

**VICTORIA,
PP. 2-231**

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Victoria, pp. 2-231 by Mrs. Mary Martha Sherwood

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MRS. MARY MARTHA SHERWOOD

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BY MRS. SHERWOOD,

AUTHOR OF "THE ORPHANS OF NORMANDY," "THE FAIRCHILD
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is, of persons who profess to take the Holy Scriptures as their rule of life ; and again being mixed up in one household with Roman Catholics, which last are persons bearing indeed the name of Christian, but having many of the errors of the heathen, together with the pride and self-righteousness of the Mussulmaun. In all these situations it has been my pleasure to study the characters of children, and to observe their various trials and circumstances of life ; and these observations have led me to conclude that many and terrible evils accrue to them from their intercourse with servants, and especially with servants in countries where the national religion is false, and the language different from that commonly used by their parents.

I have already given examples of this kind in my *Narratives of Indian Life*. It is now my intention to bring forward another example which has come to my knowledge during my residence in a place much nearer home ; and I should rejoice to find that the instance which I am about to adduce is a singular one ; that it is not so, I have reason however to fear ; but I trust, that the history which I propose to bring forward, will induce Christian parents to watch more carefully than many have hitherto done,

respecting the characters and religious opinions of those to whom they entrust their little ones.

Victoria is the name of the little girl whose history I am about to relate; it is the name also of our little princess, on whom may the Divine blessing descend! we are bound to pray for her, because she may one day be our queen. It may perhaps be thought too fine a name for any but a princess, and scarcely fit for one descended from a family which is neither royal nor noble, but this will presently be explained.

There is little question, but that you, my young reader, have heard of the town of Nice. A person travelling from the south of France into Italy, and having crossed the rivar Var, enters at once into a small province under the king of Sardinia, to which the name of Niké, now Nice, was given, by an ancient Grecian colony: this colony took possession of it from Marseilles, above three centuries before the birth of our Lord. It lies on the shores of the Mediterranean sea; and the Alps, that range of mountains which extend from the sea into Germany, and which in this place are called the Maritime Alps, so inclose this territory by their various branches, as to form of it a little world of itself. This city of Nice, which was founded,

as I before said, by the Greeks from Marseilles, afterwards fell under the Romans, who had a magnificent seat near to it, of which vestiges still remain ; in later times it became the property of the counts of Provence, and it is now a part of the dominions of the king of Sardinia ; its established religion being Roman Catholic, and the people being subjected to a very severe discipline, under the authority of the priests, in so much so, that there are few countries on the continent, with the exception of Spain and Portugal, to which less liberty of conscience is allowed.

But this little territory being enclosed, as I said before, by the Maritime Alps, and being thus sheltered on three sides from the winds, and being also much nearer the course of the sun than we are in England, cold is as little felt through all its charming coasts as in many places on the torrid zone ; hence the olive trees and cypresses which adorn its heights being ever green, it presents on every side prospects so charming, that a person who has learnt to see the Creator in his works, finds himself continually drawn out in acts of praise in beholding these manifold wonders of the divine handiwork ; for to the instructed mind, the heavens

declare the glory of God, and the firmament telleth his handy works, although it is to be feared that there are many to whom their language is unintelligible. But if the arrangement of hill and dale, with the various points of view in which the sea intrudes itself into the landscape, is supremely beautiful, throughout this small territory, the various brilliant colours which blend themselves in every prospect, add greatly to the marvellous effects of every scene; the clear bright blue of the heavens, the deep green of the ocean, the glittering hue of the white foam, which forms a line along the bay; the violet tint of the distant mountains, and the browner glow of those which are nearer, with not unseldom the addition of some far distant snow-crowned peak, and all these seen, as they often are, over groves of orange trees, which might vie with the gardens of the Hesperides, form a whole which can hardly be imagined by persons who have always inhabited a northern region, where, if the natural beauties are not inferior, they are undoubtedly of a very different character. Nor are all the beauties of this place such as would meet the eye of a traveller at once, for one of the remarkable features of this sequestered spot, this mountain region,

which is thus protected from the winds of the north, are the amazing quantities of flowers which are found on the sides of the hills; here are anemones of every colour, sown in the earth, and springing forth in the early part of the year without the assistance of man's hand; long ranges of aloes are seen on the acclivities of the rocks where no human foot can tread. The arbutus, too, is here in abundance with its wax-like blossoms, and the sweet acacia, shedding perfumes in every breeze from its golden tassels. The almond tree, which is the first to blossom after the cold season, and for which it has been chosen in Scripture as the emblem of the guardian of the church who watches and wakes, is found also in this climate; and the vine which gives its blood for the refreshment of man, and the tall majestic cypress, all these are here, nor is there a cottage garden in which they are not assembled, with thousands of lesser shrubs, which if I could enumerate, I should be wiser than Solomon, who knew every plant from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall. But that which is the principal among the trees at Nice is the olive, of which groves of an immense extent cover the mountains; and as the almond and vine are used in Scripture for