

LITTLE SOPHY,
A TRUE STORY.

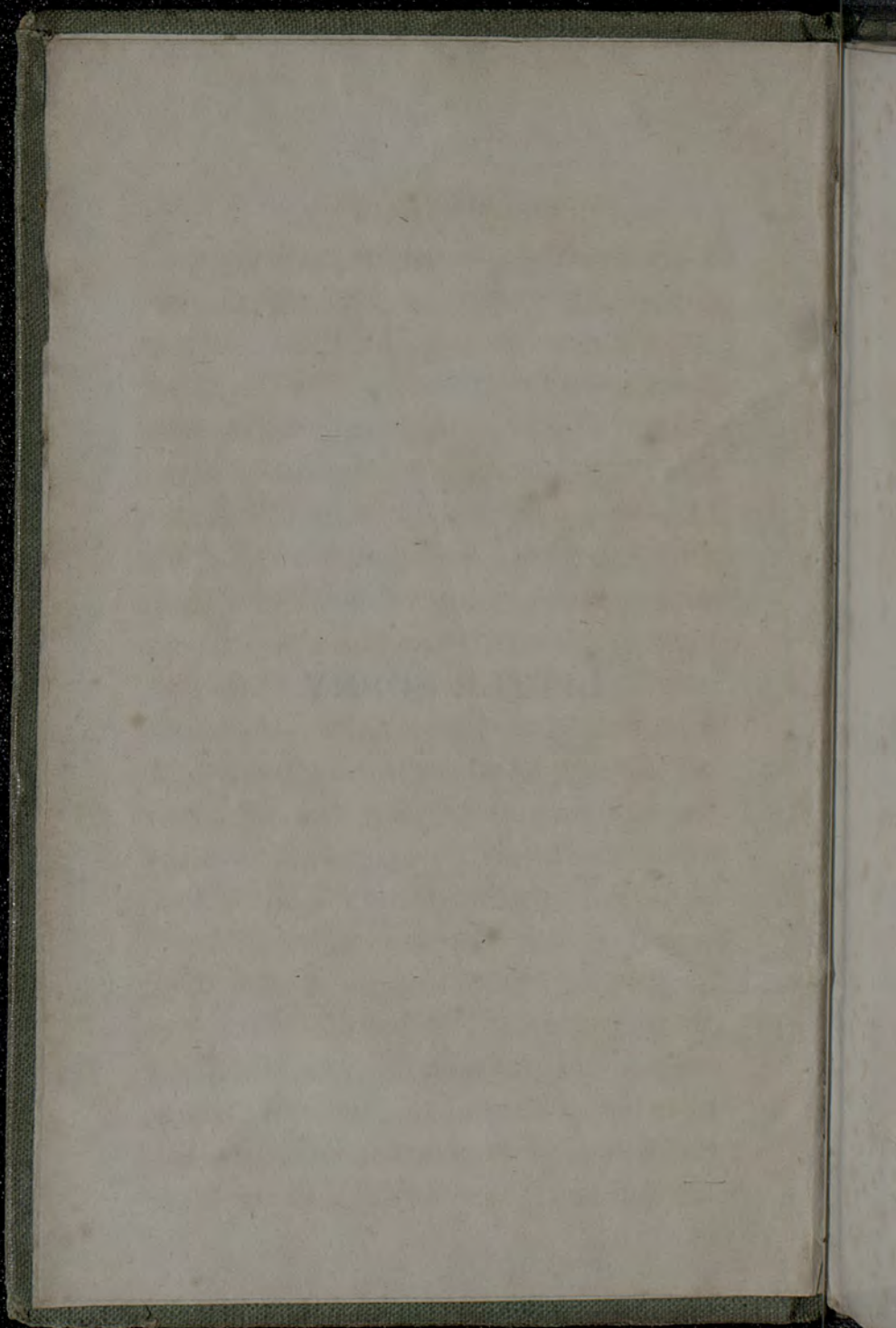
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LITTLE SOPHY

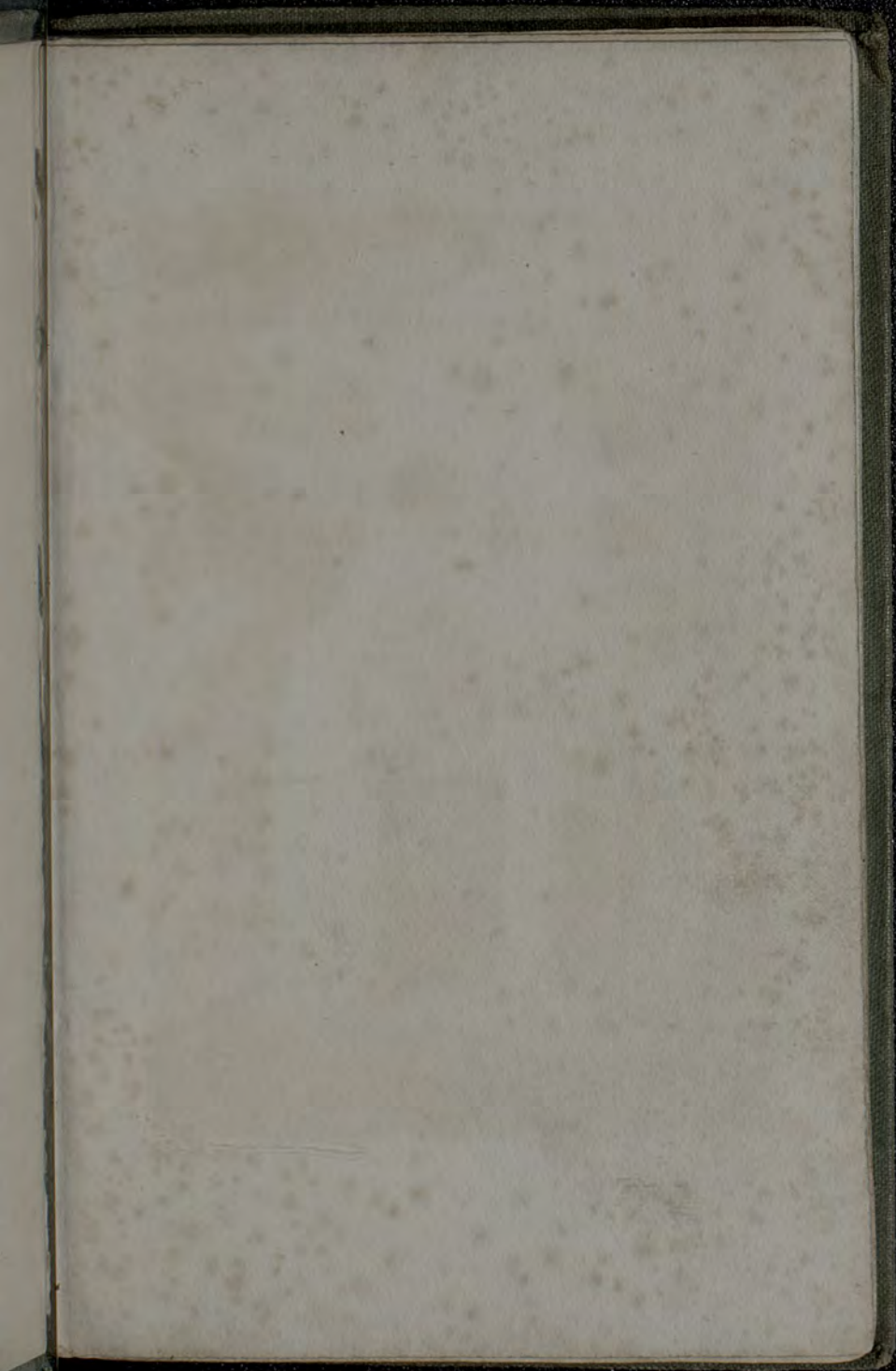


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Rachel Sellar

1828





LITTLE SOPHY.



H. Green Del.

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Published by...

ALAS! BEFORE THAT BUD BECAME A BLOSSOM
MY DARLING CHILD WAS LAID IN HER GRAVE.

