

**EARLY
FRIENDSHIPS.
A TALE**

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Early friendships. A tale by Mrs. Copley

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MRS. COPLEY

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EARLY FRIENDSHIPS.

"Be cautious, my dear child, in your selection of an intimate friend."

Such was among the counsels given by an excellent mother, when about, for the first time, to part with a beloved daughter.

"Dear mamma," replied Helen, "I shall never have any other friend than you: I want no other."

"I doubt not, my dear, that such is your present feeling. Between a mother and child, who have lived together as we have done, there subsists not only a strength and tenderness of natural affection, but also an entireness of confidence, and freedom of communication, that can scarcely meet in any other relation. But you are now going into a circle of companions of your own age; and, in the course of a very few weeks, I have no doubt you will find yourself susceptible of those feelings of preference which, ripening into intimacy, will assume the character of friendship."

"Oh, mamma! I hope you do not think I shall ever love anybody better than you?"

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“The intimacy to which I refer, if properly directed and regulated, will not be likely to displace, or at all to weaken, the hold which your mother at present has on your affections. You will love your friend much, but your mother not at all the less.”

“Then, mamma, what can be the difference between friendship and the love I bear to you?”

“There will be the feeling of equality in the one case, which, in the other, can never exactly exist. It is impossible, as it is undesirable, for a child, in its intercourse with its parents, ever to lose sight altogether of its dependence upon them, or of the feeling that anything by which it can promote their comfort and gratification, is an act of gratitude, duty, and obedience. You can never forget who it is that has nourished, and cared for, and instructed you.”

“Oh no, dear mamma, I would not for the world forget it: I hope and trust I never shall.”

“I hope so too, my dear; but, can you not realize the thought of cherishing a tender regard for a friend to whom you are under no such vast obligations, but with whom you can reciprocate acts of kindness on an equal footing?”

“Yes, mamma, I think I can imagine it.”

“Well, then, with a companion of your own age there will also be a sort of equality of pursuits and attainments, very favourable to intimacy of friendships. You know there are many things in which I take interest and pleasure, simply because they are yours;—such, for instance, as

dressing your doll, or selecting the shades for your worsted-work. I should not have thought of attending to these things, to please myself, apart from you."

"No, mamma, I am sure you would not; and therefore, it is all the more kind of you to do it for my sake."

"But suppose, Helen, you had a young friend of your own age, engaged in pursuits like your own, should you not find a great pleasure in comparing together your work and your play, and consulting about your plans and your progress?"

"Oh yes, mamma; I think it would be very pleasant. If I wanted to talk to her about any little thing, I should not be afraid of interrupting her in anything of importance. Besides, I could help her, perhaps, as well as she could help me. There might be some things which I could tell her, that I have learnt of you, which, perhaps, she did not know before."

"Perhaps so. Well, then, if you should thus become attached and kind to one another, you would be friends. Such a friendship you will most likely form; and I am anxious that you should be discreet in the choice of your friend, and steady and wise in the exercise of your friendship."

"Mamma, whom should you advise me to have for a friend? Will not all the young ladies at Mrs. Gilbert's be my friends?"

"I hope you will live on terms of good-will and courtesy with all; but it is most likely there

will be some one or two whom you will reckon your chief friends—towards whom you will cherish a stronger attachment, and with whom you will maintain more intimate intercourse than with the rest."

"Well, mamma, I should like you to choose my friends for me: I am sure you would choose the best."

"As I do not know any of the young ladies in Mrs. Gilbert's establishment, it is impossible for me even to recommend any one by name to your friendship; and, if I knew them all, though I might form my own opinion as to the most estimable and desirable among them, I could not command your feelings towards her. We may form an acquaintance, on the recommendation of one whose judgment we respect; but friendship must be a matter of personal election. I can, perhaps, furnish you with a few hints as to the character of a desirable friend, which may assist you in forming your choice."

"Pray do, mamma; for though, as you sometimes tell me, when I leave home I must learn to think and act for myself, it would be a very great guidance to me to know what you would think and wish."

"Well, Helen, I shall be glad to furnish you with all the assistance in my power; but I fancy my advice will be rather of the negative than the positive kind. In the first place, I would say, do not be hasty in your choice of a friend, or in your professions of friendship, lest you should be