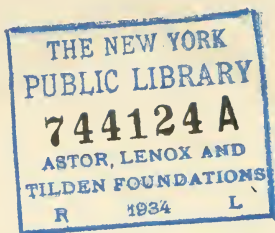


THE
Smitten Household:
OR,
THOUGHTS FOR THE AFFLICTED.

BY
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Publisher's Note.

FROM hundreds of stricken families, assurances have been received of sweet consolation imparted by the "Thoughts on the Death of Little Children." It was the evidence of the usefulness of that volume which suggested the idea of obtaining from distinguished clergymen of several religious denominations similar thoughts of comfort for the mourning household, when death has entered it, and removed a Wife, a Husband, a Parent, or a Friend. The idea found immediate favor in the eyes of all to whom it was submitted, and the writers cheerfully furnished the elegant and appropriate treatises which are here published under their respective names. Not only to the thousands of families who are accustomed to receive spiritual instruction from the lips of these men, but to thousands besides, this book will go with messages of comfort and peace.

The publisher wishes to add that the authors who have contributed these essays are not to be held responsible for the sentiment or taste of the poetical selections with which the book is interspersed.

Death of Little Children.

BY

SAMUEL IRENÆUS PRIME, D.D.

Words of Scripture.

ALTHOUGH affliction cometh not forth from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.—JOB 5 : 6, 7.

Consider the work of God! for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider. God also hath set the one over against the other.—ECCLESIASTES 7 : 13, 14.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.—ECCLESIASTES 7 : 2, 3, 4.

Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble.—JOB 14 : 1.

Death of Little Children.

The Child is Dead.

It is hard to believe it: that we shall no more hear the glad voice, nor meet the merry laugh that burst so often from its glad heart.

Child as it was, it was a pleasant child, and to the partial parent there are traits of loveliness that no other eye may see. It was a wise ordering of Providence that we should love our own children as no one else loves them, and as we love the children of none besides. And ours was a lovely child.

But the child is dead. You may put away its playthings. Put them where they will be safe. I would not like to have them broken or lost; and you need not lend them to other children when they come to see us. It would pain me to

see them in other hands, much as I love to see children happy with their toys.

Its clothes you may lay aside ; I shall often look them over, and each of the colors that he wore will remind me of him as he looked when he was here. I shall weep often when I think of him ; but there is a luxury in thinking of the one that is gone, which I would not part with for the world. I think of my child now, a child always, though an angel among angels.

The child is dead. The eye has lost its lustre. The hand is still and cold. Its little heart is not beating now. How pale it looks ! Yet the very form is dear to me. Every lock of its hair, every feature of the face, is a treasure that I shall prize the more, as the months of my sorrow come and go.

Lay the little one in his coffin. He was never in so cold and hard a bed, but he will feel it not. He would not know it, if he had been laid in his cradle, or in his mother's arms. Throw a flower or two by his side : like them he withered.

Carry him out to the grave. Gently. It is a hard road this to the grave. Every jar seems to disturb the infant sleeper. Here we are, at the brink of the sepulchre. Oh ! how damp, and dark, and cold ! But the dead do not feel it.

There is no pain, no fear, no weeping there. Sleep on now, and take your rest!

Fill it up! Ashes to ashes, dust to dust! Every clod seems to fall on my heart. Every smothered sound from the grave is saying, Gone, gone, gone! It is full now. Lay the turf gently over the dear child. Plant a myrtle among the sods, and let the little one sleep among the trees and flowers. Our child is not there. His dust, precious dust! indeed, is there, but our child is in heaven. He is not here; he is risen.

I shall think of the form that is mouldering here among the dead; and it will be a mournful comfort to come at times, and think of the child that was once the light of our house, and the idol—ah! that I must own the secret of this sorrow—the *idol* of my heart.

And it is beyond all language to express the joy I feel, in the midst of tears, that my sin, in making an idol of the child, has not made that child less dear to Jesus. Nay, there is even something that tells me the Saviour called the darling from me, that I might love the Saviour more when I had one child less to love. He knoweth our frame; he knows the way to win and bind us. Dear Saviour, as thou hast my

lamb, give *me* too a place in thy bosom. Set me as a seal on thy heart.