LITTLE SOPHY,

A TRUE STORY,

FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

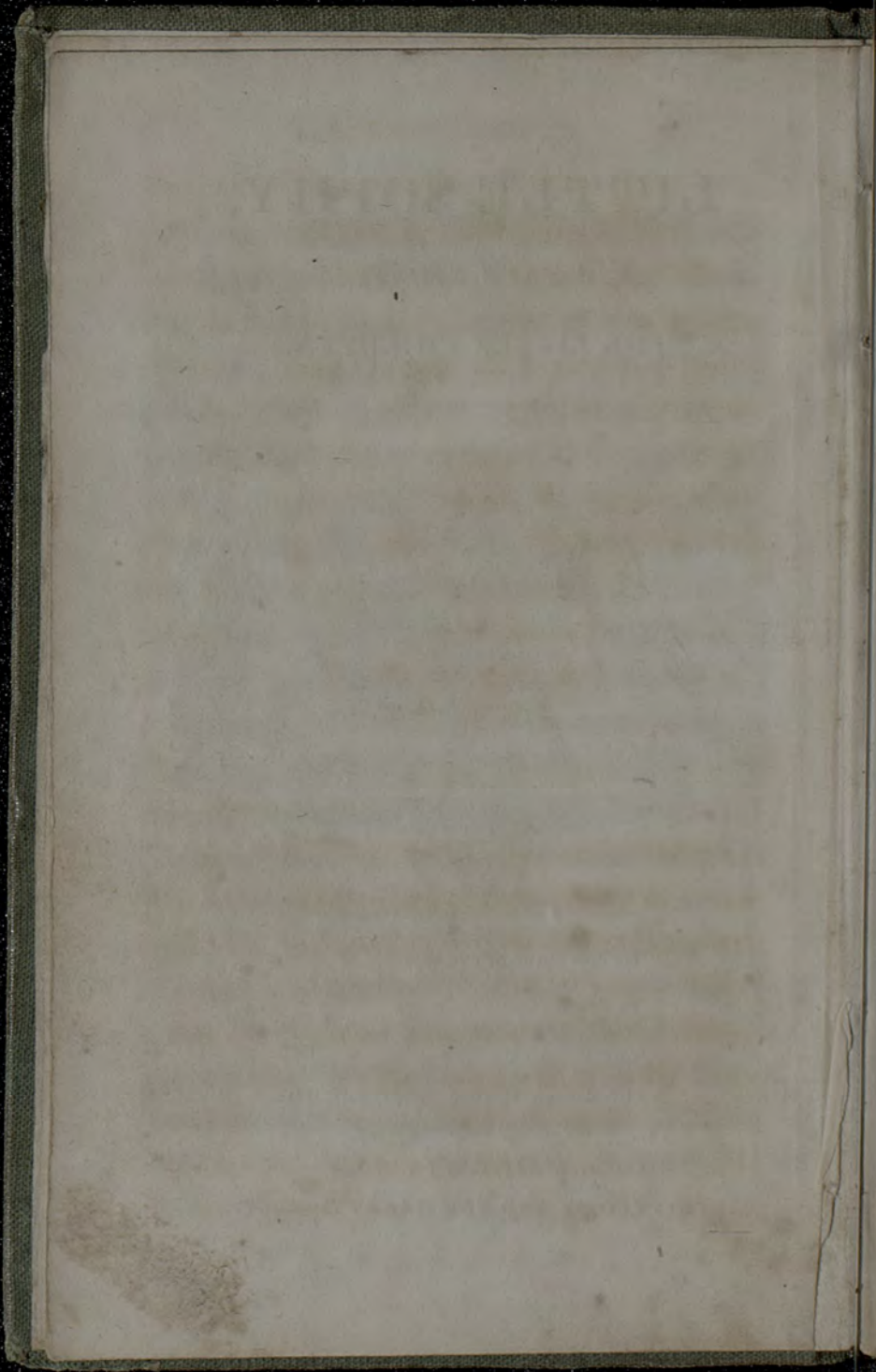


— “ And does he never speak ?
O yes; for, in his word,
He bids me come and seek
The God that Samuel heard:
In almost every page I see,
The God of Samuel calls to me.”

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

DERBY:

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LITTLE SOPHY,

A TRUE STORY.

I AM requested to put on paper what I have told my friends, respecting the illness and death of my beloved child, under the idea that it may be profitable to other little children of her age. I never supposed that the short and simple history I have to tell, could interest any persons except those who personally knew the subject of it, but I am very willing to yield my judgment in this instance to that of my kind friends, and I shall be most happy if I may hereafter find that the story of Little Sophy has been made useful to any child who may read

it, and who may in consequence become, like her, obedient to their parents, and anxious above all things to love and serve God.

My little readers must not expect that I am going to amuse them with the relation of any extraordinary or unexpected incidents. The little girl of whom I write, had only numbered seven years the day before she died, and it is pleasant to me to remember that her short life was always as happy as the fondest care of her parents could make it. There was nothing in any of the circumstances of her life that can distinguish it from the life of any other little girl who lives at home with her friends, except one thing, and that is of so much importance, that I think myself justified in calling for your undivided attention whilst I relate it to you.

She was once, as all other chil-

dren are by nature, perfectly indifferent to every thing that belonged to religion, disliking the subject and avoiding it as much as possible; and from this state of careless indifference she became, what the scriptures call, "alive unto God through Jesus Christ;" she became anxious to please God, and desirous to know his will. The detail of this, and the account of her peaceful death, is all that I shall have to tell you.

I am not in general fond of publishing an account of a happy death; if it has not been preceded by some of the fruits of Faith before death was expected. In the case of my dear child, my young readers will find that her illness was so short, so sudden, and of such a nature, that very little account of herself could be expected from her. The state of extreme weakness to which she was

suddenly reduced, prevented us from speaking to her on any subject that was likely to disturb her in the slightest degree, and if I could not look back on the great change which had taken place in this dear child for some time previous to her illness, I should have little to tell but that her death was a very peaceful one, and that is not always a sure proof of its being a happy one. Animals die quietly, and human creatures very often die in the same manner, with no more apprehension of what is to come after death than "the beasts that perish." I have sometimes, in visiting sick people, heard them say that "they were quite ready to die," and when I have inquired farther, I have found that this composure has proceeded from their ignorance of the Bible. They had perhaps sometimes read it, but without prayer to God for a heart

to understand the important truths which it teaches. The persons of whom I speak had never discovered that God is holy, and requires us to be holy too. They had never found out that we must have a new nature; that we must have the mind of Christ; that we must endeavour to be like him; that if we really desire this, he will give us the grace that is sufficient to make us so; and that when we have done his will here, and are become meet for the kingdom of heaven, we shall be admitted into it for the sake of what he has done and suffered.

All this should be learned from the Bible in the time of our health and strength; for when sickness comes, there are very few indeed who are able to attend to these things; and if the great work of learning to know

and love God is to be done then, it is often not done at all.

Such people may die quietly; and if they have been guilty of no great crimes, they may even express a wish to die, to escape from their present state of suffering; but we have no reason from thence to conclude that they are gone to Heaven. On the contrary the Bible speaks of them as “under strong delusion to believe a lie.” This is entirely their own fault, because the word of God is open to every body. Every little child in this happy country may read the Bible and learn for itself how kind the Saviour is, and how ready to receive all who come to him.

The dear child of whom I write has been, I humbly trust, received by her blessed Saviour, as one of the lambs of his flock; but though I believe that she is an inhabitant of that

happy country “where their sun shall no more go down,” yet I cannot but remember with many sad regrets that the “eye which hath seen her shall see her no more.” This time last year she was in as full health and had as little expectation of dying as any of you can have. It seems but as yesterday, since she was bowling her hoop on the gravel-walk before the window at which I now write, frisking in all the sportive gaiety of health and animation, her face blooming with exercise, and her eyes sparkling with all the joyous feelings that belonged to her happy age; and where is she now?—Before the throne of God, I trust, rejoicing with the happy spirits there, that she so improved the little time that was appointed to her on earth, as to have become acquainted with her Redeemer and his great salvation. If she had known the

“number of her days,” she would no doubt have sought him sooner than she did. She was often told that she was not too young to die, and many attempts were made to gain her attention to the great business of her life, and allure her, if such an expression may be admitted, to walk in “wisdom’s ways;” but they are only “paths of pleasantness and peace” to those who really love God, and she had yet to learn that His service is “perfect freedom.” The spiritual taste was not given; she saw in the ways of religion no beauty that she should desire, and she turned from all conversation on the subject, not only with coldness and indifference, but with a decided dislike which was sometimes expressed in words. In short, she had evidently no heartfelt impression of religion till the last few months of her life. In age she may

be said to have been a mere infant, but all who knew her will admit that her understanding was far, very far above her years. She was my first-born child, and perhaps this made me more observant of her opening faculties than I should otherwise have been. I never had any desire to force her capacity beyond its natural powers; and I can truly say that the fear of destroying, even at her tender age, that germ of native modesty which is always the brightest ornament of the female character, led me to avoid as much as possible any little exhibition of superior attainments (which might often have been made) over the companions of her own age with whom she was accustomed to associate. I do not therefore judge of her intellectual powers from the force of contrast; but my own knowledge of the general capability of children of her

age enabled me to perceive, perhaps with too much pride, that her faculties were far above the ordinary standard. It was partly this, and the idea that it might assist me in educating my other children, which induced me to keep a little note-book, in which I purposed to mark the progress of her mind. I intended this more for my own private gratification than any thing else. On looking back to this little memorandum "of days gone by," I find that at twenty months old, before I had attempted to teach her to read, she knew all the "Nursery Rhymes" by heart, from having heard them often read to her. She would distinguish the different subjects by the length or formation of the lines, and she would sit and repeat them over till every one but herself was tired of hearing her. She was very rarely at a loss for the subject of the

next Poem in turning over this little book, but when she was, she would search for some one to tell her, and then she would go regularly through the volume. I have said that I had no wish to bring her very forward, but when I found that her memory enabled her to learn so much of poetry, I thought it might be as well to begin to exercise it in a less amusing way. I began therefore to teach her the alphabets, and I was surprised to find that what is in most cases a very dry and uninteresting task, both for the teacher and learner, was to her so delightful, that she preferred her daily lessons to every thing else. Ah, how well I can remember these days of calm and heartfelt enjoyment, when she would watch her opportunities, and if she saw me disengaged for a moment, would bring her book, and making one of her best courtesies,

would say — “If you please, Mamma, will you hear me my little lesson,” and she would never willingly leave off without the promise of hearing her soon again. When she read well enough to understand the little stories that are written for children, her thirst for reading appeared insatiable, and so it continued.

