused by all my questions respecting his wooden one.

"Could it feel? Did it go to sleep when he went to sleep — and how did he come by such a queer thing?"

"Then he gave me an account of the battle in which he lost his real leg, and shewed me a large picture which hung against the wall, of the death of Nelson, and the battle of Trafalgar. Vague ideas of death and destruction flashed into my mind; and I thought what a horrible thing it must be, to go to battle and lose our legs.

"With what patience that dear old man, turned over vast volumes of his library, to shew me the prints; and after ten, Lewis frightened me out of my wits, by playing off an electrical machine, and conjuring up phantoms with his magic lantern. I no longer regretted the play, while amusing myself at blindman's buff, and puss in the corner, with Lewis and his pretty sisters Lucretia and Maria, who loaded me with pieces of silk and velvet for my doll; and gave me all sorts of treasures, beads, flowers and toys. It was twelve o'clock when Lewis carried me home. I kissed him at parting and told him to come and see me again. The next day, we pursued our journey into Kent, and I never saw my young friend, or heard of him again."

Chapter IV

"It was the noon of a November day, when the coach set us down at the head of the romantic lane, which led to Mr. Long's estate. The air was raw, and a dense fog hung on the leafless bushes. I was chilled with the cold and cried bitterly.

RACHEL WILDE, OR, TRIFLES FROM THE BURTHEN OF A LIFE
“Miss Long’s father, an old man of eighty, received us at the door of a pretty white house. He had not an agreeable physiognomy. His features were thick, and expressed violent passions. His head was quite bald, and his face very red. I did not like him at all, and I shrank behind his daughter.

“He led the way into the sitting room, and I was presented to two of the fattest women I ever beheld. They were really mountains of flesh. These ladies were the daughters by a former marriage, and either of them, old enough to be Long’s mother. Miss Betsy, the elder, was considerably turned of fifty, and like her father, possessed a repulsive countenance. She had the same thick features. — The same red face; but was shockingly marked by the small pox. The second daughter, Miss Sally, had fine dark eyes, and a very handsome face; but the enormous proportions of her full blown figure, spoilt all. Among flowers, she would have been a piony. ‘So Lucy,’ said the elder, ‘we are to be pestered with this child, for the next twelve months. That is what we get by your long visits from home.’

“She will be no trouble,’ said the old man, patting my head; ‘she will help to amuse me.’ From that hour I nestled up to the old man; and Miss Betsy was my horror.

“I have visited many a lovely spot that has faded from my memory; but time can never efface from my recollection the localities of that place.

“Thirty-eight years have passed over me since I was there; yet, I could find my way back to that spot.

“The green lawn in front of the house — the large pond overhung with willows — the orchard that opened out of the vegetable garden, with its green banks and tufts of violets and primroses — all came as vividly back to my mind, as if it were but yesterday that I sat among the primroses, and played with the young lambs. But what have I to do with flowery banks just now. It was winter, chilly winter, when I arrived; and I felt myself very lonely among grown up persons, with no child to play with. Youth is fertile in invention. I soon made companions and playmates, from the living creatures around me.
Mr. Long kept a pack of fox-hounds, which were a partnership concern between him and a rich old fox-hunting squire, whose fine hall, with its tall chimneys and ancient gables, rose towering from among the giant oaks and elms which surrounded it. The dogs were kept in a paved court behind the house, with kennels on three sides, for their accommodation, and a cistern of clear water in the centre, overshadowed by a tall ash tree. That cistern, the old tree, and those dogs, were my delight. Many a whipping I got for soiling my white frocks and trowsers, by dabbling with sticks in the water, and rolling over and over upon the pavement with the dear dogs—Rover, Ringwood, Lightfoot: how I loved them all; and one, a beautiful spotted dog, called Clio, with a whole litter of mischievous pups, that bit my fingers and gnawed the hem of my frock into tatters.

"No state of existence is free from trouble; even this sacred spot contained an adversary to my peace, in the shape of a large turkey-cock, which sometimes invaded the dog-yard, and strutted and fretted his brief day of power among its tenants—biting some, and flapping others with his strong wings. The turkey-cock was decidedly very unpopular among the dogs; and, as for poor me, I fled like a coward at the mere sound of his hoarse voice; and, for days after, never dared to poke my nose into the dog-yard, without first being certain that Mr. Gobbler was gone. The turkey-cock greatly resembled some purse-proud ostentatious fool, thrusting himself, uninvited, among persons vastly his superiors, and thinking by his noise and fluster, to impress them with an idea of his own importance.

"Besides my friends, the hounds, I had established a most intimate acquaintance with a large tame raven, who hopped about the garden, and went by the familiar name of Jack. I never failed to save half of my cakes and bread and butter for Jack. Every warm sun-shining day, I found him standing at the root of the old willow, nodding and winking in the sun. To fling myself beside him, to kiss his shiny black head, and pat his glossy back, and to feel him knabbling my fingers in return was my delight. Then I ran races
up and down the neat box-edged walks.

“How freshly they smelt in the first days of spring, and laughed to see Jack hopping quickly at my heels, calling aloud his own name, to increase the sport — Jack, Jack. I verily believe that he used to laugh too. Then, there was Gipsy and Rose, the two large shepherd dogs, who were not the least beloved among my pets; — the great tortoise-shell cat and her two kittens, who lived in the barn, and helped to amuse me on a rainy day; — to say nothing of the pigeons, who inhabited a large dove-cot near, and whom I went with the maid, Anne, every morning to feed.

“When I was away from the parlor and cross Miss Betsy, I was as happy as a queen with all my subjects round me.

“Unfortunately for me, Miss Lucy Long was a great favorite in the neighborhood, and was seldom at home, and I was left almost entirely to the tender mercies of Miss Betsy, who privately kept a rod behind her father’s bureau for my especial benefit.

“How I longed to shew the old gentleman this instrument of torture; but, she threatened me, that if I did, she would fay me alive. Silly child that I was, to believe this threat. But so it was. I thought it would be a dreadful thing to lose my skin; and I felt sure that the cruel old maid would not scruple to keep her word. Mr. Long, on the other hand, spoilt and humored me to my heart’s content; but he was a violently passionate man, and used to storm at his daughters and servants in a way which made my flesh creep.”

Chapter V

One bright sunny day in the beginning of March, Miss Betsy dispatched Nancy the parish apprenticed girl, to the village of S ——, to buy some treacle for the farming men employed upon the estate, to eat with their apple dumplings; and as Rachel had been a good girl, and said her lessons without blundering, she was to accompany her. Rachel was delighted, for no one loved praise, or enjoyed recreation, more than did the little girl; and she anticipated
a pleasant stroll by the banks of S —— wood; and lots of violets and primroses, treasures incalculable to the young heart overflowing with the love of nature. Besides — had not Miss Betsy bestowed upon her a penny — wonder of wonders — for she was the most parsimonious of human beings. A penny to Miss Betsy, was of more value than a crown to others; and she had really opened her heart, and her purse strings, at the same time, and given the child a penny, charging her to lay it out discreetly in a book or toy, and not to buy sweeties with it, for when once eaten, it was gone for ever.

As Rachel kissed and thanked Miss Betsy, for her munificence, she wondered what had made her so good natured all of a sudden. Perhaps, the donor could not have solved her doubts. It was one of fortune's caprices, and it made Rachel the happiest of children, as she trotted off, dressed out in her gay pelisse, and holding Nancy by the hand.