And now let us go back to the house. It is strangely changed. It is silent and cheerless, gloomy even. When did I enter this door, without the greeting of those lips and eyes, that I shall greet no more? Can the absence of but one produce so great a change so soon? When one of the children was away on a visit, we did not feel the absence as we do now. That was for a time; this is for ever. He will not return. Hark! I thought for a moment it was the child, but it was only my own heart's yearning for the lost. He will not come again.

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Such thoughts as these have been the thoughts of many in the season of their first grief.

As heart answereth to the heart, there is a wondrous likeness in the sorrow of parents over the death of their little ones. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant are alike, when they sit by the side of their babes in the struggles of death; and when they follow them to the grave, their hearts are true to nature, and nature mourns when the loved are torn away.

One of the iron sort of men, a man of war, sent for me to come and see him in his affliction.

His child, a sweet girl of three or four years only, had been taken with the croup, and died before medical relief could be obtained. He met me in his hall, and fell on my neck, and wept like a child. I had never seen him weep before. I had never thought that such a man as he, had tears to shed. And I do not know that he would have wept, had the pestilence or the sword swept off all the rest of those whom he loved, and spared the infant that nestled in his bosom.

If this is a weakness to those who have never tasted the cup, I am sure that none of them will be offended with these words, for they will not read them till they are weeping too. To be a brother in sorrow, you must have suffered. Even the Lord of heaven had to become a man, that he might, by his experience, learn to bear our sorrows. And then he wept with those who wept.

Some time ago I was at the funeral of the child of a pastor ; and when the neighboring minister, who had been called upon to bury his brother's child, had closed his words of sympathy and comfort, the stricken father rose and said : " When I have sought to minister to your consolation in the times of your affliction, weeping with you over your dying children, you have often said to

me that I knew nothing of the anguish, and could not sympathize with you in your loss. I feel it now. I never did before." And then he pointed them to the sources of comfort that God was opening to his soul, and asked them to come to the fountain and drink. The house in which we were then assembled stood on a hill-side, overlooking a beautiful river, and, on the other side of it, "sweet fields stood drest in living green." The pastor went on to say — and there was a strange power and beauty, too, in the words as they fell from his lips in the midst of tears — "Often, as I have stood on the borders of this stream, and looked over to the fair fields on the other shore, I have felt but little interest in the people or the place in full view before me. The river separates me from them, and my thoughts and affections were here. But a few months ago, one of my children moved across to the other side, and took up his residence there. Since that time, my heart has been there also. In the morning, when I rise and look out toward the east, I think of my child who is over there, and again and again through the day I think of him, and the other side of the river is always in my thoughts with the child who is gone there to dwell. And now, since another of my children has crossed the river of

death, and has gone to dwell on the other side, my heart is drawn out toward heaven and the inhabitants of heaven as it was never drawn before. I supposed that heaven was dear to me; that my Father was there, and my friends were there, and that I had a great interest in heaven, but I *had no child there!* Now I have; and I never shall think of heaven, but with the memory of that dear child who is to be among its inhabitants for ever."

The Rev. Dr. Pye was called to part with two children, a son and a daughter. A few days afterwards, he wrote a letter as if it had come from the girl just after she had ceased to breathe, and a little before her brother's death. Here is an extract from the letter which he supposes his child to write:

"It was He who made us that called us away, and we cheerfully obeyed the summons; and I must now tell you, though you already know it, that he expects from you not only that you meekly and calmly submit to such a seemingly severe dispensation of his providence, but that you also rejoice with me in it, because it is the will and pleasure of our divine Father. I, young as I was, am now an inhabitant of heaven, and already see the beauty and harmony of that little

chain of events which related to my short abode in your world, and even the manner of my leaving it; and when you see the things as they really are, and not as they now appear, you will confess and adore the Divine goodness, even in taking us so soon from your embraces.

“Ask not why it has pleased God so early to remove us; we sufficiently answered the great end of our being, if, while living, at the same time that we gave you pleasure, you were disposed to lead us, by your examples and precepts, into the paths of virtue and religion; and if now, by the loss of us, you become examples of patience and submission to the Divine will.”