The first lessons for children are not capable of being made very interesting to them, but she preferred learning to read, when she was only able to read words of two or three letters, to every thing. I proved this in several instances. One I will mention. She asked me one day to give her a very fine rosy-cheeked apple which happened to be on the table, I took it in my hand and said, “now, would you rather have this apple, or read your lesson to me again?” Without a moment’s hesita-

tion she answered, "read my lesson, Mamma." I took her at her word; she read her lesson, and went without the apple; and so completely was she absorbed by her book, that she never thought of the apple again. Perhaps this was not very remarkable in her, because from her birth she had been, as far as I could judge, entirely free from all sensual feeling about eating. I mention it because I think it is a very common fault in children to think too much about "what they shall eat and what they shall drink," and I think it is not in general sufficiently noticed by their parents. I have heard them say, it is natural to children, and it is the first fault that shows itself. It may be so, and I grant it may be very natural, but it is a fault which should be invariably checked, and not passed lightly over as a trifling error.

I know of none that will so rapidly “grow with our growth,” and fix itself so firmly on the character. I have no doubt that all the great eaters and drinkers, who distinguish themselves in after-life by this disgusting feature in their character, might trace it back to their childhood, when instead of being warned to overcome the propensity, it has been passed over without notice, or perhaps encouraged by the custom of rewarding them for good behaviour with some unusually nice thing to eat. My dear child was always accustomed to the plainest food that could be procured, and her taste in consequence was so simple, that she would even eat her meat without salt, or any stimulant beyond that of a wholesome appetite. Nor had she ever been accustomed to have wine given to her as a treat. No conversation was ever held before her

that might lead her to imagine such things indulgences, therefore she never desired them. She was once pressed to take some wine, and assured that her Mamma could not object to it. She took the glass and tasted it, but immediately set it down, observing that she did not like it. The taste for wine is an acquired taste, it is not natural to any children, but they are accustomed to sip a little with their friends, or to have it given them, perhaps as a birth-day treat, and they soon learn to think that it must be desirable. I remember once observing a complete proof of this in a little boy of whom I was very fond. When I first knew him he had rather an aversion to wine, or at least was perfectly indifferent to it, but he was in the habit of coming in after dinner, and then he was allowed to sip a little wine from his fa-

ther's glass. This was at first only an occasional habit, but it soon became a regular thing, and he gradually acquired such a taste for this indulgence, that he thought more of it than of any thing else that happened in the day. "I don't much care about my dinner, if I might only have some wine after it; and, when I am grown a man, I shall buy a great deal of wine"—he used to say. All this was amusing to his friends, who could not be persuaded that it was "the beginning of evil." He was always reprov'd when his desire for wine led him to go round the table and drain all the glasses that were left, but as he said, he could not see any harm in drinking what his Papa gave him. He loved me very much and I represented to him that I should be disgusted with him if he did not cure himself of this propensity. Then

he would argue very ingeniously with me that I ought not to be disgusted with him, &c. He was a boy of remarkable character. I knew that he would never pretend to yield to my arguments unless he really felt the force of them, and I was quite at a loss, and had nearly given it up in despair, when one day he asked leave to accompany me in a walk that I was going to take to a neighbouring village, he had nearly reached the place, he had run before me after butterflies, and he was almost the length of a field from me, when I saw him on a sudden stand quite motionless: he continued fixed as a statue, and when I had nearly reached him, I perceived that the object which had so completely arrested his attention was a drunken man, who was staggering along and appearing every moment as if he would tumble down. I took the

child's hand, and drew him aside from the path in which the man was coming. Still his eyes followed him, and he continued to gaze at him as long as he continued in sight. He then asked me what was the matter with that poor man? I said, "this is a man who has taken so much wine or ale that he is become intoxicated, that is, he has lost his senses, and is no longer able to guide himself. You see that he is at present not half so sensible as your little dog." The child asked me several other questions, "when the man would be better;" "how long he had been used to drink, &c.?" I said in all probability he began when he was a child to be very fond of it, and the desire had increased as he grew up, so that now he was not able to overcome the love of drinking. No other observation was made. I was careful to suffer

him to make his own application of this moral lesson. All the rest of our walk he was unusually grave and thoughtful, he made no remark on his own habits, he made no promise for the future, but it appeared that from this moment his resolution was taken. The next time that wine was presented to him he put it on one side with a look of disgust that was too remarkable not to be noticed. He was asked the reason of this, but he avoided giving an explanation, only saying that he had rather not have any. The impression that had been made on him remained afterwards. From this time he invariably refused to *taste* what he had before liked better than any thing else. I have seen him tempted to break through his resolution in every way, but I never saw it shaken. He always *turned away his eyes* from the

glass, only repeating that he did not choose any, and this he said like a person whose mind was quite made up on the subject, and who did not parley with the temptation by advancing reasons which he wished to be overcome; he turned away his eyes from it, and would immediately occupy himself about something else. Little boys and girls who may read this anecdote, you will do well to imitate the example of this child, who was not, at the time when he showed such firmness in acting up to his resolution, eight years old; and, when you are tempted to do what you know to be wrong, think of little Henry; and, that you may maintain yourselves in the right way, turn away your eyes from the temptation, and employ yourself immediately about something else; and if you act, as this noble-minded little boy

had learned to act, from a principle of serving God and trying to do what is right, because that is the way to please Him, and show your love to Him, you will not fail to be assisted by the Holy Spirit, and you will gradually overcome all the evil of your nature.

But to return to my own dear child. At that time, I thought it not advisable to speak to children so very young as she was, upon religious subjects. I had fears, which I now know to be groundless, that it would lead to misapprehension. I now firmly believe that a peculiar blessing attends upon the instruction of the infant mind. The seed sown in that tender soil appears to be more abundantly watered by the dews of Heaven, and, like a root planted by the right hand of the Heavenly Gardener, it flourishes with less interruption

than it can do at a more advanced age when the weeds of the enemy must first be rooted up, ere the plant be dug about to see if it will bear fruit, lest the awful sentence be pronounced, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground." With this, my first child, I thought it advisable to wait till her mind was a little matured before I spoke to her of the great end and purpose of her being. I wished first to make God an object of love instead of fear, and I was mistaken enough to expect that this object would be attained by watching my opportunity, and speaking to her when I conceived that her mind was in a fit state to receive the impression which I meant to convey. When this would have been I cannot now determine, nor is it worth recalling, I only remember that I was induced to alter my intention by finding that

she had picked up some notions of her own from her personal observation. I discovered this by her pointing out the word "God" in her lesson, and observing that she should know that word, when she came to it, without spelling. She then asked, "Do you love God and Christ, and do you believe in him?"—She was only twenty months old at this time, when I found that my system of keeping her in complete ignorance of these important subjects, till I saw fit to instruct her, was overthrown. At the same time I observed that, when she came in after dinner and fruit was given to her, she always said the grace over her little plate which she had heard her Papa say at dinner. I asked her what she said it for. She answered, "to make God love me, Mamma."

Notwithstanding these promising

appearances in her early infancy she did not appear to make any further progress in the knowledge of divine things. Perhaps the vast number of books that she read was a hinderance to her. They perhaps had the same effect on her mind that the amusements of the world have upon grown up people. They were not sinful or improper in themselves, but they *dissipated* her mind, that is, they prevented her from thinking on any thing but what belonged to this world. They confined her attention entirely to the things about her, instead of leading her always to bear in mind that here “we have no continuing city; that we are but the travellers of a day passing onward to “a better, that is a heavenly country;” and that our only business of real importance in this life, is to obtain a knowledge of the way which leads to another;

and receive those promised supplies of divine aid which can alone support us under "the burthen and heat of the day," and enable us to reach our home before the "night" of death "cometh when no man can work."

When I say that my dear child made no further progress in the knowledge of divine things, I do not mean to infer that she did not read the Bible, and perhaps liked the historical parts of it, as most children do, who are fond of reading. Indeed I remember that, when I began to read it with her, she surprised me by repeating nearly the whole of the first chapter of Genesis by heart; and she afterwards gave me the history of the chapters that follow in a very accurate manner, describing the most particular events in the same words that are used in the sacred book. She read the Bible as she read other

books, not for her improvement, but entirely for the amusement it afforded her, and when she had read what she considered the entertaining passages, she put it away. She had no desire to discover in it the will of God; she had no wish to please Him; her only idea was how to please and amuse herself. But while she failed to acquire a taste for reading the Bible, the powers of her mind improved daily. As I am writing for very little children, I will tell them by what means I think my little girl improved herself so much as to astonish every one who became acquainted with her. She was never desired to read any thing which she could not understand; and when she took up a book to read, she gave up her whole attention to it, and if she found any thing that she did not comprehend, she would not pass it over, she would

stop and think, and if she could not make it out herself she would come and ask to have it explained. I always tried to make her find out the meaning of things for herself, so that her mind was trained to that kind of exercise which brought forth its powers. She was very early used to the *labour* of thinking; and many little children would improve more, if they would take as much trouble to find out things for themselves as she did. Perhaps you will understand better what I mean, if I transcribe one or two little conversations from my note-book. I wrote them there in order to mark how she improved, and though there is nothing in them which any other little child might not have said, they will show the habit that she had acquired of thinking for herself even before she was two years old. December 10th,

—, my little Sophy asked me to-day “what made the fire?” I said, “think, and try to find out for yourself.” After a pause she said, “I think, Mamma, it is paper: Anne makes the fire with paper.” I took up a piece of paper—“Is this fire?” “No, Mamma.” “You must think again, my dear.” “I think the candle makes the fire, Mamma; the candle lights the paper and the sticks.” “Very well, now go to play.”—A little while after, she was very much amused with seeing her shadow on the wall. I asked her what made it come there? “I make it, Mamma;” “Yes, but you did not see it a little while ago.” “No,” she said, and after looking about for a minute she added, “it is the candle that makes it come.”

