

**EVENINGS AT HOME: OR, THE JUVENILE
BUDGET OPENED: CONSISTING OF A
VARIETY OF MISCELLANEOUS PIECES
FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND
AMUSEMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS. IN
SIX VOLUMES. VOL. V**

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JOHN AIKIN & ANNA LAETITIA BARBAULD

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CONSISTING OF
A VARIETY OF MISCELLANEOUS PIECES
FOR THE
Instruction and Amusement of
YOUNG PERSONS.

BY DR. AIKIN AND MRS. BARBAULD.

THIRTEENTH EDITION.

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TWENTY-FIRST EVENING.

ON EARTHS AND STONES.

Tutor—George—Harry.

Harry. I WONDER what all this heap of stones is for.

George. I can tell you—it is for the lime-kiln; don't you see it just by?

H. O yes, I do. But what is to be done to them there?

G. Why they are to be burned into lime; don't you know that?

H. But what is lime, and what are its uses?

G. I can tell you one; they lay it on the fields for manure. Don't you remember we saw a number of little heaps of it, that we took for sheep at a distance; and wondered they did not move? However, I believe we

better ask our tutor about it. Will you please, Sir, to tell us somewhat about lime?

Tutor. Willingly. But suppose, as we talked about all sorts of metals some time ago, I should now give you a lecture about stones and earths of all kinds, which are equally valuable, and much more common, than metals.

G. Pray do, Sir.

H. I shall be very glad to hear it.

T. Well then. In the first place, the ground we tread upon, to as great a depth as it has been dug, consists for the most part of matter of various appearance and hardness, called by the general name of *earths*. In common language, indeed, only the soft and powdery substances are so named, while the hard and solid are called *stone* or *rock*; but chymists use the same term for all; as, in fact, earth is only crumbled stone, and stone only consolidated earth.

H. What!—has the mould of my garden ever been stone?

T. The black earth or mould which covers the surface wherever plants grow, consists mostly of parts of rotted vegetables, such as stalks, leaves, and roots, mixed with sand or loose clay; but this only reaches a little way; and beneath it you always come to a bed of gravel, or clay, or stone, of some kind. Now these earths and stones are distinguished into several species, but principally into three, the properties of which make them useful to man for very different purposes, and are therefore very well worth knowing. As you began with asking me about lime, I shall first mention that class of earths from which it is obtained. These have derived their name of *calcareous* from this very circumstance, *calx* being lime, in Latin; and lime is got from them all in the same way, by burning them in a stron^g

4 TWENTY-FIRST EVENING.

fire. There are many kinds of calcareous earths. One of them is *marble*; you know what that is?

G. O yes! Our parlour chimney-piece and hearth are marble.

H. And so are the monuments in the church.

T. True. There are various kinds of it; white, black, yellow, gray, mottled and veined with different colours; but all of them are hard and heavy stones, admitting a fine polish, on which account they are much used in ornamental works.

G. I think statues are made of it.

T. Yes; and where it is plentiful, columns, and porticoes, and sometimes whole buildings. Marble is the luxury of architecture.

H. Where does marble come from?

T. From a great many countries. Great Britain produces some, but mostly of inferior kinds. What we use chiefly

comes from Italy. The Greek islands yield some fine sorts. That of Paros is of ancient fame for whiteness and purity, and the finest antique statues have been made of Parian marble.

H. I suppose black marble will not burn into white lime.

T. Yes, it will. A violent heat will expel most of the colouring matter of marbles, and make them white. *Chalk* is another kind of calcareous earth. This is of a much softer consistence than marble; being easily cut with a knife, and marking things on which it is rubbed. It is found in great beds in the earth; and in some parts of England, whole hills are composed of it.

G. Are chalk and whiting the same?

T. Whiting is made of the finer and purer particles of chalk washed out from the rest, and then dried in lamps. This, you know, is quite soft