“Let, therefore, all the little incidents in our past lives, the remembrance of which is too apt to renew your sorrow, be so many occasions of your joy, inasmuch as they may recall the pleasant ideas you once delighted in; and let the dismaying and melancholy remembrance of our sickness and early death be changed into cheering and bright ideas of what we now enjoy, and what you, I hope, will one day see us in possession of.”

There was something very comforting in this thought, of the child departed sending back a message to the mourning parent. I doubt not

that children in heaven are astonished, if they know, that their parents here are grieving on their account. "If our parents only knew what we have gained, how soon they would dry their tears!"

The lady of Sir Stamford Raffles, in India, was overwhelmed with grief for the loss of a favorite child, unable to bear the sight of her other children, unable to bear even the light of day. She was lying upon her couch, with a feeling of desolation that was fast growing into despair, when she was addressed by a poor, ignorant woman, one of the natives, who had been employed in the nursery: "I am come," said the servant, "because you have been here many days shut up in a dark room, and no one dares to come near you. Are you not ashamed to grieve in this manner, when you ought to be thanking God for having given you the most beautiful child that ever was seen? Did any one ever see him or speak of him without admiring him? And, instead of letting this child continue in this world till he should be worn out with trouble and sorrow, has not God taken him to heaven in all his beauty? What would you have more? For shame! leave off weeping, and let me open a window."

It is not always wise to bid a mourner "leave

off weeping." Tears are sometimes good for the soul. That grief is very bitter which can not find tears. I have often wished that they would come, and relieve this dry and dreadful pressure on the heart. But if we do not cease to weep, by all means let us open the window. Let us have the light of God's countenance shining upon us like the sun at noon. To shut ourselves up in the dark to brood over our sorrows, is the worst of all remedies for grief. To cherish our afflictions, as if they were to be indulged, and petted, and kept fresh as long as possible, and as if it were wrong for us to go out into the world, and mingle in the duties and pleasures of social Christian life, is a sinful yielding to the power of a dispensation that was not designed to be thus received.

The pious Flavel says—and there is great wisdom in these words of his—"Mourner, whatever may be your grief for the death of your children, it might have been still greater for their life. Bitter experience once led a good man to say, 'It is better to weep for ten children dead, than for one living.' Remember the heart-piercing affliction of David, whose son sought his life. Your love for your children will hardly admit of the thought of such a thing as possible in your own case. They appeared innocent and amiable;

and you fondly believed that, through your care and prayers, they would have become the joy of your hearts. But parents much more frequently see the vices of their children than their virtues. And even should your children prove amiable and promising, you might live to be the wretched witness of their sufferings. Some parents have felt unutterable agonies of this kind. God may have taken the lamented objects of your affection from the evil to come."

A mother, suddenly convinced that her child was dying, sent for a man of God to come and pray for the child's life. "Shall I not pray," said he, "that the will of the Lord may be done, and that you may have strength to suffer all that holy will?" "No," she answered in the agony of her heart, "no, no! I want my child to live. Pray for his life, or do not pray at all." The child lived, and lived to be a man, a great man; but oh! how wicked—and to pierce his mother's heart with pangs of anguish which made that night almost a night of joy, when she would not let her infant die. We do not know from what our infants are saved, when they are saved from draining the cup of life.

"In another life," says Fenelon, "we shall see and understand the wonders of His goodness that

have escaped us in this ; and we shall rejoice at what has made us weep on earth. Alas ! in our present darkness, we can not see either our true good or evil. If God were to gratify our desires, it would be our ruin. He saves us by breaking the ties that bind us to earth. We complain because God loves us better than we know how to love ourselves. We weep because he has taken those whom we love away from temptation and sin. God takes the poisonous cup from our hands, and we weep as a child weeps when its mother takes away the shining weapon with which it would pierce its own breast.

“ Oh ! consider, ere you accuse Providence for the stroke, that this death, apparently so untimely, is possibly the greatest instance toward you both of the mercy and love of God. The creature so dear to you may have been taken from some sad reverse of fortune, or from the commission of some great crime, which might have endangered his salvation. To secure this, God has removed him from temptation. The pang of separation is indeed most bitter, yet our merciful Father does not needlessly afflict his creatures. He wounds only to heal the diseases of our souls. Let us, then, in the hour of our calamity, hold fast by this conviction, and say with

Job, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' His mercy can be my support here, and my recompense hereafter."