I have said that my first desire in giving her religious instruction was

to make her love God, but I did not succeed in the attempt. We must all ask God to give us the power to love Him, for we have no power in ourselves. I have marked down a short dialogue on this subject, and my young readers have probably heard something very like it from their own little brothers and sisters.—To-day my little darling asked me “who made her.” I said, “God.” “What did He make me of?” “I don’t know.” “Did he make Nancy?” “Yes.” “Were you with God when he made me, Mamma?” “No, my dear.” “Did he give me to you?” “Yes.” “When will He come here again?” “I don’t know. Do you wish to see Him?” “No, Mamma.” “Do you love Him?” “No, not at all.” “Why don’t you love Him? He gives you every thing that you have.” “No, he does not, my Papa gives me

all my things."—After a pause she asked, "What is God made of, Mamma?" "I don't know, my dear." "Where is he now?" "In Heaven." "A great many people are in Heaven, and they all do what God bids them." "Yes, my dear; and they are very happy. Would you like to go there?" "No." "Why, my dear, you would be very happy there." "No, I should not be happy any where if I had not got my little bricks, and I could not take them so far." "Would you like to see God?" "No." "He sees you always." "Oh no, Mamma, He can't see me now, He is up so high. Did God make my little sister?" "Yes." "And then he took her back again, and does he keep her now?" "Yes, and she is very happy."

There is nothing at all extraordinary in this conversation. Almost

every child of her age, if asked the same questions, would probably answer in the same manner. But I wish my young readers to pause here, and ask themselves if they really love God any better than this little girl did, because, if they do not, they are not fit to die. All people who go to Heaven love God: they would not be happy even in Heaven, if they did not. "God is love;" and, if we are his children, we shall have something of his nature, and we shall do every thing we can to please him. We shall obey our parents, because, God has desired us to do so; and we shall always speak the truth, and try to do all the good we can to every body. Not that any thing *we* can do will take us to Heaven, but we must try here to become holy, and fit for the enjoyment of it. We shall go there, because Jesus Christ has suffered the

punishment due to our sins, but all people who really believe in him are better than others. They have a new nature given to them, and they are striving every day to become better and better. These are the very words that I heard my little girl use a very short time before she died, when she was endeavouring to make her little sister understand the power of religion, upon the heart of all those who were really under its influence. As soon as she felt the importance of religion herself, she tried to make every body else feel it too. This change in her own views and feelings was the more evident because truth obliges me to confess that, for some years of her life, she had given me much pain, by showing, not only a total disregard and dislike of every thing that belonged to religion, but a course of conduct in direct opposition to it.

This was the more mortifying and surprising to me, as her advantages were so much greater than those of most other children. She had not only kind and indulgent parents, who were anxious that she should be good, but she had also two godmothers who were both as remarkable for the superiority of their talents as for their exalted piety. One was a most dear and beloved sister of mine, the other a friend, scarcely less dear—the sister of my heart, whose tender love for me had stood the test of many years, and was now extended to my children. Both these dear and precious friends are now with my child in glory. They both entered upon their eternal rest before her. She was about four years old when the dear friend whom I last mentioned came to live in the same village, and for the last year of her life she lived

in the same house. I look back on this period as a time of singular privilege. It is always of the highest consequence to the Christian that all the influences around him should be holy, and I had not only this advantage, but the delight of constant intercourse with a mind of high intellectual powers, who made in all things my interest her own. "We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends." I knew that she was a light in my path, and it is pleasant to me to remember that I felt the value of it whilst I enjoyed it. My dear child was not sufficiently grateful for the unremitting care which my beloved friend took to form her mind and to "train her up in the way she should go." She spent many hours in teaching her to read the Bible. The knowledge of it which she gained then was no doubt

of great importance, but she never appeared to feel any thing that she read, or any thing that was said to her. This was plainly shown by her conduct, for she was often disobedient, and as naughty as a child, whose disposition was naturally mild and gentle, could well be. She sought only to have her own will, and tried only to please herself, so that she was frequently obliged to be corrected; and she was often deprived of pleasures which I should have suffered her to enjoy, if she had behaved well. It is a very sad thing, my young friends, when you will only do what is right from the fear of punishment. How happy am I now to think that my dear little girl had learned another rule of conduct before she was taken away! She had learned to give up her own will and try to do the will of God; but at the time of

which I am speaking she was very far from doing this. Her godmamma had a little boy about a year and a half older than she was. He appeared then, more impressed with the importance of religion than my little girl did. I often think of this little boy now that he is deprived of his dear Mamma. He is a great way off, but I love him very much, and I often pray for him. I often think how many prayers have been offered up for him in this house by his dear Mamma, whose chief anxiety was that he might be a child of God. May he show that her prayers have not risen in vain. May he cleave most to those of his friends who are the people of God, and may he be kept by His power unto salvation, who alone is able to save him from the dangers by which he is surrounded. If he should forget the prayers

and instructions of such a mother, he will no doubt follow the course of this world, and grow up to be of the number of those who seek their own will and not the will of God, and then it would have been better for him that he had never been born. I wish he knew how much his little play-fellow was changed before she died. He will remember the many happy hours they have spent together; and he will, I hope, be pleased to hear, that instead of teasing the servants, and not minding what they said, because *they were only servants*, she had learned to be kind to them for that very reason. She knew who had taken upon himself the form of a servant, and she tried to be as kind as she could be to them, and to give them as little trouble as possible. The consequence is, that she is remembered with the greatest affection

by every servant in the house. That one who was accustomed to attend upon her, could scarcely be kept out of the room, even when her disorder was known to be an infectious fever. She would have ventured any thing to have been suffered to wait upon her still, and it was only my positive order which kept her from the bedside. This dear child would now never receive any thing from those about her without an expression of gratitude; and when she was so feeble that she could only articulate a single word at a time, almost the last thing she said was "thank" for something that was done for her. During her last illness, an elder servant, I was told, said in the kitchen, "Oh, I have seen many sick people, and waited upon many, but I never saw such an one as this, I never saw such a patient little creature as this before."

This was the fruit of the new spirit which God had given her, for nothing could be more opposite to the disposition of mind which I am now describing, than her behaviour at the time when her dear godmamma took so much pains to make her good. At that time her sister was a baby, and her health was so bad as to give me great anxiety, and I was obliged to pay her very great attention. This appeared to have an unhappy effect on my poor child's mind: and she was confirmed in thinking that I loved the baby better than I loved her, by the injudicious observations of a neighbour, who used often to say in joke, that "I cared for nothing in the world now, but that baby, and that I did not love little Sophy half so well, &c." These observations were made before her; and I never knew till a short time before she was taken from me,

what a deep impression they had made upon her mind. She was naturally a thoughtful and reserved child, so that she did not speak of what she felt, but it was shown in a coldness and indifference of manner which gave me great pain. Let me caution any child who may read this, and who may happen to have an infant brother or sister, not to indulge such an idea as this, nor to fancy when they see their parents caress the baby that they do not love them as well. The caresses that we give to babies belong entirely to that age; they would be ridiculous if they were given to elder children. It is even now painful to me to remember that my dear child had such an idea given to her. I never knew to what an extent she believed it, till the last hours of her life, when she was, I thank God, fully convinced that her moth-

er's love was the same for all her children.

The extraordinary progress which my little girl made in every thing that we thought it advisable to teach her, may perhaps be accounted for, by her having been blessed with such a memory as it has never been my lot to witness in any other. If I were to tell you how much, and how accurately, she learned, I am afraid you would not believe me. A gentleman who happened to be present one day when she repeated her lessons, as usual, without missing a single word, observed after she was gone out, that children who learned their lessons in the short time that she had done, forgot them as soon; and he said he should not wonder if in half an hour she had forgotten every word. I knew that her memory was as retentive as it was quick, but to convince

him, I called her from her play and desired her to repeat them over again, which she did immediately without missing a word. I marked good at the end of her lessons when she repeated them in this manner. Her little sister is now learning from the same books, and the many marks that we continually find in them, will often force the tears from my eyes. I remember how happy my dear child is now, and I would wish to say, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord;" but sometimes I am only sensible of the loss I have sustained in her.

