MORAL

TALES, FABLES, AND

REFLECTIONS.

IDleness and Irresolution.

HORACE, a celebrated Roman Poet, relates that a country man, who wanted to pass a river, stood loitering on the banks of it, in the foolish expectation that a current so rapid, would soon discharge its waters. But the stream still flowed, increased, perhaps, by fresh torrents from the mountains; and it must for ever flow, because the sources from which it is derived are inexhaustible.

Thus
4 M O R A L T A L E S.

Thus the idle and irrefolute youth trifles over his books, or waftes in play his precious moments; deferring the task of improvement, which at first is easy to be accomplished, but which will become more and more difficult, the longer it be neglected.

C R U E L T Y T O I N S E C T S.

Mr. Melmoth, in one of his elegant letters, informs his friend, that the snails have had more than their share of his peaches and nectarines this season; but that he deems it a sort of cruelty to suffer them to be destroyed. It seems to be his opinion, that it is no less inhuman to cruel to death a harmless insect, whose only offence is that he eats the food which nature has provided for his sustenance, than it would be to kill a more bulky creature for the same reason. For the sensations of many insects are, at least, as exquisite as those of animals of more enlarged dimensions.
MORAL TALES.

The Millepedes rolls itself round upon the slightest touch; and the Snail draws in her horns upon the first approach of the hand. Such instances of sensibility certainly confirm the observation of our inimitable Shakespeare, who teaches us that

— the poor beetle which we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance feels a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

But whilst we encourage these amiable feelings of the heart, we must not forget that humanity itself may be carried to an unreasonable, and even ridiculous extreme. Mr. Bayle relates that Bellarmine, a Roman Saint, patiently suffered the fleas, and other vermin, to prey upon him. *We shall have Heaven*, said he, *to reward us for our sufferings; but these poor creatures have only the enjoyment of the present life.*

AFFECTION TO PARENTS.

An amiable youth was lamenting, in terms of the sincerest grief, the death
6 MORAL TALES.

of a most affectionate parent. His companion endeavoured to confide him by the reflection, that he had always behaved to the deceased with duty, tenderness, and respect. So I thought, replied the youth, whilst my parent was living; but now I recollect with pain and sorrow, many instances of disobedience and neglect, for which, alas! it is too late to make atone-

---

TAKING OF BIRD-NESTS.

I HAVE found out a gift for my fair;
    I have found where the wood pigeons breed.
But let me that plunder forbear!
    She will say 'tis a barbarous deed.

For he ne'er can be true, the avery'd,
    Who can rob a poor bird of its young:
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
    Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

I have heard her with sweetness unfold,
    How that pity was due to a dove;
That it ever attended the bold;
    And she call'd it the fitter of love.

SONNET.

ON
MORAL TALES.

ON THE SAME.

A BOY, who was a great destroyer of nests, had carefully preserved one, that he might enjoy the cruel pleasure of confining in a cage the poor birds, who had the same natural right to liberty with himself. A hungry cat discovered the nest, and devoured the unfeathered brood. The boy bewailed his loss, and vowed revenge upon the cat; not reflecting on the many nests which he had wantonly plundered, whilst the cat was impelled by the dictates of nature to satisfy a craving appetite.

TENDERNESS TO MOTHERS.

MARK that parent hen; said a father to his beloved son. With what anxious care does she call together her offspring, and cover them with her expanded wings! The kite is hovering in the air,
8  MORAL TALES.

and disappointed of his prey, may perhaps
dart upon the hen herself, and bear her off
in his talons!

Does not this sight suggest to you the
tenderness and affection of your mother?
Her watchful care protected you in the
helpless period of infancy, when she nour-
ished you with her milk, taught your
limbs to move, and your tongue to lip its
unformed accents. In childhood she has
mourned over your little griefs; has re-
joiced in your innocent delights; has ad-
ministered to you the healing balm in sick-
ness; and has instilled into your mind the
love of truth, of virtue, and of wisdom.
Oh! cherish every sentiment of respect for
such a mother. She merits your warmest
gratitude, esteem, and veneration.

THE FOLLY OF CRYING UPON TRIFLING OCCASIONS.

A LITTLE girl, who used to weep
bitterly for the most trifling hurt,
MORAL TALES.

was one day attacked by a furious dog. Her cries reached the servants of the family; but they paid little attention to what they were so much accustomed to hear. It happened, however, very fortunately that a country man passed by, who, with great humanity, rescued the child from the devouring teeth of the dog.

INTEMPERANCE.

CYRUS, when a youth, being at the court of his grandfather Aftyages, undertook one day to be the cup-bearer at table. It was the duty of this officer to taste the liquor, before it was presented to the king. Cyrus, without performing this ceremony, delivered the cup in a very graceful manner to his grandfather. The king reminded him of his omission, which he imputed to forgetfulness. No, replied Cyrus, I was afraid to taste, because I apprehended there was poison in the liquor: For not long since, at an entertainment which you gave, I observed that the lords of
10 Moral Tales.

of your court, after drinking of it, became noisy, quarrelsome, and frantic. Even you, Sir, seemed to have forgotten that you were a king.

Xenophon.

Cruelty Punished.

A pack of ravenous fox hounds were half starved in their kennel, to render them more furious and eager in the chase; and were severely lashed every day by a merciless keeper, that they might be disciplined to the strictest observance of his looks and commands. It happened that this petty tyrant entered the kennel without his scourge. The dogs observed his defenceless state; and instantly flying upon him, at once satiated their hunger and revenge, by tearing him to pieces.

Whilst you pity the unhappy fate of the keeper, lament that, in a civilized country,