This is the spirit of Christian submission to the will of Heaven. With such a spirit is the grace that says: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." And this same holy Fenelon was called to the trial of his faith. Standing by the coffin of one whom he most tenderly loved, and for whom he would most cheerfully have died a thousand deaths, he cried:

"There he lies, and all my worldly happiness lies dead with him. But if the turning of a straw would call him back to life, I would not for ten thousand worlds be the turner of that straw, in opposition to the will of God."

"I have had six children," said Mr. Eliot, "and I bless God for his free grace, they are all with Christ, or in Christ; and my mind is now at rest concerning them. My desire was that they should have served Christ on earth; but if God will choose to have them serve him in heaven, I have nothing to object to it. His will be done."

Yes, I will say so likewise: His will be done. It is the best and wisest will; and though it does darken all my prospects, and disappoint a thousand cherished hopes, I know that He who has

done it doeth all things well. I can trust him for this, as I have never trusted him yet, when his promises have failed.

"I sincerely sympathize with you," says Dr. Erskine, to a friend who had lost an only son, "in your heavy trial. I have drunk deep of the same cup; of *nine sons*, only one survives. From what I repeatedly felt, I can form an idea what you must feel. I can not, I dare not say, weep not. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and surely he allows you to weep. But oh! let hope and joy mitigate your heaviness. I know not how this shall work for your good; but it is enough that God knows. He that said, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God,' excepts not from this promise the sorest trial. You devoted your son to God; you can not doubt that he accepted the surrender. If he has been hid in the chamber of the grave from the evil of sin and from the evil of suffering, let not your eye be evil, when God is good. What you chiefly wished for him, and prayed on his behalf, was spiritual and heavenly blessings. If the greatest thing you wished for is accomplished, at the season and in the manner Infinite Wisdom saw best, refuse not to be comforted. You know not what work and what

joy have been waiting for him in that other world."

An old tomb-stone bears this epitaph, and one might think an angel whispers it to a mourning mother's ear :

" Weep not, my mother, weep not ; I am blest,
But must leave heaven, if I *come to thee* ;
For I am where the weary are at rest,
The wicked cease from troubling. *Come to me.*"

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I know there are thousands of hearts that will read these chapters, not with sympathy only, but with comfort and sacred peace. There is scarcely a house in the world, into which the sorrow has not come which follows the death of a child. It is almost literally true—

" There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there ;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair."

The child is dead. Our child is dead. Let us now go to the book of God, and learn its lessons in the time of our affliction.

Can I bring him back again?

THE child of David, the bard and king, was dead. His son, his favorite son, his precious, well-beloved, best-beloved son was dead. For seven long, anxious days and nights, while the scale trembled in suspense, he had fasted and wept. Kings' children die :

“—————Death, with impartial fate,
Knocks at the palace door and cottage gate.”

The crown often rests on an aching head, and the royal purple covers a sad heart, when the messenger of the grave steals into the king's chamber, and stops the breath of his babes. It is so in ours.

The kind attendants of the stricken father reasoned wisely, as they reason who do not understand the power of true religion. They said among themselves : He was weeping and praying while the child was yet alive ; how he will vex himself, how much greater will be his anguish, now the child is dead !

They mistook the man. They judged him by their own standard, and were wrong. The pious

father drew from a deeper fountain, and found waters they knew not of. He reasoned on other principles than those which lie on the surface of things, and he was strengthened.

He saw the servants whispering, and thought it was probably all over with the child. It was a sign that death was in the house, when even the servants would not speak above their breath. The dead can not hear, but the living are still when death is at hand.

And David asked, "Is the child dead?"

And they answered, "He is dead."

Then David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and *came into the house of the Lord*, AND WORSHIPPED.

Then he came to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. And the servants were filled with wonder that a father thus stricken with grief should so suddenly find comfort in his sorrow; and they said unto him:

"What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst arise and eat bread."