The plan which her dear godmamma pursued in teaching her to read her Bible, is worthy of notice. She made her read a chapter in the New Testament, and then give an account of it in her own words, explaining the different subjects contained in the

chapter as she went on. The manner in which she was accustomed to do this, will never be forgotten by any one who heard her. She always took care to give her whole attention to what she was reading, and if there was any passage that she did not understand, she was encouraged to stop and ask for an explanation, so that, when she had finished, she was prepared to give her own account of the whole. She would then close the book, lay it on the table, and, placing one hand upon the cover, go through the whole chapter without the slightest hesitation, beginning at the first verse. This she often repeated in the very same words, and as she went on, and finished the different parables and events recorded, she would explain them, and speak of the sacred truths which she supposed our blessed Lord meant to inculcate in each, and go on thus till she

got to the end of the chapter, with a fluency of speech and a command of language, that, I will venture to say, would have astonished any one. A stranger would have found it difficult to believe, that such an explanation could have proceeded from a child, at that time, barely six years of age. No doubt her habit of reading so many books as she did, gave her the extraordinary command of language, which was shown on these occasions; and her very tenacious memory enabled her to go through the longest chapters, and very rarely fail to recall and explain, all the different subjects which they might present. It cannot however be denied, that she was remarkable for a clear and quick perception. Her mind appeared to comprehend, in an incredibly short time, every thing that was presented to it; and its grasp seemed so strong, that

no subject was dismissed without being examined in all its bearings. Her dear godmamma could not sometimes conceal the astonishment which she felt at her exposition of the Bible. It was done with so much ease and fluency, that it always appeared more like a lesson learned very accurately than a child speaking her own words, and giving her own ideas upon the subject. She herself was very far from supposing that there was any thing extraordinary in her manner of doing it. I was always so much afraid of exciting in her a desire of exhibition or a love of display, that I never suffered her to do it before any one, if there could be the least chance of raising a suspicion in her mind, that it was because she did it very well. Very few persons therefore have ever heard her; those who have, will acknowledge that I have not

gone beyond the truth in this statement. Yet, with all my care, I used sometimes to have great apprehensions that she would learn "to think more highly of herself than she ought to think," for her godmamma would often call her from her play when she had done her lessons, and make her tell her own little boy what *he* had been reading about, and what it meant; and if he failed in his reading, she would call her up to tell him the words. Of course this was done to rouse his faculties and shame him into more attention, but I was always sorry when this proof of her superiority was made to appear. At such times I have watched her countenance, and I have been delighted to see no trace of self-complacency at her doing better than her companion who was older than herself. If she thought at all about it, I believe she consid-

ered that her remembering it better was merely an accidental thing. She would generally stand for a moment when she was called up, with her eyes bent upon the ground to collect her thoughts, and then she would look up to her beloved teacher, and repeat with her usual fluency what she remembered of her playmate's history, or chapter, as simply as if it had been expected from her, and then return to her doll or her slate without one look around to see if any one had observed her triumph. No, I have never seen a mind of such powers, with such simplicity and humility combined. She was not a child whose manners were generally attractive to strangers. She never possessed that smartness of manner, nor had she that liveliness of remark, by which some clever children are distinguished, and which usually draw the attention of visitors.

So that very few saw, in the timid and reserved child (who would retire from them into any corner of the room, where she could read her book without interruption) any thing that was worthy of notice, any thing that was at all above the ordinary standard. Besides, I really did not place so much value on the superiority of her mind over other children; as I did not at the time perceive that it made her more obedient, more anxious to love and serve God. So that when her godmamma would exult, as she often did, in what she could not but consider her extraordinary intellectual powers, when she would sometimes leave the children, and come to cheer me in my sick room with some astonishing proof of the capacity of my little Sophy, I answered truly as I felt, that I would gladly exchange all this for a real *feeling* of the im-

portance of religion. Her kind instructress was accustomed to say, "Whoever lives to see it, may mark my words, that child will be something very extraordinary when she is grown up." Alas! how uncertain is every thing in this life! "These opening buds of richest promise," will blossom in eternity, but here they have withered for ever. Perhaps I hang too fondly on the remembrance of all that I had hoped she would have been, if it had pleased God to spare her to me. I ought rather to bow in humble submission, and be thankful that this tender plant is "safely housed," before the rough winds and tempests of this evil world had arisen to scatter, and perhaps destroy its fragrance.

It remains for me now to tell of the great change which took place in my dear little girl. I continued the

practice of hearing her read a chapter in the Bible every day. Her god-mamma at parting had charged me to do this; "let any other lesson be omitted," she said, "but never excuse this." Our time of reading it was in the evening, when her sister was gone to bed. That was a very happy part of my evening. Her Papa had never before heard her explain what she read, and he used often to lay aside his own book to listen to her; but he was careful not to express any surprise till she had retired, he then more than once observed that her remarks were really profound, and on one occasion, he questioned her strictly whether she was giving her own ideas, or only repeating what she had heard from another.

I did not fail to endeavour to make her *feel* as well as understand what she read; but I am not aware that I

succeeded, or that any lasting impression was made on her mind, till a certain time when a gentleman came from a short distance to our village, for the purpose of examining the children of the Sunday school, after which it was customary to address them, and endeavour, by the exposition of some passage of Scripture, to impress their minds with the importance of beginning to seek the Lord in the time of their youth. My dear child was particularly anxious to be present at this anniversary meeting, and we gave her permission. She had for some time had a little class of her own, and been a teacher in the school, she now went as a learner herself, and never was there a more important lesson given, certainly I think never one that made a more durable impression on so young a subject. The passage which Mr. Wilson had

selected for their consideration was the character of Samuel—his being called to serve God when a child—his obedience to the call—the call that was now given to every one present—the necessity of their obeying it, &c. &c. I was not present myself, but never will either her Father or I forget the account which this dear child gave us of his exhortation. Her eyes sparkled, and her whole face glowed with animation, as she requested me to promise that I would always let her go to hear Mr. Wilson whenever he came. “Indeed, Mamma,” she said, “he did not speak one word that I did not understand; and I really think I should never be tired of hearing him: I never understood any body so well before.” She then gave me, what was I have no doubt, a very correct, as it was a very clear, account of the

whole exhortation, concluding with the forcible observations which Mr. Wilson had made on the duty of obedience—"behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," "and surely," she said, clasping her hands with fervour, "surely I shall never be disobedient again." I think I can say that she never was; I remember once desiring her to go and do something when she was engaged in reading, she did not go immediately, and I said, "this is not obedience;" the colour came into her cheeks and she rose directly. When she had done it, she threw her arms round my neck, hid her face on my shoulder, and as soon as she could speak entreated me to forgive her. So tender was her conscience now, that she would scarcely ever go to bed without whispering to me, as she kissed me in bidding me good night, to ask if she had done

any thing wrong during that day. "Have I done every thing to please you, Mamma?" As she had before been careless of pleasing me, she now seemed to labour constantly to do something for me—to be useful to me in some way or other. It is very sweet to me to recall the many little offices of love which she now delighted to do for me. She saw me one day tying up some flower-seeds in a piece of paper; she observed how much better they would all be in little bags, and she set herself directly to work to make them for me. She could not write, so she copied the letters out of a book, and she had *printed* the word "everlasting" when I found her engaged in this laborious office, and relieved her by saying that it was quite enough for her to make the bags. On another occasion I found her one very cold day without

hat or handkerchief in the garden ; she ran up to me, “ Now then, Mamma, I have really done you some good, I was reading by the window, and I saw one of the white hens scratching the mould and rolling herself just by this anemone that you were so pleased to find the other day ; in another minute she would have picked off this pretty bud, if I had not run out and driven her away.” Alas ! before that bud became a blossom my darling child was laid in her grave. But I must not indulge in fruitless sorrow ; let me rather dwell on the many satisfactory proofs of an entire change of disposition which she now gave. In giving an account of her to a near and dear relative who had made anxious inquiries, I wrote to this effect ; “ As to my little Sophy, it is impossible for any child to be more docile and obedient, I have real-

ly no need ever to correct her, she seems only to study how she can best please and oblige us, &c.”——

She delighted to attend me in my occasional visits to the poor people. On one occasion I well remember we visited two houses in the parish. At the first, the mother made nothing but complaints of the hardships they endured, though herself and the whole family were in perfect health, and doing as well as usual, having in fact no other ground of complaint but that they were obliged to labour for their daily bread. The other house was inhabited by a poor widow, who had lately been left in great distress with four small children. She was a woman of real piety, and she talked to me chiefly of the great mercies that had been shown to her, of the kindness of her husband's creditors, of the debts she had been ena-

bled to pay; and when I inquired if she wanted any further assistance, she explained her circumstances so far as to show me that she should be enabled to pay her debts and go on without troubling her friends any farther. The chastening hand of the Lord, she said, had been heavy upon her, but, blessed be his name, he had been very near to support and comfort her; he had enabled her to look through the cloud, and see that the "everlasting arms" were beneath and about her, and feeling thus, in the midst of all her sorrows, she could say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

My dear child listened attentively, and was very much struck with the difference between these two women; "Always," she said, "Mamma, let me go with you when you go to see the poor people, I like so much to

hear them talk." Thus the things that she before thought very disagreeable, she now delighted in. A slight cold which she took about this time, prevented me from granting her this indulgence, and I shall never forget the patient sweetness which she manifested on these occasions. She saw that it was painful to me to refuse her, and she would take care to get a book, show me what she was going to read, and assure me that she should amuse herself very well alone, remarking, "I have not teased you with asking you to let me go, have I, dear Mamma?" Once when I returned, she had evidently been thinking a good deal, and she asked me how she might be quite sure that her sins were forgiven!" "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, but how am I to know that it takes away *my* sin?" She was so well acquainted with the

Bible that she could repeat texts upon almost every subject, and if I began a verse and was at a loss to go on, she could generally set me right, and very often go on to the next verses. But in addition to her daily reading, she had been accustomed to finish her lessons by learning a short passage of Scripture. This may account for the impression that was made on her mind in the instance I have just related, and for her ready application of a text which has always been a refuge for the sinner. It was evident that she had been convinced of sin, and wanted the assurance which every believer in mature age is desirous to experience. Very much of what passed in her mind was, I have no doubt, unknown to any one but God and herself; for she was, as I have before said, of a reserved and timid disposition; more accustomed to muse

and think than speak of her own feelings. I could often only judge of what passed in her mind, by the lessons she selected to learn. Sometimes when I came home from my walks, she would bring me a hymn which she had learned whilst I was away, and then, as she sang very sweetly, she would amuse herself with trying to set it to a tune. The last hymn which she ever repeated to me was from the Olney Collection, and it appeared to me so far above her capacity, and so much beyond the feelings of a child, that I questioned her a good deal upon the reasons of her choosing it, for she repeated some of the passages with a peculiar emphasis, as if she had felt them deeply. But she shrunk from my inquiries with that peculiar *modesty of mind*, which always inclined her rather to conceal her feelings than make them

the subject of conversation even to me. As it may not be uninteresting to some of my young readers to know the hymn which this dear child had so much pleasure in repeating, I will tell them that it is the 92nd in the Olney Collection, and begins with

Legion was my name by nature,
Satan rag'd within my breast,
Never misery was greater,
Never sinner more possess'd :
Mischievous to all around me,
To myself the greatest foe ;
Thus I was, when Jesus found me,
Fill'd with madness, sin, and woe.