The village was about a mile distant, and the path lay by the side of a noble wood, where giant oaks and elms cast fantastic shadows upon the grassy road. The mavis and black bird, those loving heralds of spring, carrolled their sweet loud notes, high up among the budding branches; and the lark whistled his clear lay at the edge of the white fleecy clouds, as they sailed along in the deep blue ocean of heaven. Rachel clapped her hands, and laughed and sung, in the sheer joy of her heart. The birds were her birds, the trees were her trees, and the flowers were her flowers. She was a queen in the green dominions of nature; and her mind reigned without a rival over the fair and beautiful.

Ah, blessed, thrice blessed season of youth and innocence — when earth is still the paradise of God, and its crimes and sorrows are veiled from the eyes of the unde-filed by the bright angel of His presence. They see not the flaming sword, they hear not the doom of the exile; but wander hand in hand with pitying spirits through that region of bliss.

Who would not gladly be a child again, to sit among the grass and weave daisy chains, to build grottos with
twigs, and decorate them with snail shells; to hear mysterious
music in the breeze as it wanders amid the tops of the
lofty pine trees, or impels forward the small wavelets of the
brook — to have no knowledge of sin — no fear of death
— no agonizing doubts as to the future. Well has the bard
of nature exclaimed, when these holy recollections of his
infant years thronged fast around him:

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy” —

And Rachel while filling her little basket with primroses,
was richer than the miser doating over his useless hoards.

At length the village was gained; and Nancy led the
way to the only shop it contained. Well did it deserve the
name of general — for it was the depot of every article in
common use which could be enumerated. It was a bakery, a
grocery, and a hardware establishment — while the owner
luxuriated in the titles of silk, mercer, linen draper, and
hosier; and yet, it was but a sorry affair after all. His silks
occupied a very small portion of a very small shelf. His
linen, was tied up in one old cove; and his hosiery consisted
in a few pairs of white and colored stockings, dangling in
the windows, between jars of gingerbread, nuts, and pep-
permint drops.

Then, he had books for the old and young. Histories
of Goody two shoes, and Cinderella, bound in gilt for one
penny, and Tom Thumb, and Jack the Giant killer, for two
pence. This department of the shop, was decidedly the one
that Rachel meant to patronize; and when she first entered
it, she thought her single penny, made her a person of such
consequence that, with it, she might command the best
things it contained. Older heads than Rachel's, have been as
easily deceived.

Mr. Blake, the master of the establishment, was a little,
tidy, dapper old batchelor. Fond of money, but fonder still
of that, which money could not buy — little children. He
took Rachel up in his arms, begged a kiss, which she would
not give without a struggle, and seated her on his counter.
He asked who she was? and she frankly gave her whole his-
tory — and he gave her a gingerbread husband in return —
for which the little girl offered to pay him in primroses, for she wanted to lay out her penny, in the history of her of the glass slipper. He good-naturedly accepted the primroses, and picked her out the gayest copy of the much abused fair one, he could find; and Rachel, the happy Rachel, departed pleased with Mr. Blake, pleased with her pretty book, and doubly pleased with herself — for she justly argued, “He must have thought me a nice little girl, or he never would have given me the ginger bread husband.”

They had walked nearly half a mile on their homeward path, before Rachel noticed the four pounds of treacle that Nancy was carrying, in a red pipkin. “What nasty black looking stuff” said she. “Do the men eat that with their dumplings?”

“Oh, ’tis very good Miss Rachel,” said the artful girl, dipping her fingers into the pan, and drawing them through her mouth, with great relish. “Come here, and taste it for yourself.”

“No that would be stealing,” said Rachel, drawing back. “What would Miss Betsy say?”

“Nonsense, she could not see you, and I would not tell of you.”

“But God would,” said the child, who had been brought up in the wholesome fear of his laws. — “If you did not tell of me, if she asked me, I could not tell a lie,” and jumping into the green bank, where she had just discovered a delicious nest of white, fragrant violets, Rachel forgot the treacle and the temptation.

While busy in securing her treasures, a friendly voice called her by name; and on looking up, she beheld Squire C ——, surrounded by the hounds, for he was out hunting.

“You are a good child,” he said, “not to do what that naughty girl bade you. I feel proud of you.”

Rachel dearly loved Squire C ——, and she had reason, for he was an excellent man, and a kind friend to the little girl. He was lord of the manor, and lived in a noble old hall which stood in a stately park, beyond the village which they had just left; and he was beloved and respected by the whole parish. He had taken a fancy to Rachel, and
he came over to Mr. Long's almost every day to see her; and was anxious to adopt her for his own child; but Mr. Wilde, would not part with his eccentric little girl, to her rich friend.

His visits were not merely for amusement. He taught Rachel to read, heard her the catechism, and to him, she generally said her prayers, kneeling reverently upon his knees, while he held her clasped hands in his. He was to Rachel in the place of the father she had left; and she knew his military step, for he had been a colonel in the army, and she ran to meet him, when he approached the house, and she knew the pocket, in which he always had stores of sweeties for his dear little girl, when she had said her task. And she loved to ride before him on his white mare Susan, back to the old hall; and to ramble about the beautiful gardens with his good old house-keeper. And there was a beautiful little brown pony, he called her's, and a troop of splendid peacocks, and a monkey chained up in the hall, that played all sorts of droll tricks, and when Rachel was naughty, the colonel threatened to chain her up with the monkey, and she had a wholesome fear of master pug and his chain, to the great amusement of her friends.

Now Rachel scarcely knew why Squire C— called her a good girl that morning; and when he rode off, she went on picking the violets, while Nancy went on eating—and the treacle was diminished in the pipkin to such a degree, that Miss Betsy very angrily demanded, who had stolen it?

"Oh," said this truly wicked girl. "It was Miss Wilde. I told her not, ma'am, but she would do it, in spite of me."

Imagine the astonishment of poor Rachel, thus falsely, and cruelly accused. Her face flushed to scarlet, as with tears in her eyes, she denied the infamous charge.

"I see it is you, Miss. I know it by your tell-tale face. You cannot deceive me," cried the angry Miss Long, seizing her by the arm, and dragging her into a dark room. "It is my duty to punish you for theft, lying, and bearing false witness."

All expostulations and explanations upon Rachel's
part, were vain; and then came the horrid rod, and the
debasing punishment, and Rachel would not cry; she bore
her chastisement with Spartan firmness, for her heart felt
bursting with the sense of intolerable wrong, and her indignation
was called wicked obstinacy, and her punishment
was doubly severe; and this was on false evidence — which
has sent to the gallows and the hulks, its countless victims.

Rachel lay upon the floor of the dark drawing-room,
from noon-day until night. She neither moved nor cried.
She only felt that she had been deeply injured, and every
other feeling was hushed under the mighty pressure of
undeserved punishment.

And how felt her miserable accuser, Rachel never
knew, and never asked; but, we can believe from the charac-
ter of the girl, that it gave her no concern. She was a
domestic slave, and the hard treatment she had received
from others, had made her callous to praise or blame. If she
was an artful, dishonest creature, she had been rendered so
by circumstances over which she had no control.

Her birth was one of infamy; and her education in a
country work-house, forty years ago, had been for evil, not
good. The hand of every one was against her; mankind
seemed her general enemy — for she had received naught
from her fellow-creatures but ill-usage, and mental debase-
ment. Such neglected beings are more objects of deep com-
passion, than of thoughtless blame: — while contemplating
their unmitigated wretchedness, we strive in vain to solve
the great riddle of life.

