

RECOLLECTIONS OF A HOUSEKEEPER

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Recollections of a Housekeeper by Mrs. Clarissa Packard

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MRS. CLARISSA PACKARD

**RECOLLECTIONS
OF A HOUSEKEEPER**

1831

RECOLLECTIONS
OF A
HOUSEKEEPER.

BY MRS. CLARISSA PACKARD.

Quickly. Look you, I keep his houses, and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress
meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself.
Simple. 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.

NEW-YORK:

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AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE
UNITED STATES.

1834.

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HARPER & BROTHERS, in the Office of the Clerk of the South-
ern District of New-York.]

TO MRS. FAY,
Of Cambridge, Massachusetts,
THE FOLLOWING AUTHENTIC SKETCHES,
THE MINGLED RESULT
OF
OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE,
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

Charleston, S. C.

WCH 12 FEB 1836

RECOLLECTIONS

OF A

HOUSEKEEPER.

CHAPTER I.

Ici tout est vivant, tout parle à ma mémoire

TRENKULL.

Far up the tide of time I turn my sail.

ROGERS.

My maiden name was Clarissa Gray. I was born in the neighbourhood of Boston (Mass.), in 17—, and educated with the few facilities at that time afforded for the young; that is, I read “No man may” in Webster’s Spelling-book, then advanced to the more elaborate “Art of Speaking,” and committed to memory, page by page, Morse’s Geography, without maps, of course in glorious uncertainty with regard to the position even of my own country. My

ciphering-book, however, was my pride, and my mother's too. With what delight did she display those sums, that rose like Banquo's ghosts,

“And drew at each remove a lengthening chain.”

At the age of eight years I recollect seeing my mother reading a thin black book, which attracted my attention. It was “Blair's Grave,” and she read me the passage,

—“But see, the well-plumed hearse comes nodding on.”

How distinctly my imagination pictured that hearse and those nodding plumes! I recollect no other books, until I saw and *devoured* Shakspeare, at the age of nine, except an odd volume of Pope, containing “The Messiah,” and “The Rape of the Lock.” I sometimes look around on the mass of books collected by my children, and am half skeptical with regard to the value of juvenile literature, when I remember how my mind opened under the mysteries of those writings.

In justice, however, to the good tendency of

engravings, I must mention, that the effect produced on me by the only two picture-books I possessed was an important one. One of them was "Watts's Hymns for Infant Minds," where fighting animals are portrayed. When friends have wounded or foes oppressed me, the strong but simple lines which elucidate the picture,

"Let *dogs* delight to bark and bite,"

have arisen to my memory, and calmed my chafed spirit, when mere flimsy sentiment would have afforded me no shelter against wrong.

The other book, and it is as distinct to my imagination now as the rich landscape by Fisher which hangs before me, contained a representation of Miss Kitty Greedy leaning both elbows on a table, with her mouth crammed to repletion, trying in vain to address her mamma. The *morale* has clung to me to this day, and I never see a young or old *gourmand*, or detect myself in a superfluous mouthful, without thinking of Kitty Greedy.

The utmost term of my *solid education* was

one year of attendance at the town school,—a square building, with one room for both sexes, near an open common, without a shrub or tree to grace or shade it. Thither, bearing my own satchel, I walked a mile, being a journey of four miles daily, to make my “young idea shoot.” I will not say much for my ideas, but my limbs were not backward in the process. I *shot* up into a tall girl, and was allowed to go occasionally with my mother to take tea sociably with her friends at four o'clock, carrying my knitting-work for occupation.

My accomplishments are soon told. I opened an exhibition ball with one of the slow minuets of the last century, and I cannot but stop to render a tribute of admiration to that charming movement, in spite of the admirers of the lazy quadrille, or the seductive waltz.

A single courtesy or bow, when well ordered, is graceful; think then how delightful must be the spectacle of a series of these beautiful curves, performed to slow and appropriate music, by so attractive a couple as I certainly be-