

176

LITTLE MARTHA.



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LITTLE MARTHA.



ALL young folks generally like to hear about pious children; I am now going to tell you about a child named Martha. She was the only daughter of a grocer who

lived in the middle of a large town; and, as you may think, her father and mother were very fond of her. Martha was not always a good girl; for, as she grew in years, she became from playing with rude, noisy children, rude and noisy too, and sometimes made her parents grieve much. Martha's mother was very kind, and she did not like to scold her dear girl, and so she would say, "Do not, my love; do not be so riotous; it does not look well." But Martha thought she knew best,—and go into the streets she would, in spite of all that was said to her. Little children should learn to do as they are told, and however wise they may think themselves, they should always mind when spoken to.

But the mischief did not stop here; for, besides getting rude, Martha began to quarrel, and even to use bad words, and break the sabbath, and nobody loved her, because she always behaved so badly. But things did not long remain in this state; for her father declared the first time he found her out of the house without leave, he would lock her up in a dark closet. Martha did not much like the thought of this, and she promised, if her father would forgive her what was past, she would try to

behave better. I am glad to say that at this time Martha kept her word. She thought upon her conduct, and saw its evil. She would often sit upon a stool at her mother's feet, and learn pretty hymns, and her mother used to talk to her so nicely, that, under God's blessing, she became quite a different child, and she would often say, "Mother's only little girl should not be a naughty girl." She would, after this, often ask her eldest brother to read to her about heaven, and about hell, and about Jesus Christ; and the more she heard of sacred things the more she wanted to hear. Before, Martha used to be proud and vain, and pleased when anybody praised her for her beauty; but now she knew better than to think about such nonsense; and one day, when a lady said she was a pretty little girl, she whispered to her, and said, "I had rather be a good girl."

When Martha was five years old, she would talk of the glory of heaven, and the great kindness of God, and many other subjects, and she was learning to read as fast as she could. When sitting on her mother's knee one day, she said, "Mother, I have been thinking, suppose I should have to die soon." "Well, my dear," said her

mother, "I hope you would go to heaven."
"I hope so too," replied Martha; "but I am afraid not."

Mother. And why are you afraid?

Martha. Because I have been wicked; I have sinned against Jesus Christ, and made him very angry.

Mo. But we know that though you have offended him, yet that he is rich in mercy unto all who call upon him.

Mar. Will he forgive me, do you think?

Mo. Yes; if you ask him he will; if you really feel you have a wicked heart; if you flee for refuge to the Saviour, he will answer and he will pardon you.

Mar. What shall I say, mother?

Mo. What do you say when you want me to give you anything?

Mar. If you please, will you give me what I want.

Mo. And what do you want God to give you?

Mar. A new heart.

Mo. What should you say, then?

Mar. O Lord Jesus, give me a new heart.

Mo. That is right; kneel down and say, in faith, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And though you are but a child, he will not refuse your prayer.

Martha's mother was pleased to hear her little girl talk in this manner. She prayed that God, even her own God, would give her eternal life for evermore.

Some time after this the eldest boy in the family, Samuel, caught the measles, and had them so bad that he was thought likely to die. But God was pleased to raise him up, and give him health again. When Martha knew that the complaint was catching, she felt alarmed, and she said, "If I should be as ill as Samuel, and should die, whither should I go?" And she began in earnest, in her poor way, to pray, "Lord, prepare me for death."

Several days passed, and little Martha's head began to ache, and she laid herself down in her bed, and then her eyes grew weak, and she could hardly bear to look at the light. By-and-by poor Martha's head got worse and worse, and she knew not what she said, nor what she did, and sometimes talked quite nonsense. But when she came to herself again, she said, "I am one of Jesus Christ's lambs; God loves me, and I love God, and I shall soon be with him, and be like a shining angel." "But," replied Samuel, whom God had cured, "I am spared, and perhaps you may be too;

which should you like best Martha?" "I should like it to be just which way God pleases," answered the dear little girl.

As Martha continued to get worse and worse, the doctor sent a large blister to be applied to her chest, and when she saw it she asked if it would pain her; and on being told it would, she at first refused to have it on. Her nurse then told her that this was wrong; for if we do not use the means, we cannot expect to get well. And on hearing this, with her own dear little hands she untied the strings of her nightgown, and sweetly said, "Very well, nurse, I will have it on, and you may hold my hands too, and then I shall not touch it." "No, my love," replied the kind nurse, there is no need for that, God will give you patience if you ask him:" after this she was not once heard to complain. But Martha grew still worse, and though she had several leeches on, and another blister, she did not get better. Though she suffered greatly, she was very patient, and when sometimes she felt so ill she could not help crying, she would meekly say, "Nurse, I hope God will not be angry with me for crying." One day she said to her father, "How good God is! Some poor children cannot have such nice things as I."

At another time, after she had been lying very quiet for some hours, she began to sing, and though it did not sound like her usual singing, yet it showed how happy and contented she was. "I thank you," she would say, when anything was given her, and it was quite a pleasure to wait upon her.

One evening her mother asked her what she was thinking of; and she directly answered, "About seeing God; I shall see God before you will, mother; and Timothy, and Paul, and all the good men you have told me about; and I shall have a crown of gold, and never sin any more." The next day when the doctor went to see her, he shook his head; on observing this, she said, when he was gone, "Mother, what made the doctor shake his head?" Her mother was then standing by the bedside, weeping very much, and she said as she stooped down and clasped her child in her trembling arms, "Oh, my dearest girl, it is because he knows you must soon die." "And be laid in the cold pithole," said the dying babe. "Yes," replied the grieving parent. "Well, but it is only my body;—I—my soul, shall go to heaven," said Martha; and in this way would she try to comfort her mourning

friends. But Martha's cheeks began to look more and more pale, and her lips turned rosy red and were very parched, and she began to sink very fast. As her kind brother Samuel was sitting and watching her, he thought he saw her features change, and ran to call his mother. When she came, she took the gasping child in her arms; and in a few minutes she died. Martha did not struggle; she did not groan; but she breathed a long breath, and her spirit arose on high to the world of bliss. Farewell, little Martha, farewell! for the gates of joy have received you.

Dear little children, who have read this short account, think of Martha, and worship Martha's God, and love Martha's Saviour!

Happy the children who are gone
To live with Jesus Christ in peace;
Who stand around his glorious throne,
Redeem'd by blood, and saved by grace.

The Saviour, whom they loved below,
Hath kindly wiped their tears away;
No sin, no sorrow, there they know,
But dwell in one eternal day.

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WHEN King David was a king,
While he sat on Israel's throne,
He was not too proud to sing
Praises to the Lord alone :

Surely then, a child like me
Never should be proud in heart ;
Lord, thy grace is rich and free,—
Grace like his to me impart.

Give me, Lord, such heavenly love
As thou didst to Israel's king ;
Then, where David sings above,
I, ere long, shall also sing.