Some, from the first dawn of existence, appear the
sport of an untoward destiny — vessels of dishonor fitted
for destruction; while others occupy the high places of the
earth, and revel in its luxuries to satiety. Alas! for the sinful
pride of man, for to it, and it alone, must we trace this fear-
ful incongruity. Pride must have broken the ancient bond
of unity, which, at some remote period of the world's histo-
ry, existed between its children. Yet, God, in his infinite
mercy, has provided a link which shall yet bind into one,
the disunited band of unity, and through the mediation of
his blessed son, unite into one loving family, the severed
kindreds of the earth; and the holy precepts that Jesus taught, practically borne out, shall produce the great moral reformation, that shall banish poverty and misery from among us:

“That man to man, the world o’er,
Shall brothers be for a’ that.”

But, to return to Nancy. She was the worst fed, the worst clothed, and the worst lodged, of any person in the establishment. All the coarse dirty work, fell to her share. She fed the dogs, cleaned the kennels, carried water and fuel, scoured the knives and pots, blacked the shoes, and ran all the errands. These were but a few out of the many jobs that fell to her daily lot. She was under-drudge to the cook, who beat and kicked her in a cruel manner, if she disobeyed her orders. She was fag to the house-maid, who regarded her with as much contempt, as she did the dust she swept from beneath her feet.

Poor Nancy, unhappy child of guilt and misery, her whole existence was a life-long agony. She never got a kind word from any one; and was the general butt at which the farm servants threw all their coarse jokes. To live at peace with the other members of the family, she had to fawn and flatter, and sneak, to act the spy for one, and to conceal, with unblushing falsehoods, the misdemeanors of another. Her life was made up of a tissue of lies and subterfuges; and can we wonder, that to secure herself from blame, she falsely accused an innocent child.

Rachel scarcely knew how the day went away; time seemed to have come to a stand still with her. One thought alone possessed her mind — the deep sense of undeserved injury. At length the door of her prison was unlocked, and Miss Lucy Long lifted her from the ground.

“Rachel, are you asleep?” No answer. — “Dear Rachel, that wicked girl told a cruel story about you. Colonel C —— is here; he has told us all about it.”

Rachel was alive in a moment. Her heart bounded — the tear was arrested on her eye-lash, as she exclaimed, clasping her little hands fervently together — “I never did
it — God knows! I never did it! Miss Betsy had no right to beat me. I hate her: I will never speak to her again!"

"My dear child, she was deceived: she was right to punish you while she thought you guilty," said Colonel C, now entering. "You must forgive her for my sake, whom God sent to prove your innocence. You owe Him a great debt of gratitude, Rachel, for it is not always that the innocent are cleared from the false accusations of the guilty. Come with me to Miss Betsy, she is very sorry for you, and is anxious to be friends."

Rachel went, but I fear with a very ill grace, for her back still smarted from the strokes of the rod; and the sight of Miss Betsy seemed to renew the pain. The reconciliation took place, and in a few moments Rachel was nestled in the bosom of the good Colonel, and wearied with over excitement, soon fell asleep in his arms.

Miss Betsy was very kind for some days, and Rachel had almost forgotten the wrong, when an untoward accident again called forth all her vindictive feelings, and involved her in an adventure which might have terminated in a very serious manner.

The parlor window frames had been recently painted, and Rachel, who had nothing to do, was standing in a chair, looking out of the window, with a small pair of pointed scissors in her hand, and she began drawing with the points, houses and dogs and cats, upon the fresh paint, disfiguring it sadly. Still the child was not aware that she was doing wrong. Mr. Long had laughed heartily at some of her rude attempts in white chalk, traced all over the barn walls, as high as she could reach; and Rachel thought that he would be as well pleased with her designs drawn upon the window sill.

Just as she had finished a house, greatly to her own satisfaction, Miss Long entered, and without explaining to the child the unintentional mischief she had done, she seized the rod from its hiding place, behind the bureau, and throwing Rachel rudely upon the floor, gave her a severe whipping, accompanied with very violent language. She had scarcely taken summary vengeance on the child, before
a Mr. Albany drove up in his tandem to the door, and she had to leave her indignant victim to receive the visitor.

With a heart bursting with rage, Rachel sprang from the floor, and glancing rapidly round the room, to see that no one was near, her resolution was taken in a moment, and while Miss Betsy was ushering her guest to the drawing-room, she darted, unobserved, through the open door, crossed the garden, and the road in front, and paused for one second beside the stile that led to a path which crossed a large field opposite.

"Which road should she take?" The field was the least likely to awaken suspicion, — would be the least likely to be explored: she mounted the stile, and in a few moments was out of sight.

And what did this mad child in her delirium of anger, mean to do? Reader, to run away. You know not what great thoughts were swelling that proud little heart. In fancy she had already traversed the hundred and forty-eight long miles, that lay between her and home. It seemed but a step in that moment of deep excitement. She would be ill-treated by Miss Betsy no longer: she would return home.

The day was cold and bright, as days in March often are. She had no hat upon her head: her neck and arms were bare: her white frock and trowsers, and red morocco shoes, a poor protection against the keen wind that rustled the dry stubble of the wide field before her. Rachel did not care, and she ran on as fast as she could. The path she was pursuing led to Gravesend, over the fields — the latter place being four miles distant. — She passed over S — common, with all its rugged dingles and pools of water, and fearing lest she should be found, if she kept the path, she turned off to the left, and wandered on until she gained a steep bank some miles distant from the home she had quitted.

Her trowsers were torn with the brambles; she had lost one of her shoes in a mud-hole, and she was foot-sore, hungry, and weary. Fortunately for our young runaway, there was a gap in the hedge, which crowned the steep bank, and after many unsuccessful efforts, she succeeded in scrambling to the top. On the other side, a bare, brown
newly-harried field, stretched far before her, on which the shadows of several forest trees extended their giant proportions in the setting sun.

Rachel cautiously descended the bank on the other side, but uttered a cry of fear and astonishment, as a girl about fourteen years of age, dressed in a quilted green stuff petticoat, and a man's jacket, approached to offer her assistance in affecting the descent.

Now the girl knew Rachel, although Rachel to her knowledge, had never seen the girl; and she marvelled greatly what had brought Miss Wilde there.

Speaking kindly to the child, soon drew from her the tale of wrongs: — how she had been cruelly beaten, and was on her way home, — that she was very tired, and very hungry, — that she did not know where to sleep that night, for she had not passed a single house since she set out in the morning.

The kind girl pitied the poor young stranger, and taking off the man's jacket, wrapped it, like a good Samaritan, about the little creature's shivering form. Then seating her by a fire she had in the bank, for she was employed in keeping the crows off the newly sown barley, she drew the remains of a very brown loaf from a small weather-beaten, brown basket.

"Here is bread for you, but it is very coarse."

Rachel had never seen such bread in her life, but plum cake would have been less delicious than that coarse fare. She was so hungry that she literally devoured it, and the good-natured girl laughed to see her eating it so fast. Putting an old sack over her own shoulders, she took Rachel into her lap, and held her feet near the embers of the fire.

"Poor little soul," she said "you are very cold: stay here a few minutes, while I go and look for your shoe."

"No, no, you cannot find it; it is a great way off; and it would be all wet and spoilt with the mud," said Rachel, clinging to her new friend. "May I live with you, and help you to keep the crows away?"

"Yes, and I will take you home to sleep with me
to-night; but my bed is very hard."

"And you won't beat me with a rod?"

"Oh, no: you shall do just as you please."

Rachel was happy, and she nestled closer to her new friend, when the sudden appearance of a man and two dogs, in the gateway on the other side of the field, filled her with fearful apprehensions.

"Do you see those dogs?"

"Yes. What of them?"

"They know me," said Rachel. "They are Mr. Long's shepherd's dogs; and that man is the shepherd. Oh, cover me up with the sack, and hide me in the hedge, or those dogs will find me out."