And David answered: "While the child was

yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

“*Can I bring him back again?*” A sad inquiry. *Can I bring him back again?* Not *Would I?* Perhaps he would. Perhaps we would. But *CAN I?* Had tears availed to save, the child would not have died. Had prayer prevailed, the boy would yet be living, the joy of his parents’ hearts, and the light of their eyes. But he is dead. He is gone. Could human skill avert the death-blow, he would have been saved. But all was done that skill could do, and yet he died. And there he lies. Can I bring him to life again? I may weep, but my tears fall on his icy brow, and he feels them not. His heart is still. He breathes no more. The love and wit of men are alike in vain to restore the spirit of this lifeless clay. Speak to it, and it hears not. Kiss it, and its lips are cold. Press it to your bosom, and it is not warmed. The child is dead, dead; and can I bring it back again? Ah! if I could! If rivers of waters running down my eyes, if oceans of tears would float his spirit back to this deserted shell that once was animated with his precious

soul, I would weep day and night for my departed.

But it is fruitless. And it is not the part of a rational being to expend the energies of his nature on that which avails him nothing. This may be the least and lowest source of comfort that reason offers to a mind distressed, but it is the dictate of wisdom, and grace adds its sanctions to the conclusion forced upon us by the law of nature. It is the will of God, and we can not change the purpose if we would.

We can not bring him back again. *Then and therefore* let us lay his ashes in their kindred dust, close the green turf over his mouldering form, and turn to the Book of God for consolation in the day of our calamity.

He is not lost, though gone.

It is clearly revealed that God employs the spirits whom he has made, to minister unto those whom he delights to tend with peculiar care. With the mode of angelic or spiritual intercourse, we are not acquainted. That disembodied spirits,

the evil and the good, are permitted to reach our minds and exert a power on our spirits, is not to be doubted, though we may be unable to respond to that influence, and, at the moment of its communication, may be unconscious of its presence.

“Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.” And we believe, with many others, that if we were suddenly divested of this mortal, we should find ourselves in a vast amphitheatre, reaching to the throne of God, filled with spirits, the unseen witnesses, the clouds of witnesses with whom we are encompassed continually. There is a place where the Most High dwells in light that no man can approach ; where the darkness of excessive brightness hangs over and around his throne, making *heaven*, as heaven is not elsewhere in the universe of God. But neither time nor place may with propriety be affirmed of spiritual existence. When Gabriel leaves his throne to execute the high behests of the Almighty, there is no intervening time or space between his departure and his presence, where his work is to be done. We use the terms that are adapted to our mode of existence, and are lost when we attempt to express the life of those whose nature is in another scale and order of beings than our own.

It is, therefore, scriptural and rational to suppose that the spirits of our departed friends are around us by day and night; not away from God: his presence fills immensity; he is everywhere present. If an angel or the soul of a saint should take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, there to be with us or with those we love, even there the gracious presence of God would dwell, and the sanctified would find *heaven* as blessed and glorious as in the temple of which the Lamb is the light.

We must be near to one another, to see and be seen, to hear and be heard. Our bodily organs are of necessity restricted, and hence we have the impression that spirits must be bound by the same fetters. But this is an illusion that vanishes, when we reflect that speech, and sound, and sight are attributes belonging to spirits only to accommodate us in our conception of communication with them. *Thought* is the language of the soul. Words are needed to convey that thought through the organs of the body to another soul. If there were no intervening body, I know not that the soul has any need of words. Sympathy is doubtless felt through all the spiritual world, without those channels of intelligence that we must open and explore. There is joy among the

angels when a sinner repents, or a saint expires, long before the news is whispered from throne to throne, through the palaces of the skies. The thrill is more than electric. It is instant and everywhere in the empire of holy mind.

If, then, there is such conscious sympathy among the spirits of the blest, who will deny that they, whose angels do always behold the face of the Father, are also conversant with those whom they have left on earth? The dead are with us and around us, and though gone, are not lost. Wherever, in the world of spirits, God may have fixed the habitation of his throne, it is right to believe that his essential presence is everywhere, and his saints are where they can be the happiest, and best perform his high and holy will.

All this proceeds upon the doctrine, that the souls of infants do immediately pass into glory, when released from the prison of the flesh. This truth is too plainly taught in the Holy Scriptures, and is too firmly rooted in the human heart, to be doubted. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," was said by Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The royal prophet evidently recognized this truth, when he comforted himself by the assurance that he

should meet his child again. To me it has always been a delightful truth, that these little ones are, in great kindness, transplanted to a more congenial clime, and spared the ills that they must meet and buffet in a world of sin. So that I have often said, "I thank God when an infant dies." But this is gratitude felt only when the children of others die.

