

**THE FRUITS OF
EDUCATION, OR, THE
TWO GUARDIANS**

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The fruits of education, or, The two guardians by Mrs. Cameron

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MRS. CAMERON

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OR,
THE TWO GUARDIANS.



BY

MRS. CAMERON,

Author of "Emma and her Nurse," "Margaret Whyte,"

"The Two Lambs," &c. &c.



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THE
FRUITS OF EDUCATION,

&c.



CAPTAIN OAKLEY was an officer in the army. He was a man of an excellent private character, amiable manners, and well disposed towards religion, though not yet acquainted with its real nature. At five-and-thirty, he married a lady of a character congenial to his own, though more advanced in her religious attainments; and for nine years she was the companion of all his travels, which had never yet extended beyond the United Kingdoms.

At the end of that period she was attacked with a disease which speedily terminated her life. She died, enjoying the hopes and consolations of a Christian, leaving behind her a son, aged eight years, and a daughter, aged six, in whose tender minds she had laboured to implant such pure principles of religion as they were capable of receiving.

A few weeks after Mrs. Oakley's death, the regiment of the afflicted father was ordered to the East Indies. Captain Oakley was on this occasion in extreme perplexity respecting his future plans: to leave the army at such a time, with little or no provision yet made for his family, he thought inconsistent with his duty; at the same time he felt at a loss what arrangements to make for his children.

While his mind was thus agitated, he received, one morning, two letters, from which I shall make some extracts. The first was from his eldest brother, who was in the church; it was as follows:—

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ You well know, that ever since the death of my highly respected sister-in-law, you have been continually in my thoughts, and daily in my prayers. But I felt that I could do nothing else for you. Since, however, I have heard that your regiment is ordered abroad, it has occurred to me, that if you have any thoughts of accompanying it, which, on some accounts, you may probably think desirable, it might be a convenience to you if I

were to undertake the charge of my little nephew and godson James.

“ If you design him for a soldier, you must give me particular directions respecting his education; if you should like to make a country clergyman of him, I could keep him under my own eye till his college days begin. My parish, my study, and my garden, you know are every thing to me; but still I think I could make the child happy, for we have poultry, dogs, and cats about the house, flowers in abundance in the gardens, apples in the orchard, squirrels in the woods, and pictures in the study; and, as his age ripens, I doubt not, with God’s blessing, that he will learn to take pleasure in my habits and pursuits, in which, indeed, I find abundance of peace.

“ I wish I could offer to take his sister, but, you know, I have neither wife nor sister, and my old housekeeper, I am sure, is not fitted to train a little girl.”

The other letter was from a first cousin of Captain Oakley’s, with whom, in his younger days, he had been in habits of intimacy, and he remembered

her as a lively good-natured girl. She had been married fifteen years to a gentleman of easy fortune and great respectability, who resided at Reading. Since her marriage, the continual change of place to which Captain Oakley's profession had subjected him, had prevented his ever meeting Mrs. Danvers, but he had heard, from different people, that she was much respected in the place where she lived, and was considered as a very good sort of woman.—We shall copy nearly the whole of her letter:—

“ MY DEAR COUSIN,

“ Our ancient friendship, of at least twenty years standing, does not permit me to feel uninterested in your late troubles. I have several times sat down to write to you, but our intercourse has been so long interrupted, and I felt myself so ignorant of the circumstances in which you were placed, that I hardly knew how to address you. Accident, however, has befriended me; a gentleman, who had lately seen you, was, luckily, my next neighbour yesterday, when dining at a friend's house, and from him I heard all about you.

“ I understand your regiment is ordered to the

East Indies, and certainly you will not lose so good an opportunity of making a provision for your children; for you know nobody returns poor from India.

“Should you feel happy in trusting me with your little girl during your absence? I always loved children, though I have none of my own. I promise you that I will try not to spoil her.

“I cannot engage to undertake her education when she is past being a plaything; for the confinement necessary for such a purpose would not agree with my health and Mr. Dunvers’s engagements. But should you not be returned by that time, there is a most excellent school, in a charming airy situation, within a morning’s drive of my house, kept by a very clever sensible woman, where I could send the dear girl. I could overlook her health and morals myself, and make her happy in the holidays.

“I suppose you will leave your son at school, and I should be happy at any time to receive him in his vacation. If you accept my offer, I will meet your daughter in London at any time you will name.”