The girl did as she was bid, at the same time she beckoned the shepherd, unknown to Rachel, to advance.

Poor Rachel, how her little heart beat, as she lay cowering under the sack. Her old friends, Gipsy and Rose, ran hither and thither: at last they came upon her hiding place, and gave a joyous bark.

"What have the dogs got here?" said the shepherd, winking to the girl, who was no other than his daughter, and the next moment he lifted Rachel, pale as death, and trembling with fear, from the ground.

"So, my little lady, I have found you at last?"

"I won't go home," said Rachel, clinging to the bushes. "I will die first!"

"Then I must leave you to the gipsies in the lane. They know how to make little girls behave themselves."

Rachel was dreadfully afraid of the gipsies. — "Well," she said, "I will go with you, if you will promise me that I will not be beaten when I get home, and that you will carry me every step of the way, for I am too tired to walk."

To this the good shepherd readily agreed, and seating Miss Rachel on his shoulder, he walked off with her at a round pace. — Informing her that his old master had been nigh distracted for her loss, — that he had been all over the country in search of her, — that the Colonel had spoken very angrily to Miss Betsy, and burnt the rod, and sent his servants in all directions to find the runaway. Rachel had
wandered more than four miles from home; and it was dark when the shepherd deposited her safely by the fire-side in the parlor.

Chapter VI

Rachel expected a severe reprimand for her late conduct, and a whipping as a matter of course. She was agreeably disappointed. Her kind friend, Colonel C——, had burnt the rod, and Mr. Long was so fearful of her running away again, that not a word was said to her on the subject that night. In the morning, the old gentleman called her to him, and taking her up on his knee, said to her:

"Was it to keep crows with Annie Herd, that you ran away yesterday, Rachel, and made us suffer so much uneasiness on your account?"

"No," whispered Rachel, who surely thought that the anticipated punishment was at hand. "I ran away because I was beat with the rod."

"Do not you think that you deserve some punishment for your bad conduct?" Rachel hung her head. She thought Miss Long deserved to be whipped for her conduct to her, but she said nothing. "Rachel, I should not be your friend, if I did not punish you," said the old gentleman. "You chose to keep crows yesterday with my shepherd's daughter, to please yourself, and to day I mean you to keep sheep with another daughter of his, on S—— Common, to please me. Now get your breakfast and eat heartily for you will be away all day." Rachel did not understand the nature of her sentence, but she supposed, that it must be very dreadful; and she could not eat her bread and milk with any appetite for thinking about it.

After breakfast Miss Lucy put on the little girl's pelisse and hat, and the man servant led Mr. Long's favorite brown pony, Punch, to the front door. Mr. Long mounted, and ordered the man, to put Rachel before him on the horse; and off they jogged at a round trot down the lane. The sun was shining brightly, and the birds were singing in the budding hedge-rows; and the smell of the golden furze
bushes, then in full blossom, was delicious. The air was sharp and keen, but the country looked so beautiful, and Rachel enjoyed her ride so much, that to have seen the little girl, smiling and gazing around her with animated delight, no one could have imagined that she was a culprit, going forward to receive punishment for a very serious offence.

The lane terminated on the Common, which, gay with furze bushes, and knots of daisies and primroses, was speckled over with sheep and their young lambs. The lambs were gambolling hither and thither, and cutting a thousand graceful antics on the green sward. A girl about two years older than Rachel's friend of the proceeding day, was the presiding genius of the scene. She was seated upon a sunny knoll, sheltered from the wind by a low range of bushes, the two dogs, Gipsey and Rose, crouching at her feet, while their young mistress was employed in knitting.

"Susan," said Mr. Long, riding briskly up, "I shall leave Miss Wilde with you to-day. She was very naughty yesterday, and ran away from me to help your sister Annie keep crows. Pray make her help you keep the sheep, and see that she is not idle; for idleness you know is the root of all evil."

Susan came forward and lifted Rachel from the pony. She seemed surprised that the little girl made no resistance, but looked up to her with a smiling countenance; and Susan promising Mr. Long that she would take great care of her, the old gentleman rode off, saying "that he would come to the cottage for her in the evening."

"Oh, how happy we shall be, playing with the dear lambs and gathering flowers," cried Rachel, clapping her hands and frisking about as blythely as any lamb in the flock. "I wish they would send me here every day." Susan laughed at her companion's vivacity, and found her a nice seat among the primroses, and in ten minutes they were the best friends in the world. Susan taught her how to make chains of daisies and dandelions, and to weave the primroses and butter cups with the long slender branches of the green broom, to make garlands for the lambs. Then they
ran races up and down the verdant slopes of the common, trying their speed to the utmost, and laughing and shouting in their uncontrollable glee. The dogs entered fully into their sport, and ran round them in circles, leaping and barking with all their might.

Rachel's cup ran over with the nectar of happiness. Free, and surrounded by beautiful objects she revelled in the mere consciousness of existence: and her heart expanded and grew light as the air she breathed.

"Why do people remain half the day cooped up in dark, dull houses," she cried. "Is it not better to be here with the lambs. To hear the birds sing, and to see the sun shine?" "But birds do not always sing, and the sun does not always shine," said the girl. "There be dark, rainy, foggy days, when 'tis not so pleasant to remain on an open exposed place like this. How would you like to be drenched with the rain, and chilled with the cold, as I often am. No, no, the gentlemen in their fine houses, know little about the sufferings of the poor. It is not all play like this."

Rachel felt the shadow of the rainy day descend upon her soul. "Why are some people poor and others rich?"

"I don't know," said the girl; "'tis God's will, and it must be right; but it seems hard to us who are poor. Maybe we shall be rich in the next world."

"I hope so," said Rachel. "If we are good, Mr. C— says, we shall be happy there."

"I often wish myself one of the lambs," said the girl; "they do seem to enjoy their life so much, and they have not the dread of the butcher, though he will surely one day come for them, and in a day when they least expect it, when the sun is bright, and the air is warm, and the grass is fresh and green, and they are full of frolic and play, as they are at this moment. But God provides them with a good warm coat, and they never know what it is to be hungry like us, or to see their fleece worn out, without knowing where to get money to buy a new one. Oh, it would be so nice, to sport about in the fields all day, without work and without care, like the lambs."

"And never to be beaten with a rod, and called harsh
names,” said Rachel, whose thoughts kept turning continu-
ally upon that hateful flagellation. “Yes, I should like to be a
little lamb.” And thus the two friends conversed together,
until noon reminded them that it was dinner time. Susan
produced her little basket of coarse bread and cheese which
was duly shared with Rachel, and the two dogs, who grate-
fully licked the hands of their benefactors. Exercise, and
the free, fresh, bracing air, had given our little one, a sharp
appetite; and the dinner that had been provided for one,
seemed very scanty for four.

“Never mind Miss Rachel, you shall have a good sup-
per at night, of warm bread and milk, and my dear old
granny shall tell you a pretty story; she knows hundreds of
them.”

“I love stories,” said Rachel. “I wish it were night.”

“Are you tired of the lambs already?”

“No but I want to hear your granny’s stories.”

“But you will tire of granny and her stories and want
to go home?”

“Not while you are kind to me. We will keep the
sheep to-morrow and make garlands of flowers, and be as
happy as we have been to day.”

A long day of play is very tiresome, even though spent
among the flowers. The mind that lacks occupation must
have change, or pleasure becomes satiety, and that which
produced excitement whilst new to it, ends in weariness.
Rachel grew tired with excess of freedom. The flowers she
had gathered withered at her feet, and the day before so
sunny and bright, grew dull and cloudy. The wind whistled
shrilly through the furze bushes, and Susan, experienced in
the changes of the weather, said there would be rain before
morning.