I have no doubt that my dear child fully understood this hymn, and applied it to her own case. I judge from her manner in repeating it, and from the observations which I drew from her respecting it. She was beginning to think *seriously*. The good seed which had been sown with so

much anxiety, and which at first appeared to have been lost, was now appearing. Her prayers used to be a short form, which I had often heard her go through with as little interest as possible; but now we observed that when she was desired to say her prayers before she went up stairs to bed, she was a much longer time than usual on her knees. I asked her whose prayers she used, "Nobody's, Mamma," she said, "I pray what is in my own head."

Not only to me was her conduct changed, but to every creature about her, and to none more than to her little sister, whose high spirit and overbearing temper had made it very difficult for one so much older to give way to her. She would now give up to her in any thing—suffer her to strike her without attempting to return it, or without making any com-

plaint to me. It was from the servants that I heard of her constantly allowing her little sister to master her now. Once only, she said to me, "Now, Mamma, I have this day done every thing I could think of to please my sister." She asked me on one occasion very seriously, if I thought her sister was old enough to be answerable for her sins, "because," she said, "I am frightened to think of it, but this morning she called me a fool, and you know what is in the Bible about that, Mamma."—She seemed very anxious to make her little sister good; I overheard her a few days before she was taken ill, telling her that they must love one another, because God said in the Bible, "if you do not love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?"

I was one day reading to them

both, one of the many pretty stories that are to be found in the "Children's Friend," when her little sister began to make a noise, and said, "she did not like stories about good children, she liked best to hear about naughty boys and girls;" "Yes," said the dear child, "but when I hear about a good child, I think God sent that story for me, on purpose to make me good."—"Why don't you be good then?" said her little petulant sister. "I do try," she very meekly answered, "I try every day to be a little better than I was the day before, and every night I think, and try to remember how many naughty things I have done in that day, and I ask God to forgive me and not let me do so again, &c." These are the very words that passed between these two children, and as they serve to show my dear Sophy's state of mind, and I

write for little children, I have not thought them too trifling to be inserted. The Bible seemed to be made the rule of her conduct in every thing, and instead of disliking to read it as she once did, she said one day with unusual emphasis, "the thing that I like best in the whole world is to read the Bible when I am alone with Mamma." She was very anxious to be allowed to take in a small monthly publication for children. I asked how she could be answerable for supplying a penny every month. After thinking a little while, she said, "I hope now, I may be quite sure of having so many tickets for good behaviour, and my lessons, that I shall at least earn a penny every month;" and she was very careful to have her penny always ready. One of the last things she told me before she was confined to her bed, was that I should

find more than a penny in her little purse when the time came.

But I am delaying to come to the few last days of her life. I almost fear to retrace them, yet they are forever present with me. Change of scene and place has made no difference; the image of my dying child is always before me. She began to droop, but so gradually that no one was alarmed. First her appetite failed a little, then it was gone, then she could only walk a little way, then only round the garden, the next day going into another room fatigued her. Still she was so patient, so far from any complaint, that we were not alarmed. She always seemed happy if she saw us near her, and she would try to eat on purpose to please us. She had always been particularly fond of her Papa, and she now

seemed to wish that he should be always with her.

She slept at intervals all day upon the sofa, and when she awoke she would smile at me and her Papa, and if she thought we looked anxious, she would stretch out her hand and say frequently, "better, dear Papa—no pain." If her Papa was absent she would ask, "Where is my *own* dear Papa?" I told her that he was obliged to be absent sometimes, that he had a great deal to do, and that he could not be always with her, &c.; she would gently acquiesce, and, smiling sweetly at me, would say, "My dear Mamma never leaves me, she is always here to watch over me." But if her little sister came near, she would motion her to keep away, and check herself when she was going to kiss her, saying, "better not, better not come near me, dear, for fear I

should have the fever, and then you might catch it." This was on the Sunday, and at night she was so much better that her medical attendant said she would be running about in a day or two. Alas! that night a change took place, and as soon as he saw her in the morning he desired us to send for a physician. For the first time she breakfasted in bed, or rather breakfast was taken to her, for she could not eat. She asked for Mamma to cut her a small slice of bread and butter; I did so, and she tried to eat it. Her little sister crept in on tip-toes, and we were going to send her out, but she begged that she might stay a little, and looking at her with eyes full of affection, she said, "I love to see my little sister, Mamma, when she does not make a noise;" she then offered her the piece of bread and butter, and as she stood beside

the bed and ate it, she said, "I love to look at her." This was the last time they ever saw each other. The physician came soon after, but he said he saw no reason whatever to expect an unfavourable issue to her illness. Her heavenly Father was mercifully pleased to mitigate the violence of the disorder, and it seemed in her case to be disarmed of all its usual virulence. Nothing appeared to alarm us farther. She slept constantly, or rather dozed, and it seemed all one long night to her imagination, for on waking, once she looked at me, and said, "*I have* prayed, Mamma; I told God I had been a naughty girl, and had done many things that Mamma bid me not do;" and then she sank to sleep again. Any thing like conversation was impossible. She was so weak that it was hardly safe to disturb her by asking a single question. How

impossible then was it to prepare her for death, if she had not herself thought of it before this time of sickness! On the Tuesday evening I was sitting alone with her, expecting the physician; it began to get quite dark, but I sat still, not liking to disturb her by any movement. She had been some time asleep, and as I sat wishing her to awake, it struck me that she drew her breath in a manner rather unusual to her, it was rather quicker and interrupted. I rang the bell for a light. It was brought. Never shall I forget that moment, for I saw at the first glance that the hand of death was upon my child. The servant who brought the light heard me say as I clasped my hands, "now, Lord, thou must support me, for no human power can;" and He, to whom we never cry in vain, did support me in an especial manner. I remember

that I endeavoured to moisten her mouth with some water which was near; she half opened her eyes, fixed them upon me and smiled; but she had no power to speak. The physician then came, and he gave her wine, which revived her so far that, in the course of an hour, she was able to speak; and thus she seemed rescued from the grasp of death. We were ordered to give her wine in small quantities every twenty minutes, day and night. This we continued to do, and she was better, so much better, that on the Thursday Dr. — said it would not be necessary for him to see her again till Saturday, when he would come to breakfast. From this time our hopes were high. I never left her. I was assisted by a nurse of whom she had always been very fond. She was one to whom she had been often used to read her little

books, and she had been a very patient hearer; she waited upon her now with the most affectionate attention. The medical attendant, who lived near, watched over her with a tenderness and anxiety which we can never forget. She occasionally awoke for a moment, looked for me, and said, "dear, good, Mamma," or murmured some indistinct expression of love and tenderness, and then sunk to rest again. Sometimes she would speak as if in a dream, of the kindness of the servants, thank them, and say how sorry she was to give them so much trouble, "but I could not help it, Mamma, and how very kind they are to me, &c." Once, when the medical attendant stood by the bed, directing us how to move her to my bed while her own was changed, she opened her eyes and said, with unusual liveliness, "yes, and Papa shall

carry me, and then I shall put my arms round Mamma's neck, and then — then I shall be well." — Alas — she sunk exhausted with this effort, and was scarcely aware of our moving her at all. But I must pass on. Saturday morning came, and we thought she was going on well. I had even slept in my clothes, on the bed beside her. The doctors both came together. They said at first how much better she looked, but the moment they felt her pulse they looked at each other, and we saw how it was. They scarcely knew how to tell us that all would soon be over. No, I can never forget the anguish of that moment of crushed hopes, of blasted expectations. It was her birth-day, she was seven years old that day, and I had prepared myself to breakfast with the medical attendants with all the grateful feelings of a heart which felt itself

indebted to them beyond measure, and which could not express half the gratitude it felt. And now it was chilled and oppressed with unspeakable agony. Still after the first shock my hopes revived. I sat down by her bed-side, and watched her placid countenance the whole of that sad day. I scarcely dared to breathe lest I should disturb her. She seemed no worse; there was no appearance of increased disorder, rather the contrary; she slept less, and appeared to take more notice of things about her. Once she said, "You have not washed my face to-day, Mamma." I had been ordered not to do it for fear of disturbing her unnecessarily. I brought the bason and towel, and gently washed the dear face that was so soon to be cold in death. She observed that I had not done it entirely, and pointed to her lip as a place

which I had not touched. I brought the towel again, she looked at me with the sweetest expression of grateful love, and said feebly, "'fraid I tease my dear Mamma;" and, after a pause, she said, "every body is afraid to come near me, but not my dear Mamma—she is never afraid." She had observed that the persons who were obliged to be about her, kept as far from her as they could for fear of infection. Afterwards, when we raised her for the last time in bed, she had no power to support herself, and her head fell on my bosom, she said, with more strength than she had shown before, "I have hurt my dear Mamma," and as long as she was able to speak she inquired about this. I endeavoured to satisfy her about it, and to hush her to rest, for we were desired by no means to encourage her to talk; but she continu-

