

THE ALCHEMIST

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The alchemist by Mrs. Hughs

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MRS. HUGHS

THE ALCHEMIST

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As Louisa stooped to embrace her

Her Alchemist, Act 1, Sc. 1

at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London

THE
ALCHEMIST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED,”

“THE METAMORPHOSES, OR EFFECTS OF EDUCATION;”

“AUNT MARY’S TALKS FOR HER NEPHEWS
AND NIECES,” &c.

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THE ALCHEMIST.

PART I.

MAMMA, said little Louisa Granville, after standing for some time in deep thought near her mother's work-table; will you tell me what is meant by an Alchemist?

An Alchemist, my dear, is a person who pretends to change the common metals into gold.

And can any person do that, mamma?

No, my dear; I believe not. But some philosophers, who had more learning than wisdom, have been so foolish as to fancy it practicable; and have wasted a great deal of real gold in searching for that which was only imaginary. But what made you think of an Alchemist, Louisa?

Because, mamma, I was trying to find out what my aunt Cleveland could mean when she said, if you succeeded in making me a prudent and careful woman, you would be a perfect Alchemist.

And what do you think she meant? Oh! I know now very well! She meant that I was so careless and giddy, that if you ever made me prudent and careful, you would change what is

worth very little at present to what would be very good and valuable.

I believe you are very right, for that was no doubt her meaning.

And do you think you will ever be able to make me a good and amiable woman, mamma ?

Yes, my dear ; I have no doubt of it. At least if you wish yourself to become one.

Oh ! I am sure I wish it ; but I am afraid I never can.

You have nothing to fear, if you really wish and are determined to be good.

Do you think, mamma, I could ever be as good as my sister Caroline ?

Certainly I do.

But you know, mamma, you have often said that Caroline, even when she was as young as I am, never gave you any trouble ; for she had always so good and amiable a disposition, that it seemed only natural to her to do what was right.

I have so ; and on that account I do not despair of seeing you some time possess even greater merit than Caroline herself.

How can that be, mamma ?

Because, if you, who are now of a very giddy, careless disposition, take pains with yourself, and become as prudent and amiable as Caroline is, you will certainly have greater merit than she, who never had any such difficulties to overcome.

But I am afraid I never shall be able to cure

myself of my faults ; for I keep constantly resolving to be more attentive and careful in future, but I always forget again before the time comes for me to be tried.

I do not expect you to succeed with the first or second effort, or perhaps with the hundredth ; but if you keep trying, and remember how much pleasure it would give your papa and me to see you cured of your faults, and how pleasant it would be to yourself, I have no doubt but by the time you are as old as Caroline is now, you will be as great a source of pleasure to us as she has ever been.

Oh ! that would be delightful ! To hear papa say of me, as he does now so often of her, " I am never afraid of Louisa " — " I am sure Louisa will do what is right, " How happy I should be ! Let me see ! Caroline is fourteen, and I am only nine. Well, come, I have five years to learn in ; that is a long time.

But length of time will do little for you, Louisa, except strengthening all your bad habits, unless you are most watchful over yourself.

Ah ! that is the thing ; that is what I am afraid will be my misfortune.

But when you are so sensible of your faults, and know so well how happy it would make you, to be a good, attentive little girl, I hope there is no fear but you will take pains to become one.

I hope not, said Louisa in a tone that expressed more of desire than hope. Then, after

a pause, But, mamma, added she, I should not like to be too careful; not so very careful as my cousin Anna.

I do not apprehend much danger, my dear, replied Mrs. Granville smiling, of your falling into the contrary extreme.

But do you not think my cousin Anna is too careful? Do you not think she is quite stingy?

Perhaps she may be a little; but she is upon the whole a very pleasant, good-tempered girl.

Yes, she is indeed, and I like her very much. It is very nice for me to have her staying with us, for you know, mamma, I had not any one exactly of my own age to play with, or learn my lessons with till she came: for Charles is quite a little boy; he is only seven years old. Besides, you know a girl is far better than a boy to play with. I hope my aunt Cleveland will stay a long time here, mamma.

I hope so too, my dear.

Then there is Albert. Oh! I love Albert! He is so pleasant and kind and obliging. Do you not think he is, mamma?

Yes, he is indeed a remarkably fine boy.

And he is very generous too. He is not at all mean, like his sister Anna. Do you think he is?

No. I am afraid, if any thing, he rather too nearly resembles his cousin Louisa.

Oh no! mamma, indeed he is not at all extravagant. His mamma calls him so, because she would like to see him as careful and pru-