The sun at-length descended in the west, although
hidden in a thick mist. The dogs scoured the common, and
gathered the sheep together into the fold; and after Susan
had shut them in for the night, she took Rachel by the
hand, and raising her voice into a glad song, they turned
their steps homeward. They left the broad common, and
entered a narrow sandy lane, girt on either side by furze
hedges. Among a shower of golden blossoms, Susan shewed Rachel a robin’s nest with five speckled eggs in it.

“Oh, give me one of those beautiful eggs.”

“It is unlucky,” said Susan, shaking her head.

“The robin and the titty wren,
Are God Almighty’s cock and hen.”

“God would be angry with me, if I robbed the nest of his favourite bird; I have heard,” and the girl bent down lower to her companion, and her countenance grew dark, and mysterious,—“I have heard granny say, that when the wicked Jews raised the cross on which our blessed Lord was crucified, that a little robin lighted upon the top of it, and sang so sweetly, that his murderers stopped to listen to it, and Christ blessed the bird, and his breast became blood-red from that day. I don’t know whether it be true; but this I do know, that if you bereave a robin of her young, no good ever happens to you again. You are sure to break a limb, or meet with some dreadful accident. We are told in the bible, that God takes care of sparrows, who are but a bold, thievish crew; then how much more likely it is for him, to protect his own pretty robin.”

“I always loved the robin,” said Rachel, “but I will love it still more now.”

At the end of the lane, they crossed a little brook by a rude plank thrown across it; over this rustic bridge, a tall willow threw its long pendant branches. Having crossed the bridge, they entered a neat little garden, surrounded by a hedge of sweet-briar whose thick buds, half expanded into leaf, threw out a most grateful odour. The shepherd who had just returned from folding the rest of Mr. Long’s numerous flock of sheep, was standing in the doorway of a snug mud cottage, whose white-washed walls, and green moss grown thatch, gave it a peculiarly rural appearance.

“Susan, thee be’est just in time for supper,” he cried.

“Bring in the little lady, she looks cold and hungry.”

Rachel was soon divested of her gay pelisse, and perched upon the knee of granny Herd, by the side of a cheerful fire on the hearth. A low oak table was covered.
with a coarse cloth, on which was placed several wooden bowls and platters — some very brown bread, part of a skim-milk cheese, a plate of onions, and a saucer with salt. A red pipkin of milk, was simmering upon the hearth stone, and two sturdy boys, were sitting upon a rude bench watching its progress with evident satisfaction. Granny Herd cut some of the brown bread into each of the wooden bowls, and the milk was poured over it, and duly distributed. Rachel was so hungry, that she thought it excellent, and made amends for her scanty dinner by eating heartily of the plain fare before her. After the things had been removed, and her friend of the day before, had washed them away, Rachel nestled up to the old woman, and begged her to tell her a story.

“A dozen if you like,” said the old dame. “What shall it be. About fairies, or hobgobblins, or ghosts.”

“I don’t care which,” said the little girl. “I have heard of fairies; they are pretty little men and women, who live in the flowers, and dance by moonlight in the green rings in the meadows. I should like to see a fairy very much, but I am afraid that they would never let me catch them.”

“Bless me! the child talks of fairies as if they were butterflies and beetles,” said the old woman.

“But ghosts, and those things you were talking about with the hard name,” said Rachel, “I never heard of them before.”

“Never heard of ghosts?” screamed the old dame.

“Hush, mother! don’t go to frighten the child, with your ugly tales,” said the shepherd.

Rachel’s curiosity was excited; she sat bolt upright upon the old woman’s knees, and her eyes grew round as she gazed intently in her face.

“Tell me, what are ghosts?”

“Nothing, my child, nothing, only the spirits of dead folk who cannot rest in their graves; persons who have been murdered, or have murdered others, who walk the earth of a night and frighten people in lonesome places. I have seen a ghost myself.”

“Oh do tell me all about it,” said Rachel, while she
felt her blood trickling back in a cold stream to her heart; and her teeth chattered, and her rosy cheek grew white as ashes.

"Hold your tongue Mother," cried the good shepherd, "don't you see how you are scaring the child?" But the old woman was in for the story, and in spite of her son's admonitions, she was determined to have her talk out.

"When I was a young gall," she commenced, "and was in service at S—— Hall, with Squire C——'s mother." Here a shout from the bridge, made the narrator start and look up. "By jolly!" cried the shepherd springing from his seat, "that is the master's voice. Come little miss, be quick, and put on your coat; the night is dark, and he will not like to wait in the cold."

"Oh, but the story. I want to hear the story."

"You must wait until some other time," whispered Susan, kneeling on the ground and slipping the little girl's pelisse over her head, "Hark? Mr. Long is calling again. If you keep sheep with me to-morrow, I will tell you the story, for I know it by heart." This promise pacified Rachel, and in a few minutes she was in the saddle before Mr. Long, who bidding the shepherd good night, set off home at a round pace.

"Why do you cry Rachel?"

"I don't want to leave the cottage. I should like to live there always. Do let me keep sheep to-morrow with Susan."

"Are you happier there than with us?"

"Oh, yes, a thousand times happier."

Mr. Long felt hurt at the enthusiasm with which his little visitor proclaimed her sentiments. He forgot that she was only a child. That the day spent with nature, free from the artificial restraints that wealth imposes upon its children, was more highly prized by the unsophisticated Rachel, than all the luxuries of his comfortable home. He considered Rachel an ungrateful little baggage to prefer the shepherd's cottage to his own handsome house; but the young creature he thoughtlessly blamed, was true to herself — to the best feelings of humanity. She lived in a world of
poetic liberty — a world of her own — a world peopled by bright thoughts and natural objects, and unacquainted with the philosophy of human institutions, she was still in blissful ignorance of the hard names that human pride had invented to separate into two distinct species, the rich and the poor. To Rachel, the shepherd and his family were as worthy of love and respect, as the wealthy Mr. Long. They had been as kind to her, and she knew no difference. The first worst lesson of humanity, was taught her from that hour.

When Rachel entered the parlor, a strange gentleman and lady rose to meet her. Rachel looked into the gentleman's face enquiringly: a cry of delight burst from her lips. It was her father! — the young lady, her eldest sister. They had come to take home their little absentee.

Chapter VII

A lapse of five years occurs in Rachel's reminiscences of her early childhood; and from the tear-stained pages of the growing girl, we shall extract a few trifles which may amuse our readers.

At nine years of age, we find her battling with a governess, who unable to discern the light, bright tints in her character, pronounces her entirely bad; a stubborn, self-willed, crazy-pated creature, to whom it was impossible to impart a rational idea; and the poor girl like many an unfortunate, misunderstood child of genius, remains unteachable, untaught. Keenly sensible of the unjust prejudice which had pronounced the ban against her; and too proud to conciliate the favor of the tyrannical mistress she despised, Rachel obstinately refused instruction. Her father rebuked, her mother scolded, her elder sisters blamed, and Miss — threatened, but Rachel, firm to her promise, bore it all without yielding an inch. This was wrong, Rachel felt that it was so, but had she been treated with the least kindness or consideration; had the tenderness of love been tried, instead of the stern brutalizing force of blows, and the insulting abuse of power; the child, who stood
aloof, invincible in her wounded pride, had bent to instruc-

tion and received the chastisement of her faults, with tears
of penitence. Poor Rachel, her heart was full of affection,
full of deep, abiding love — love strong as death, but those
around her, knew not how to call forth all its energy and
tenderness. In all her sorrows, and they were many, she
found one faithful friend and counsellor, in her sister
Dorothea.