Yet it is a blessed thought, that when one of our children dies in infancy, it sleeps in Jesus. We are sure of one in heaven. The rest may grow up in sin, and die in sin, and be lost, but one is safe. Thanks to God, the lost is found, the dead is alive. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "They only can be said to possess a child for ever, who have lost one in infancy."

Infinite Wisdom took him away.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." The truth of this we feel when clouds and darkness

hang around the throne. And then we listen again, and the same voice adds: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Nothing but infinite presumption would challenge the wisdom of the Divine decrees. What is man, that he should venture to doubt that He who knows all things from the beginning, before whom the future, with all its changes, is for ever present, better understands than we what is the most for his glory, and the good of his government? Could we behold the varied and benign results that, in his providence and grace, are to be the fruit of those events which we regard as painfully undesirable; could we see the glory that they will bring eventually to Him whose glory is the ultimate and righteous object of all that is, so that around the death of an infant, or around the fall of an empire, cluster considerations that bear upon the joys of saints, and the services of angels, and the honor of Him who sitteth in the heavens, God over all, we would not merely acquiesce in the *dispensation*, but we should rejoice in it with joy unspeakable. It is often the severest portion of our afflictions, that we can not see why they are sent upon us. Our

faith is demanded, that we may believe where we can not see. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." That faith is grounded on our knowledge that He who orders all our ways is too wise to be mistaken. His purposes are eternal. When this earth shall have become wearied with rolling, and all the stars have fallen from their places, away in the future, millions of ages beyond the judgment of the great day, the death of a babe in the house will be working out its results in the eternal purposes of God. We may not *see* till then, perhaps not then. How far off it may be, none can tell. But it is all right, and we shall find it to be so hereafter. It requires no very *exalted* order of *faith* to adopt this sentiment, and let the soul lie down on it confidingly, and look up trustingly, and smile serenely, when the hand of God presses heavily.

Oh! let my trembling soul be still,
While darkness veils this mortal eye,
And wait thy wise, Thy holy will,
Wrapped yet in tears and mystery.
I can not, Lord, thy purpose see ;
Yet all is well, since ruled by thee.

Thus, trusting in thy love, I tread
The narrow path of duty on.
What though some cherished joys are fled?
What though some flattering dreams are gone?
Yet purer, brighter joys remain:
Why should my spirit then complain?

Infinite Love called the Child.

“LIKE as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”

The sovereignty of God we are bound, as his creatures, to acknowledge and adore. He has a right to do with his own what he will; and when to this we join his wisdom, it is easy to construct an argument that compels submission. So the afflicted father, whose example is our theme, was affected when he said: “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.” And then he cried out, under the same emotion, “Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thy hand.” This is not the high

est style of Christian confidence. It is right; but it is not the sweet and joyous trust of him who rose from the earth when his child was dead, and washed, and changed his apparel, and went into the house of God and worshipped. He is not only our God, he is our FATHER. He taught us by the lips of his Son to call him our Father; and "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. "We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

We have chastened our own children. We did it not in anger, much less in malice, or with a desire to do an injury to the one we loved. And when our Father's hand is laid on us, it is surely our duty to bear in mind that his love for his children infinitely excels our love for those who climb on our knees and hang on our necks. Oh! was it not love that gave the child; that gave us such a child; that made it lovely in our eyes, clothing it with beauty as with a garment, and shedding upon its form and spirit those gentle, winning ways that wound about our hearts,

and rendered the object of our affections just the child whom we would wish to keep? We blessed God for giving. But it is the same God who hath taken away. He never changes. And *faith* assures us that it is greater *love* that takes than gives. Was not the lamb his own? And did he not gather it to his own bosom? If he had not loved it, he would not have taken it. Was it not his own jewel? And did he not set it as a gem in his own crown? Let the thought of murmuring be rebuked by the following beautiful story from the Mishna of the Rabbins:

“During the absence of the Rabbi Meir, his two sons died, both of them of uncommon beauty, and enlightened in the divine law. His wife bore them to her chamber, and laid them upon her bed. When Rabbi Meir returned, his first inquiry was for his sons. His wife reached to him a goblet; he praised the Lord at the going out of the Sabbath, drank, and again asked, ‘Where are my sons?’ ‘They are not far off,’ she said, placing food before him that he might eat. He was in a genial mood, and when he had said grace after meat, she thus addressed him: ‘Rabbi, with thy permission, I would fain propose to thee one question.’ ‘Ask it then, my love,’ replied he. ‘A few days ago, a person in-

trusted some jewels to my custody, and now he demands them; should I give them back to him?' 'This is a question,' said the Rabbi, 'which my wife should not have thought it necessary to ask. What! wouldst thou hesitate or be reluctant to restore to every one his own?' 'No,' she replied, 'but yet I thought it best not to restore them without acquainting thee therewith.' She then led him to the chamber, and, stepping to the bed, took the white covering from the dead bodies. 'Ah! my sons, my sons,' loudly lamented their father. 'My sons! the light of my eyes, and the light of my understanding: I was your father, but you were my teachers in the law.' The mother turned away and wept bitterly. At length she took her husband by the hand and said: 'Rabbi, didst thou not teach me that we must not be reluctant to restore that which was intrusted to our keeping? See; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' 'Blessed be the name of the Lord,' echoed the Rabbi, 'and blessed be his holy name for ever.'"

We should esteem it a mark of honor and peculiar regard, if the king should choose one of our children to be taken into his family, and trained for the throne. There are thousands of

little children besides ours, whom God might have taken, if he had been pleased ; but he loved ours so much, and loved us so much, that he came into our humble household, and gently bore away from our arms our infant child, and took him into his own family, and placed him among the brightest and best, and made him a king. There is love in that—precious love—a Father's love.

There is love in thus chastising us when we wander, and He would draw us back. I have seen a shepherd striving to drive his flock into the fold, while they would refuse to enter, and prefer to run off into the highways, where they were in danger of being torn and lost. At length, when wearied with efforts to urge them in, he takes a lamb into his arms, and folds it gently in his bosom, and walks into the inclosure, while the mother follows, and the whole flock come on, and are soon folded in the place of safety and peace. So have I seen a family whom God would win to his house and home in heaven ; but they became worldly-minded, and wandered away among the dangerous paths of a deceitful, unsatisfying earth ; and when his calls and commands had been lost upon them, he has taken their lamb, their pet lamb, their youngest child,

and laid it in his own bosom ; and then, oh ! then, how readily the mother and all the little flock have followed him to the gate of the celestial city, into which he has entered with their darling in his arms !

It was love, infinite love, that ordered such a plan ; and it will be felt the more, the more the heart is softened, and the eyes are opened to behold the hand that does it.

“ Before I was afflicted, I went astray.” “ It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” So David was able to say while yet in the house of his pilgrimage ; and so shall we say, if not now, when we come to sit down by the river of the water of life, our children with us, broken households reunited, and talk over the trials of the way by which we have been led, and admire and adore the grace that directed the blow that laid our early hopes in ruins, blasted our fond domestic joys, buried our babes, and broke our hearts.

The Child is happier now.

WE desire our children's happiness; we pray and labor for it; we are willing to make great sacrifices of our comfort to secure it for them. In sickness, we forget our own health and lives for the sake of theirs. We watch them, and toil for them, and would die for them. We more than die for them sometimes.

And if we grieve when their happiness calls them from us, our grief is selfish; it is for ourselves, and not for them, we mourn. But we should not mourn, if we knew what he has gained whom we have lost. Instantly on being released from the body, the spirit of the infant returns to God who gave it. Endowed with capacities that, if permitted to expand and improve on earth, would in fifty years, perhaps, have made him wiser than Newton, or Plato, or Solomon, it rushes into the mysteries of the Divine Mind, and, on wings of thought such as angels use in rising into the regions of knowledge that pass all understanding, he begins his flight, and stretches onward and right onward for ever. He never tires. No weakness, no sickness, no pain, to

make him pause or falter in his upward way. He bears himself into the presence of the Omniscient, becomes a disciple in the school of Christ, flies on with Moses, and David, and John, and learns from them the wonderful things of heaven, the mysteries of the kingdom ; and thus, ever advancing, he rises nearer and still nearer to the comprehension of Him who is still infinitely above and beyond his last and loftiest reach. And what a change is this ! Yesterday, an infant in his mother's arms, or a child amused with a rattle or a straw ; to-day, a seraph in the midst of seraphim, burning with excessive glory in the presence of God.