ed from time to timè to murmur, in broken sentences, expressions of her deep affection—"Mamma loves me—she would not change me for any other little girl—she would never go out and leave me, &c." These, and many such imperfect sentences, fell from her at different times as she awoke from the short, disturbed slumbers, that immediately preceded her death. I would not lose the remembrance of one word that fell from her lips, though they piercè my heart through with many sorrows. She never said any thing which indicated a sense of her danger but once, when she put aside a medicine which I offered her, when I urged that it was to make her well, she said, "No, Mamma, nothing will make me well;" and then she closed her eyes again to sleep. She always seemed to wish to speak comfort to her Papa, of whom

she was so fond. His agony of mind was so great, that very often he could not stay in the room. In the course of this last day, she refused her bark, but when I said how pleased her Papa would be if she took it, she immediately showed a desire for it; she was exhausted with the effort, but as soon as she recovered a little, I saw that she wanted something. At last she said, "Papa." I rang the bell; when he came, she looked at me and said, with much difficulty, "tell him that I am a good girl—he—so pleased." The chief of her suffering appeared to arise from our giving her wine so often; she had always disliked the taste of wine, and it was now a great punishment to her to take it. Sometimes she closed her mouth firmly against the spoon, but her gentle nurse never failed to open it by whispering, "for your dear Mamma's sake

do take it, Miss;" and she would open her lips for it, and fix her eyes upon me, while she swallowed it, with an expression which I shall never forget. This continued to the very last. When she could no longer speak, the name of her Papa or Mamma would uncloset her lips to take any thing that was offered. But this trial of her love for us was near its close, as the evening drew on the fever returned as if to claim its victim. The poor wasted cheek was again flushed with a dark crimson, and the eye shone with unnatural brightness, she was for a little time restless and wanting change of posture, but the mind seemed kept in perfect peace. Not a word fell from her that indicated any anxiety, any doubt as to her final safety. She was incapable of conversation, but she spoke more than usual in broken sentences, and her Papa

was not aware that her last great change was so near. He spoke of the difficulty he should have in doing his duty at church next day. I knew the symptoms of approaching death but too well, and I was thinking how I should tell him that it was very near, when the sudden departure of the fever, and the consequent absence of its excitement in the dear sufferer, forced itself on his observation and spared me the painful task. It was midnight, and she had sunk into a sleep, from which it was evident she would never have awoke, if we had not continued to disturb her by giving her wine. This was the only thing that maintained the struggle between the departing spirit and its tenement of clay, but we dared not omit it till we were authorised by her medical attendants. She might yet revive, they thought; alas, she was

“in the valley of the shadow of death;” but, blessed be God, if we may judge from appearances, she “feared no evil.” At length, as the morning of Sunday dawned, all hope was over, and we were allowed to discontinue the wine. From that moment she gently sunk to rest, like an infant sinking to sleep on the bosom of its mother. I had gone down for a few minutes to be with her dear Father, whose heart seemed almost broken, and I greatly feared that he would not be able to bear the heavy load of sorrow which was come upon him; but God, who never lays upon us more than he will enable us to bear, was near to support and comfort him. We both walked round the garden in the grey twilight of that cold and cheerless morning, insensible to every feeling but one, an earnest desire that our beloved child might be

released from her mortal struggle, that the gentle spirit might be permitted calmly to exhale from its earthly tabernacle. In looking back on that time, I have been almost led to wonder at the state of calm, tearless sorrow, in which we both were. The same feeling of dull and quiet misery seemed to be upon us. The agitations of hope and fear were over. We had hung over her in breathless anxiety; we had watched the turns of the disease, sometimes in despair, but often elated with hope. My imagination had even been employed in anticipating the feelings with which I should talk with her on her past danger, the interest with which I should question her about her consciousness of it. How many questions which I now feared to ask, should I have to put to her! what delight I should have in seeing her strength gradually return under

my unceasing care! what pleasure it would be to speak to her of the patient endurance she had shown, and give her all the praise for it which she so well deserved! such thoughts as these I had indulged, as I sat beside her, watching a quiet sleep into which she sometimes fell; and her medical attendant had perhaps during the time felt her pulse, and left her as she slept, only whispering "better, decidedly better." How long I lived on those words, repeating them gently to her Papa till we were both driven from this revival of hope by some new exhibition of her disorder, and could no longer hide from ourselves that the "sentence was gone forth against" her! and then how acute was the despair which overwhelmed me! all this variation of feeling was now over. We had nothing left on which to rest a hope. She was dying. I could say

it calmly, though it seemed as if the iron had entered into my soul while I spoke, but it had passed over me, and it seemed as if it had seared my heart, and dried up the source of my tears. My eyes have gushed with tears a hundred times since at the sight of things which in this hour failed to move me. As we walked in the garden, that morning, her hoop was in our path, and the sight of it did not in the least disturb the *dull misery* of my mind. I passed by her little garden, where she had for several summers spent so much of her time. The snow-drops were in blossom. There was one bunch which she had herself discovered when they first appeared above the ground, and she had watched them and called them hers. They were gathered to put in her coffin. All these ideas, which at another time would have filled me

with anguish, now failed to move me ; and I look back on this as another mark of the kindness of our Heavenly Father, who in judgment remembered mercy, and by thus saving me from agitation at that dreadful moment, perhaps gave me my life. I recollect that I was conscious only of one feeling, the anxious desire that an easy death might be vouchsafed her. This was now the only prayer that dwelt on my lips, and, blessed be God, he suffered me to perceive that it was granted. On my return to the room, her nurse met me at the door in tears, and endeavoured to prevent my entrance, "Go back, Ma'am," she said, "this is not a sight for you." I could not bear the idea of leaving her, though for some time my presence had been useless, but it afforded me afterwards a melancholy satisfaction to reflect that I was not persuaded to return, nor was

there any thing to see that could have shocked any one. My dearest child still breathed, but all bodily suffering was over. Her eyes were open, looking upward, as if she already saw the glories of her Father's house, and only waited for the heavenly messenger to convey her to it. I stood alone, in awful silence by the bed, waiting with breathless anxiety for her deliverance, but it was impossible to tell the exact moment when it took place, so softly did the gentle spirit pass away. I could only see, after the lapse of a few minutes, that the little breast had ceased to heave—the hand lay powerless on the coverlet, and I knew that the silver cord was loosed, and that the angels in heaven were rejoicing over her escape from a world of sin and sorrow. I stood and looked at her calm and placid countenance, which wore the same peaceful expres-

sion as when she first blest my eyes—a sleeping—new-born child. I could not shed one tear—that relief was for some time denied. I tried to imagine the triumphant entrance of the happy spirit to a world of light and glory—but it would not be—I could only at that time feel my own desolation. But I could see that this was one of the chastisements which make us better acquainted with ourselves. In many heavy sorrows and deprivations I had imagined I was, indeed I think I may say, I felt, resigned to the will of God, and I thought that, in the exercise of this grace, I had made some proficiency in the Christian progress, but He came near—He laid his hand on my first-born, and though I continually said, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it,” yet it was long before I could say, “Thy will be

done." But He who knows that there is no sorrow like a mother's, saw all the difficulties and trials that surrounded me, and He knew that the desire of my heart was to be resigned to Him in all things. Perhaps it has not been among the least of my mercies, that this severe trial has served to show me *myself*. It has convinced me that I have nothing to bring to the Lord. The only thing in which I believed myself to have some merit, has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Like the morning dew it has passed away, and there is as little trace of it to be found. Once, during the brief space of her illness, I said, and I believed that I spoke truly—"Oh! if the lifting up of my finger would restore her, and I knew it to be contrary to the will of God, I would not do it."—And now, what is become of my resignation? There

is not a day, scarcely an hour, in which the remembrance of her bed of suffering and death does not fill my heart with anguish, and my eyes with tears. The sight of her clothes, her toys, a little glove that she had lost, any thing that presents her image to my mind, is sufficient to overwhelm it with sorrow, till I recall to my recollection in whose hands she is, and I repeat with my lips, and try to feel in my heart, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." Who that has ever sat by the bed-side of a beloved object, watching the slow, but sure approach of death, can seek to lose the remembrance in the vanities and frivolities of life? yet this is the way in which thousands seek to drown the memory of such scenes, and thus they lose the salutary effect which they might otherwise produce on their minds. I repeat, I would not lose

the remembrance of any one feeling, but I hope in time to feel less acutely than I do at present ; for almost every thing around me has power to wound me by presenting some memento of her. All music and singing has a very painful effect upon me. She had a correct ear for music, and I can scarcely bear to hear her hymns sung by others. When she was only six years old, I was asked to bring her to the Sunday school, that she might lead the children in their hymns during the accidental absence of the teacher, who generally began the singing. I shall never forget the sudden and overpowering effect produced on our minds, a few months after her death, by the children of the Sunday school, on the day of their school-feast, or anniversary. They are always permitted to come on that day into our garden, and play on the lawn be-

fore the house. It had always been with her a day of great enjoyment. We could not but feel saddened and depressed as we walked silently amongst them: but these feelings were increased to anguish, when on a sudden the children, without any premeditated design on their parts, formed themselves into groups on the grass, and began singing one of her hymns. Their voices sounded very sweetly in the open air, and in the calm of that lovely evening; but oh! we could ill bear the emotion which these innocent and simple sounds produced, when we remembered, with feelings of almost insufferable bitterness, that the voice which *we* most loved to hear was silent in the grave. But I must not forget that I am writing for little children, to whom I am anxious that this narrative should do some good. It has cost

me some pain to write it, but if it should be the means of making one little child more obedient, more thoughtful of the great end and purpose of her being, I shall be amply rewarded. If you, my young readers, receive any good from it, you will be glad to hear that Little Sophy's good example is likely to have a happy effect on the sister that she left behind. She is, as she herself says, "beginning to be good, and trying every day to *conquer herself*." And if you are disposed yourselves to be impatient, as this little girl has hitherto been, while you dwell upon the gentle disposition of her dear sister, you will do well to ponder upon the text of Scripture which has been engraved upon her tomb-stone, as describing the peaceful character of her who sleeps beneath it: "The ornament of a meek

and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.”