Dorothea, was nearly two years her senior; was a gen-
tle, loving, lamb-like creature, full of sincerity and truth.
Her talents were equal, perhaps superior to those of her
impetuous, irascible sister; but she had a perfect control
over her passions. Her temper by nature was placid and
kind, she could not bear to see Rachel suffer; and she did
all in her power to soften and heal the wounds which the
daily friction of uncongenial minds, stamped into the
unfortunate girl’s too sensitive heart.

Oh how devotedly Rachel loved this kind sister. Her
affection for her, fell little short of idolatry; untractable to
others, she was tractable to Dorothea. To lay her aching
head in her lap, to sob out her full heart upon her bosom,
to feel her hand wipe away the tears, she was too proud to
shed before those by whom she was insulted, and reviled,
was the only comfort the young girl knew. Had she pos-
sessed any knowledge of the human heart, could she have
seen, that her own perverseness drew down upon herself,
much of the misery, which shed a doleful gloom upon her
mind and character, and darkened the days of her future
years, she had turned with meekness to those who knew as
little of her mind, with all its lofty aspirations, and poetic
images, as she did herself, and sought their sympathy and
regard with the same earnestness, that she did the esteem
of her beloved Dorothea.

But Rachel had yet to learn by bitter experience, the
philosophy of life. To force a strong will, instead of battling
with others, to make successful war against the imperfec-
tions of her own faulty temper, and those head-strong pas-
sions, which at this period of her history, bid fair to destroy
a fragile body, and a sensitive and highly imaginative mind.
Rachel was a solitary child. Other children felt no sympathy with her — they could not comprehend her fantastic notions. She talked of things they understood not, and asked questions which they could not answer. Full of vague and undefined thoughts, with a mysterious consciousness of the great mystery of life, overshadowing her like a cloud, from the midst of whose darkness, gleams of that far off eternity, flashed from time to time, like lightning through her brain; Rachel lived in a world of her own creations. She felt that some great unknown power had called her into existence, dream-like as that existence appeared to her; and her young soul stretched forth its longing arms towards God. An intent desire to know, what to her, was buried in impenetrable mystery, conquered even the fear of death. She longed to die — if death could answer her questions, and solve her doubts; and day after day, she sought a deep dell in a beautiful grove upon the estate, to sit alone with nature, and ponder over these awful dread sublimities.

From constantly brooding on such themes, her character took a sadder, sternier tone, and she loved those objects best, that best assimilated with her thoughts. The lofty trees tossed into furious motion by the winds — the deep surging of ocean rolling in terrible grandeur to the shore — the black embattled thunder clouds — the solemn roar of the earth shaking thunder — the sweeping rush of the devastating rain, was music to her ears. Her spirit rode sublimely above the warring elements, and gloried in the majesty of the storm.

There was no fear in her heart, no quailing of her eye, when God agitated the mighty fabric of his creation, and the world trembled at the manifestations of his power. Then would the tumultuous thoughts, cribbed and confined within the narrow circle of a human heart, expand and break forth in words of fire; and the young improvisatrice, forgot all her sorrows in the exstatic joy of her wild unmeasured, unwritten, spontaneous bursts of song.

The consciousness of this gift, formed a new era in the life of Rachel, and imparted a dignity to her nature,
which atoned in her own eyes, for all the reproaches daily poured against her ignorance and want of sense. She began to feel faith in herself; to believe that the lofty visions that amused and soothed her solitary hours, were inspirations direct from heaven. If not from above, from whence came those electric flashes of mind — those sudden revelations of the spirit world within and around her. They came unbidden, and they departed as suddenly, leaving the young visionary intoxicated with a sweet delirious extacy.

Then came the tempting fiend, and whispered,

“Oh, that I could give life and reality to those visions that so charm me — that I could convey in words, the bright pictures in my mind — that I could leave behind me when I die, some memorial that I once lived — that my name might be mentioned with respect by the wise and good when I am dust.” Oh, who can fathom all the vanity of the human heart. Fancy can so clothe its littleness in the sublime language of poetry; and cover with a shield of light, all its imperfections.

Youth blind to the faults of others, is as blind to its own! It is the age of love, and trust — it hopes for all things — believes in all things — and in the simplicity of its reliance, finds all things true. Rachel sitting among the grass, and discoursing poetry to the flowers, felt not the darkening influence of the dust and rubbish of the world. Her wealth was the abundance of nature, the garniture of fields and woods. To have been undeceived would have robbed her of the beautiful, to have driven her forth from paradise with the flaming sword. When goaded into pain by the sneers and scoffs of those who knew not of her hidden Eden, Rachel sought the “Divine Mother,” and on her verdant ever fragrant bosom, dried her tears. It was in one of these moods, that she exclaimed in the bitterness of her soul,

“Oh nature though the blast is yelling,
    Loud roaring through the bending tree —
There’s sorrow in man’s darksome dwelling,
    There’s rapture still with thee.”
"From the sublime to the ridiculous," said the great conqueror "is but a step;" and the child who revelled in grand conceptions alone with nature, and the solitude of her own soul, was the strangest, most eccentric impersonification of a feminine humanity, that could well be imagined, when among her young compers. We have alluded to the mighty devastator of the nineteenth century, the great Napoleon, and linked with his name, are woven some of the absurdities and oddities, of Rachel's desultory childhood.

Napoleon had just commenced his unfortunate Russian campaign; and the whole world rang with the fame of his exploits. In England, he was belied and abused, and his name made a bugbear to frighten refractory children; but whether from a contradiction in human nature, or from an inherent admiration of genius, Rachel had conceived a romantic love for the detested Bonaparte. In him, she saw realized all the greatness of her favourite heroes; and she pursued his victorious career with an enthusiasm unsurpassed by his most devoted followers. He was the idol of her imagination, whom she worshipped to the exclusion of all others. She triumphed in his success, and gave herself up to despair, when fortune ceased to favor his arms. He was the hero of all her tales and impromptu poems; and once she got a beating from her mother, who had set her to write some lines on her sister Janet's birth-day, when instead of commemorating the happy day in gentle, affectionate milk and water rhymes, she composed an ode to the great Napoleon, whose early victories had occurred about the same period, and thus was poor Janet merged in the illustrious conqueror; and the only compliment paid to her, was that she had received her existence at this important era. To punish the child, for such an extraordinary fault, appears ridiculous to Rachel now, and is only remembered by her, as a matter of mirth; but it pained her exceedingly at the time; and she committed her ode to the flames, secretly vowing never to degrade her mind, by writing birth-day odes again. A promise which she religiously adhered to all her life.
An old friend of her father's, whom we shall call Mentor, was exceedingly amused by this anecdote of Rachel, whom he loved in spite of all her eccentricities, and tried to convince her father that the germs of future excellence, might be contained within this rude shell.

Mr. Wilde was very sceptical. He did not comprehend Rachel, and he was really displeased with her, for the mad love she evinced for the enemy of her country.

“She is a strange girl,” he said, “she fills my mind with painful doubts.”

“Ah let her alone,” would the good Mentor say, “My pet lion's heart is in the right place. — I love to see her ruffle up her mane. — She is a mountain torrent which restraint would render more impetuous. — I will try what I can do with her.”

And much, did this truly excellent man do for his little friend, who loved him with a zeal only one degree less, than that she bore for Napoleon. He entered into correspondence with her, and endeavored to call out all the powers of her mind. He stimulated her to study — he taught her to think. He sent her books to read, and made her write her opinions to him of their contents — to mark down the impression they made upon her mind, and the reflections they called forth. Rachel was proud of this correspondence — she entered into it with all her heart and soul; and learned more in one month by pursuing Mentor's system, than she had done for many years.

