

I am glad ; and when I do most wrong, you are most glad. And all for the sake of keeping your paltry world, and winning my poor kings !”

“No, indeed !” exclaimed Godfrey, “it is not for the sake of the world or the kings ; for you know I would give you my world, or anything I have upon earth, Rosamond.”

“Yes,” said Rosamond, wiping away her tears ; “I remember, you offered me your world the first day you had it ; but I would not take it, and I don’t want it now ; I would even give up my kings to you, if it was not for my wager. You know I cannot give up my wager.”

“Nor I either !” cried Godfrey ; “the wager is what I cannot give up ; I must prove that I am right.”

“And that I am wrong ? Ay, there’s the thing ! you want to triumph over me, brother.”

“And if I do, this does you a great deal of good, because, you know, you do not like to be triumphed over ; therefore, you take care not to be found in the wrong. Do you not see that, since I laid this wager, you have taken more pains than ever you did in your life before not to make excuses ?”

“True !—It may do me good in that way, but it does not do me good altogether ; because it makes me angry with you, and would make me, I do believe, dislike you, if it went on long.”

“*Went on long ?* I do not know what that means.”

“If you went on laying wagers with me, that I should do wrong. I do not think such wagers are good things. Now, I will ask mamma. Mamma has not said one word, though I am sure she has heard all we have been saying, because I saw her look up from her work several times at us both. Well, mamma, what do you think ?”

“I think, my dear Rosamond, that you have reasoned

better than you usually do, and that there is much truth and good sense in what you have said about this wager.”

Rosamond looked happy. Godfrey, without seeming pleased, as he usually did when he heard his sister praised, said—

“Mamma, do you really disapprove of wagers ?”

“I did not say that I disapprove of all wagers,” replied his mother ; “that is another question, which I will not now discuss : but I disapprove of this particular wager, nearly for the reason which Rosamond has given.”

“But, mamma, do you not think that it did her good to try and cure herself of making excuses, and that my wager made her take great care ? And, you know, if she were to dislike me because she was in the wrong, at last, or because she lost her wager, that would still be her fault, the fault of her temper.”

“Let us, for the present, leave out of the question whose fault it will be, and tell me, my dear Godfrey, do you wish to make your sister dislike you ?”

“Oh no, mamma ! you know I do not.”

“Should you like a person who was glad when you were sorry, and sorry when you are glad ? Should you like a person who rejoiced when you committed a fault, who did not wish you to cure yourself of your faults ? Should you like a person who told you that you could not cure yourself of your faults, especially when you were trying to improve yourself as much as you were able ?”

“No. I should not like a person who did all this. I understand you, mamma. I was wrong,” said Godfrey. “It was my eagerness about that foolish wager that made me ill-natured to Rosamond. I will give up the wager, though I really think I should win it ; but I will give it up, if mamma advises us to give it up.”

"I really think I should win," said Rosamond; "but I will give it up, if mamma advises us to give it up."

"I do advise you to give up this wager, my dear children," said their mother.

"So we will, and so we do," said both Rosamond and Godfrey, running up to one another and shaking hands.

"And I assure you, brother," said Rosamond, "I will take as much pains to cure myself of making excuses as if the wager was going on; and my wager shall be with myself, that I will make not a single excuse to-morrow, or the next, or the next day, and that every day I shall be better than I was the day before. You will be glad of that, Godfrey, shall you not?"

"Yes, with all my heart," said Godfrey.

"And that will be a good sort of wager, will it not, mamma? It will be a good sort of trial with myself, mamma."

"Yes, my dear child!" answered her mother. "It is better and wiser to endeavour to triumph over ourselves than over anybody else. But now let me see that you do what you say you will do; for many people resolve to cure themselves of their faults, but few really have resolution enough to do even what they say and know to be right."

Rosamond did as she said she would do. She took every day pains to cure herself of her bad habit of making excuses, and her brother kindly assisted her, and rejoiced with her, when, at the end of the day, she could say, with truth—

"I have not made one single excuse to day."

Godfrey, some time afterwards, asked his mother what her objections were to wagers in general. She answered,

"I am afraid that you cannot yet quite understand my reasons, but I will tell them to you, and, some time or other, you will recollect and understand them. I think, that the

love of laying wagers is likely to lead to the love of gaming, if the wagers are about matters of chance, or to the love of victory, instead of the love of truth, if the wagers relate to matters of opinion."