I have hesitated whether I should relate here one circumstance which was the means of affording strength and consolation to my mind even in the depth of sorrow. I have hesitated, because it arose from a dream, and I am careful in guarding young people against placing too much dependance upon dreams or impressions of any kind. But I think any impression, or even any dream, which tends to exalt the power, or exhibit the mercy of God, may be safely permitted us. We all acknowledge that he is about our path, and about our bed, and that he spieth out all our ways, that he is acquainted with every thought of our hearts. In prayer we repeat that his ear is not become heavy that it cannot hear, neither is his arm shortened that it cannot save. Yet we fear to ac-

knowledge that his mercy has been shown in any especial way to us. We ask for blessings, but we do not watch as well as pray; we do not act as if we expected an answer to our prayers; we fear to exercise our highest privileges, and thus we perhaps lose his tender mercies. I would speak on such a subject with becoming awe and reverence; I am sure I speak as one who feels unworthy of the least of all his mercies; yet it would be difficult to persuade me that I had not tasted of them largely. I shall never believe that the instance which I am going to detail to you, is not another proof of the goodness and mercy of Him, without whose permission a sparrow cannot fall to the ground. I would wish you to regard it as a proof of his omniscience. The very thoughts and intents of our hearts are known and open to him, we frequent-

ly say, when we address him : yet do we not practically deny this, when we refuse the comfort which we might receive from waiting upon him, and expecting the operations of his mercy upon us!—I had besought him in prayer, broken and interrupted as it was ; I had cried to him for support. I particularly dreaded the first time of my going to church after the burial of my poor child. I must, I knew, of necessity, pass by the very spot in which the dear wasted form, that was so familiar to my eye, was laid. I must see the place in which she had sat, the prayer-book which she had used. I should hear the singing, and I could not fail to remember the sweet voice which had been used to join in that simple melody. All this I anticipated, and my heart sunk within me at the approaching trial. I had never dreamed of my poor child once

since I had lost her, but the night before the approaching sabbath, or rather on the sabbath morning, when I was to go to church for the first time, I dreamed that I was with her in some part of our garden; that we were both conscious of some approaching evil, something that was to separate her from me; and, as was natural to her timid nature, that she had flown to me for protection; I put my arms round her, and assured her that nothing should hurt her; that I would take care of her, and nothing should take her from me. While I was endeavouring to support her in this way, I thought she gently disengaged herself from my arms. I seemed to have no power to hold her, and she had no longer any wish for me to do so. She stood a step from me, and I still repeated, "You shall not be taken from me, dearest, I will

take care of you ;” but she seemed no longer to fear any thing ; she laid her hand on my arm, and fixing her fine dark eyes upon me, she said with sweet and powerful emphasis, “ My dear Mamma, we must not fight against God.” It appeared to me then, that by one of those changes which take place in dreams, the scene was entirely altered, and I heard her singing, as plainly as I had ever done when living, “ To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all praise and glory give.” I awoke, and the impression was so powerful, that I could scarcely be persuaded that I had not been awakened by very sweet music. I was sure that the dear voice only faded gradually from my ears as I awoke. The effect produced on my mind I shall never forget. The duty of perfect acquiescence in the dispensations of God, was clearly impressed upon me.

Let my will be lost in thine, was for some time the first feeling of my heart, as it was the constant prayer of my lips: and during the whole of that dreaded day, I was so entirely lifted above my sorrow, that I never once felt a fear of sinking beneath it. I was enabled to bear with perfect calmness, and with all the appearance of the most perfect resignation, every exertion that was required of me. If for a moment I felt giving way, her words recurred to me, and I repeated, "Let me not fight against God;" it was his will, and let his will be done. He comforteth us by whomsoever, and in whatever way he willeth, in whatever way may be best fitted to our weakness and to the peculiar character of our minds. Who shall limit his power or deny his interference to support the reed that he has bruised? For my own part, I can

truly say, that I never look back on this circumstance without feeling an overflowing of love and gratitude to the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. This feeling I would wish to excite in the breast of my young readers. It would be well for us if we could at all times realize the divine presence. "Thine eye seeth me" would be the text that of all others I should wish you constantly to remember; and how many vain, if not sinful thoughts, would be repressed or driven from our minds, if we could truly say, "it is the place where thine honour dwelleth." If our hearts are really the habitation of the Spirit, we shall not have room for other guests. The Spirit of the Lord is promised to those who seek it, and it will strive with every other inmate, till all are subdued into obedience to the divine will. Only be careful how you resist

the work of the Spirit. When you are tempted to indulge in sinful passions, when you feel your heart swell with anger, remember it is "the place where his honour dwelleth," and dread lest you should drive away the heavenly guest by the admission of any thing that is contrary to its gentle nature. One sinful temper indulged, will bring others; for there is no such thing as a single and unconnected sin. "My name is legion" is the true character of every sin, for one sin indulged will inevitably bring others with it. The language of the poet, when he had grieved the Spirit of God, is so beautiful, that I am tempted to remind you of it, and recommend you to commit it to memory:

Return, O Holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn
And drove thee from my breast.

My beloved child used to sing this hymn, and it is marked in her little book as one of her chief favourites, "because," she said, "it was Papa's favourite hymn." Alas! she was so entwined in every thing about us, that we are continually presented with some memento of her, sometimes when we least expect it, but we feel that we ought not to repine. We are, I hope, thankful in some degree for the mercies that are left, and we know, that whether the Almighty gives or takes away, our language should still be that of adoring praise. It is not amongst our least mercies that God has been pleased to comfort us by the means of earthly friends. Few parents have ever had more tender sympathy bestowed from the hands of private friendship. None can be more grateful. "Memory swells with many a proof of recol-

lected love." I cannot refuse myself the satisfaction of concluding this little work with some beautiful lines, which were sent to us by the author, a long tried and very dear friend of ours. You may not, my young readers, understand them at present, but if you have parents who are mourning for the loss of a dear child, these lines may give comfort to *them*, for they had power to sooth *our* minds, even in the first days of our sorrow :

Mourner! the dust thy tears bedew, shall shine
In angel brightness and again be thine.
And though thou grieve, she thanks the hour that
gave

Her soul to Heav'n, her sufferings to the grave.
If now from that high sphere of light she bend
A look on father, mother, sister, friend,
Fain would she check your tears, and bid you bless
Her spirit's flight from care and nothingness.

* * * * *

While soft affection drops the pious tear,
Wraps the cold clay, and decks the sable bier,

The sainted spirit spurns her late abode,
 Wings her high way, and seeks the throne of God.
 Oh, glorious change! still felt and prized the more
 That languor, pain and fear assail'd before!
 No dark unknown receives her wand'ring flight,
 She mounts and shines in Heav'n's own blessed light.
 Nor sullen ghosts aloof look speechless on,
 But kindred angels greet her freedom won,
 New tune their harps and lift their grateful song
 That one blest spirit more has join'd their countless
 throng.

Enraptured in that holy band, she hails
 The well-known forms which not Heav'n's glory
 veils.

Greets the bright virtues which on earth she knew;
 Each love made perfect, and each friendship true.
 Perchance a mother's angel vision moves
 With fond embrace to clasp the child she loves;
 Or early snatch'd from earth, the child on high
 In cherub splendour greets the parent's eye.

Joyce's Lay of Truth.

ON HIS BELOVED SOPHY, BY HER
FATHER.

CHILD of my earliest care, whose opening buds
Of richest promise, to the prescient sense
Told of the fragrance of thy riper years,
How fondly had I hoped with *thee* to tread
Once more the realms of fancy and of song,
Mid gales that breathe of Paradise, and sounds
That speak to us of Heaven! vain fruitless hope.
Fancy and song *were* thine, but they are quenched
In the cold grave; while nought remains for *me*
But the faint echo of that dearest voice
Which I must hear no more. Then farewell, song,
And farewell all that on my youthful ear
Poured its unreal witchery. My child!—
Thy infant years had traced the page of God,
And at the fountain of eternal truth
Had quaffed its purest stream. Oh! to that page,
From all that once allured my charmed eye,
For ever may I turn! and though I fling
A mournful chaplet o'er the lonely tomb
Where my poor Sophy moulders; though I pour
A sad and solemn requiem o'er the spot
Her dear remains have hallowed; shall my view
Look forward to the realms of brightest day,
Where fancy's meteors play not, but where truth
With steadiest lustre burns. There, dearest child!
We yet will live to poesy and song,
To all Heaven's harmonies. Thy voice which here

Warbled in native sweetness, then shall learn
A wider compass, and a nobler strain,
As round the throne of God, and of the Lamb,
We raise the song which never can deceive,
Then shall it grieve me not, that here the buds
Of richest promise withered ; and that hope,
Which fondly spoke of happiness to come,
Was but the day-dream of an earthly mind,
Which sought for *her*, the triumphs of an hour,
For whom the eternal gates of Heaven flung wide
Their golden splendour, and for whom the harps
Of plumed seraphs struck the chords of joy,
Which hail a saint's beatitude.



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