Wishing to cure her of the Bonaparte mania, which had so strangely possessed her, Mentor sent her the present of a large bust of Lord Wellington. Living entirely in the country, Rachel had never seen a picture of either, and therefore readily mistook the high stern features of the one, for the classical face of her heart's idol. The poor child received this gift with rapture. The bust was never out of her sight. Every day she crowned it with fresh laurels, and at night it lay upon her pillow. It possessed in her eyes, the perfection of beauty. It was the effigy of a hero. Alas for love and faith, a cynical sort of a Diogenes, a doctor in the neighbourhood, who was very intimate at the house, came...
one afternoon to visit Rachel’s father. He used to tease Rachel not a little, and she had christened him Diogenes. In the pride of her heart, she displayed the bust of her hero, and he burst into a long, continuous roar of laughter. Rachel heard him with indignation and astonishment. She always thought him a rude fellow — had often told him so — but he appeared ruder and more intolerable than usual.

“Ho, ho, Miss Rachel, and so you worship that image as the head of old Bony, they may well say that love is blind — it is the head of Lord Wellington!”

Had a thunderbolt fallen upon her idol and shivered it to atoms, its destruction could not have been more complete — enraged at having been cheated into paying adoration to a false God, Rachel dashed the bust to the ground, and trampled it to pieces beneath her feet, then fled to her own chamber, to conceal the tears of mortified pride, shame and regret. It was some time before she could forgive Mentor, for what she considered his illnatured trick.

A few weeks after, she went to visit her father, who was staying at the city of ——, to transact some important business. Mentor resided at —— and he soon made his peace with his little friend, and presented her with a crown to buy a Napoleon for herself.

There was an Italian boy who sold images daily in the market place; and elated with her prize Rachel hastened hither. She found the swarthy lad standing silent and solemn as an image among the crowd, bearing the modern conquerors, monarchs, great authors and statesmen, upon his head, which like a second Atlas, bent not beneath their ponderous weight.

“I want to buy the head of Napoleon,” cried the impatient Rachel, holding up the crown piece. “Now you must be sure, to give me the right one?” The boy must have marvelled at the doubt — but a tall soldier of the German legion, then stationed in the city, anticipated him, and lifting down from his elevated perch, a large bronze bust of the Emperor, he exclaimed.

“Little maid, dis is him, I know Napoleon, by his sulky look.”
Rachel's eyes flashed, she could have beat the soldier for the insult offered to her darling. She however, restrained her anger, paid the crown, and hugging the emperor to her bosom hurried homeward, anxious to display her treasure. In St. —— street, she met the son, of a Captain Thompson, who had fought and bled at the battles of Barossa and Vittoria. Fred was very loyal, and for his father's sake, a great hater of old Bony, as he sacrilegiously termed the master spirit of the age — and as he passed Rachel, he dexterously fractured the skull of her image with a stone. Rachel pursued the culprit with tears in her eyes, but he laughed at her and fled — and to make bad worse, her misfortune was greeted with peals of mirth, when she told to her father and sisters, and Mentor, the tale of her wrongs.

"Never mind Rachel," said Mentor. "Many a great hero has passed through a long life, with a cracked head. Bring me a piece of black sealing-wax, and a lighted candle; and I will restore to the Emperor a sound cranium."

The fracture was dexterously healed, and Rachel dried her tears, and for many long years, the bust of Napoleon adorned her writing table.

It cannot be denied, that this infatuation with regard to Napoleon, led her into the commission of many absurdities. At church for instance — instead of praying for the King and the Royal family, she substituted Napoleon's name, and that of the young King of Rome. Being very vehement in her prayers in their behalf, she was overheard by the wife of an old Captain in the Navy, who thought it incumbent upon her, as a matter of duty, to inform Miss Rachel's Mamma of this act of treason.

"Really Mrs. Wilde, you should punish Miss Rachel — it is very wicked — very wicked indeed, for any one to go to church and pray for our enemies. 'Tis a shame and a scandalous shame — and Miss Rachel, is old enough to know better."

Thus spake the wise woman of Gotham, and Rachel was punished accordingly.

At length the fate of the Emperor was decided, the
allied armies entered Paris, and he was banished to Elba. Oh, how Rachel wept his fall — how she longed to share his exile — while the cloud of defeat hung over him, little minds triumphed in his misfortunes, and reviled his name. Rachel fought for him like a lion, could she have cleared his name from reproach and calumny, she would have done so with her heart’s blood. Almost forbidden to mention him, she brooded over his captivity in secret, and lost no opportunity of learning any news respecting him.

It was in the spring just preceding the battle of Waterloo; that Rachel, was busy writing with her sisters and brothers, at a long dining table the usual copy daily set them by their father, when an old Yorkshire pedling merchant, who travelled the country with broadcloths and blankets, with whom Mr. Wilde often dealt, entered the room.

"Oh sir," he cried "have you heard the terrible news?"

"What news?" quoth Mr. Wilde.

"Bony has escaped from Elbow!"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Rachel flinging down her pen, and starting up with a scream of delight. "He will be Emperor of France again!"

"Send that girl to bed," said Mr. Wilde, with a frown, "she is a traitor to her country."

Rachel longed to hear the news, but to remonstrate with her father was useless; and she left the room, but lingered on the last step of the back staircase, till the old Pedlar, his gossip and trading completed, passed through the kitchen on his way out. Then springing from her hiding place, she implored the good man, to tell her all he knew about the escape of Napoleon. This he very good naturedly did, and Rachel retired to spend a long spring day in bed, and fasting, on the tip toe of delight.

"He was free! he was himself again, and what was the punishment to her?" She lay in a sort of extacy, fighting for him new battles and achieving more astounding conquests. Alas! the dreams of the young enthusiast were doomed to be quenched in the blood shed at Waterloo, when the gathering together of the nations, chained the imprisoned eagle to the lonely ocean rock.

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Chapter VIII

Rachel had just entered her tenth year, but many changes had taken place in the fortunes of her family. Her father had given his name as security to a gentleman, nearly related to his wife, who betrayed his trust, and dragged his generous benefactor down in his own ruin.

Involved in difficulties, with a failing constitution and broken heart, Mr. Wilde still morally great, battled bravely with the waves of misfortune, which threatened to overwhelm him on all sides.

To reduce his comfortable establishment; dismiss the larger portion of his servants; and lay down pleasure horses, and equipages, was to him a command of duty to which he submitted without a sigh.

Released from the tyranny of a governess, Rachel continued her studies, together with Dorothea, and her two brothers, under the care of her elder sister.

In the distraction of their affairs, Miss Wilde, had so many more important things to attend to, that we cannot wonder that the children were left in a great measure to teach themselves. They were shut up for part of the day in the school-room, to do as they pleased, so that they were out of mischief: or they wandered over the estate, building huts in the plantations with boughs of trees, and thatching them with moss.

To pass away the weary hours, they all crowded together into one of these wigwams, and related stories and romances of their own invention, to amuse each other.

It would have formed a curious subject for a painter, — these girls and boys seated beneath their rude structure, o'er-canopied with forest trees, and eagerly relating the imaginary events in their histories as they flashed into their young minds — their eyes shining, their cheeks glowing, and their faces lighted up with the inspiration of the moment. If the interest of the tale flagged, or the reciter appeared at all at a loss for an adventure; one of the others took up the thread of the narrative as if perfectly acquainted with the plan of its originator, and continued the story. Some of these impromptu
romances, were carried on for weeks and even months in this manner; and so eager were the children to develop all the mysteries of their plot, that the moment they had concluded their tasks, and the door closed upon Miss Wilde, and they were once more alone, the boys would cry out, “Come girls! — let us go on with the story!”

After having been so long successful narrators of fiction, although with no other audience than the two young brothers; Dorothea and Rachel, consulted together, as to the possibility of writing down one of their favorite tales. Poor children, they knew nothing about authors and authoresses, they had no ambition at that early period of their lives, of being known to the world. It was to them, merely a matter of diversion; a play which was to amuse themselves and their little brothers.

Dorothea thought that the scheme was practicable — that it would be a nice thing for them daily to write a portion of their history, and at night to read aloud what each had written.

“But,” said she, “What shall we do for paper? — The pens and ink that we write our copies with will do, but we have no paper; and, you know, dear Rachel, that Lilla will never give us paper for such nonsense.”

Rachel was now puzzled, she sat down and thought for a while. “Dorothea,” she cried eagerly, rising and pushing her fingers through the dark masses of her chestnut hair; “Would blue paper do?”

Dorothea laughed heartily, “But wherefore blue?”

“Oh because we can get plenty of that, and Mamma and Lilla will never miss it; and would not care a fig for it if they did. You know the great Indian chest in Selina’s room.”

“Capital!” cried Dorothea now fully entering into the scheme.

“If we can read them ourselves, that is all we want,” said Rachel. “We will call them the ‘Blue Paper Manuscripts’ and we will keep the secret to ourselves.”

To the great chest they went, hand in hand, to extract from its depths, materials for their first essay in authorship.
Alas! poor children, they little knew the troubles and trials that beset the dangerous path they were about to tread. The love and approbation of the few, and the envy and hatred of the many. To resign the joys of the present, and to live alone for the future. To be the scorn of vulgar and common minds; the dread of the weak and sensitive, to stand alone and without sympathy, misunderstood and maligned by most of their species.

This was the talisman they sought, the good they so recklessly coveted, in the blessed days of literary ignorance, and the blue paper manuscripts.

But of what, I hear my readers exclaim, were these manuscripts formed, and how came they blue?

In my hurry to get on with my tale, and my sage reflections on the same, I had forgotten to offer the necessary explanation.

This India chest, which was some seven feet long and three deep, was covered with papier-mâché splendidly illustrated in black and gold, which at the present day, would have been prized by the collectors of Indian curiosities as a treasure; but which was suffered to hide its diminished head in a sleeping room; and to form a general repository for all the odd articles in the family. The wedding dresses, formed of rich brocaded silks, and interwoven with silver and gold, of several generations were there.

Beautiful specimens of fruits and flowers, embroidered on silk and satin, and fine linen, by fair hands now mouldering into dust, lay side by side, with long flapped waistcoats, fly caps, and muslin aprons, the latter curiously wrought in a thousand different stitches — and at the bottom of all this fading and useless finery, were several reams of blotting and blue paper, such as is used to line drawers and cover bandboxes. How the paper came there the girls never knew, or what business it had among the tarnished dresses of their ancestors; but to them it was a treasure far surpassing in value the bugled and spangled petticoats and gowns, in which they used to play at Queens, sailing about their bedrooms in the fine summer evenings, in the long trained dresses of a former age.

Rachel Wilde, or, Trifles from the Burthen of a Life 147
From the family chest, they abstracted a couple of quires of the blue paper which they privately conveyed to the school room, and hid behind an old fashioned cupboard which contained their school books.

That very afternoon they commenced their first written story. The scene of both was laid in Germany. Dorothea called her tale, "The Brothers," and Rachel sported the title of, "Harold of Hohenstien, or the spoilt child." Never was a story written in after years, so enthusiastically commenced, or so zealously continued. After her lessons were over, she flew to the task with the most intense delight, and often continued writing until the gray twilight obliterated from her sight, the characters that she still endeavored to trace upon the dusky looking paper.

With what pride she read over to the patient listening Dorothea, the wild outpourings of her untutored brain, and in her turn considered Dorothea's story divine. Harold was a soldier under Prince Eugene. Prince Eugene was one of Rachel's heroes, and her fancy, which at that period, was of a very warlike cast, luxuriated in drawing descriptions of battles and seiges, at all, and each of which, her spoilt child performed unheard of prodigies of valor, receiving and recovering from more desperate wounds, than would have killed a hundred champions like Goliath.

But nothing was impossible to Rachel in those days. She had faith in the wild and wonderful. Ghosts were her familiars, and with witches and fairies she was well acquainted. She had vague notions of the truth of the second sight, and was sorry that the gods of the old mythology were entirely banished from the world. It was at this period of her life, that she first read Milton's Paradise Lost, and was so deeply interested in his sublime delineation of Satan, that all her sympathies went with the fallen. She literally fell in love with the devil, and upon his being turned into a serpent, flung down the book and refused to read any farther, to the great amusement of Dorothea.

But to return to the blue paper manuscripts, they soon grew too cumbersome to be concealed behind the cupboard, and Rachel having let her sister Selina into the
secret, who had just returned from the city of ——, where
business detained her father the greater part of the year.
Selina had removed the papers into the drawer of a side-
board in which she kept many articles that belonged to her-
self, and where she concluded the M.S., which she regarded
as a wonderful performance from the pen of such a child,
would be perfectly safe.

A few days after the removal of the m.s., Miss Wilde
returned home, and expecting friends to dinner, she had
been superintending the arrangements with the cook in the
Kitchen. Wanting a piece of paper to cover a roasting pig,
she went to look for some in Selina’s drawer of litters.
Rachel and Selina were at work by the fire, with their backs
to the sideboard, and they had no idea of their sister’s
design until their attention was aroused by an exclamation
of surprise from Miss Wilde.

Imagine the consternation of Rachel — for she was
no favourite with Lilla, when she beheld her reading her
sacred Manuscript, and evidently much amused at its con-
tents.

“What are you about at my drawer Lilla?” said Selina.

“I want some waste paper, to cover the pig, to keep it
from burning!”

“There is none there,” said Selina pettishly, trembling
for the fate of her poor protege’s manuscript.

“Who in the world wrote this?” asked Lilla — “and
on such paper. It really seems very interesting, was it
Annie?”

Selina laughed and shook her head, “You must guess
again — no it was Rachel.” This was said with an air of
triumph.

A frown gathered upon the brow of Lilla. — “That
chit, ridiculous; indulge her in making such a fool of her-
self. I wish papa would put a stop to her nonsense, and if he
does not I will. It will just do to cover the pig.” She was
about to rend the papers, but the kind Selina, starting from
her seat, rescued the doomed manuscript from her hands.

And there sat the hapless author, the tears swelling
up in her eyes, not that she had been found fault with for
writing; she was too much the general scape-goat to wonder at that; but she felt keenly the injustice which had stamped the writing interesting, while supposed to have emanated from the pen of a more favored sister — and nonsense — only fit for the flames, or worse — to keep a vile pig from burning, as coming from her. And ah! how much of this spirit was put in force against her. The bitter sneer, the sarcastic critique, the scornful laugh, all that could wound the pride and repress the genius of the young candidate for fame, she had to bear in silence, and shroud in the depths of her own heart.

Time rolled on. The world, as umpire, decided the question of her capacity, and gave the meed of praise so long denied by those whom true wisdom and benevolence should have taught the policy of a more generous course.

Little recked Rachel for the change in her prospects. The desire to be loved by one noble heart was dearer to her than ambition, than the applause of the world; and she resigned the tempting wreath it offered her, to follow the adverse fortunes of the beloved — to toil in poverty and sorrow by his side — a stranger and an exile in a foreign land.