Happiness is the fruit of holiness. Washed in the blood of the everlasting covenant, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, he is now among the holy, as happy as any who are there. Those faculties of mind, expanded in the atmosphere of heaven, are employed in the praise of that grace that called him so soon from Nature's darkness into the glorious light of *eternity* ; the gloom of sin scarce shading the brightness of his rising sun, before the noon of heaven burst upon him. As if an angel had lost his way, and for a few days had wandered among the sons of men, till his companions suddenly discovered him in this

wilderness, and caught him, and bore him off to his native residence among the blessed ; so the child is taken kindly in the morning of its wanderings, and gathered among the holy, and brought home to his Father's house. How pure his spirit now ; how happy he is now !

“Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there
Around my Saviour stand ;”

and among them I behold the infant forms of those whose little graves were wet with the tears of parental love. I hear their infant voices in the song. Do you see in the midst of that bright and blessed throng the child you mourn ? I ask not now if you would call him back again. I fear you would ! But I ask you, “*What would tempt him back again ?*” Bring out the playthings that he loved on earth, the toys that filled his childish heart with gladness, and pleased him on the nursery-floor, the paradise that was ever bright when he smiled within it ; hold them up, and ask him to throw away his harp, and leave the side of his new-found friends, and the bosom of his Saviour ; and would he come, to be a boy again, to live and laugh and love again, to sicken, suffer, die, and *perhaps* be lost ! I think he would stay. I think I would shut the door if I saw him coming.

A father, who had buried the youngest of three boys, exclaims, in words familiar :

“ I can not tell what form is his,
What look he weareth now,
Nor guess how bright a glory crowns
His shining seraph-brow.

“ The thoughts that fill his sinless soul,
The bliss that he doth feel,
Are numbered with the secret things
Which God doth not reveal.

“ But I know—for God hath told me this—
That now he is at rest,
Where other blessed infants are,
On their loving Saviour’s breast.

“ Whate’er befalls his brethren twain,
His bliss can never cease ;
Their lot may here be grief and pain,
But his is perfect peace.

“ It may be that the tempter’s wiles
Their souls from bliss can sever ;
But if our own poor faith fail not,
He must be ours for ever.

“ When we think of what our darling is,
And what he still must be ;
When we think on that world’s perfect bliss
And this world’s misery ;

“ When we groan beneath this load of sin,
And feel this grief and pain ;
Oh ! we’d rather lose our other two,
Than have him here again.”

We shall see him again.

“I SHALL go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

“Shall we know our friends in heaven?” is a question that I will not here discuss. It is to my mind obvious that the personality of each of us is to be preserved distinctly in the world to come; and whether the ties that are formed on earth are to be reünited and perpetuated there, or not, we shall undoubtedly recognize the spirit allied to our own, and that once breathed the same vital air with us. Those who have died in Christ, the Saviour will bring with him; and those who wait his appearance shall meet those they loved, when they come in the air with their glorified Lord.

Very true it is, that the Lamb in the midst of the throne is the chief attraction of heaven, and that all eyes and all hearts will turn toward him with infinite longings that are never satisfied.

A pious young man, of ardent filial affection, buried his beloved mother, and afterwards was frequently heard to say, that one of the chief pleasures he anticipated in the prospect of hea-

ven was meeting again his sainted mother. But that young man, on his death-bed, was heard to say: "It seems to me, if I am so happy as to enter heaven, that I shall wish to spend a thousand years, before I think of any thing else, in looking upon my Saviour."

Yes, blessed Saviour; and in thy bosom nestles the lamb from our fold. We can not look at thee, without beholding him. We can not think of him, without remembering thy sweet words: "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

It is not, then, the illusion of fancy, it is the dictate of Christian faith, to look toward the holy city, and within its gates of pearl to see the little one that has been taken from us, now a pure beatified spirit, robed in celestial beauty, with a crown on his head, and a harp in his hand, beckoning us to come up thither.

Oh! it was sweet to hear his voice in the glee of infancy; to feel his lips as they pressed the fount of life, or met our own in the kiss of parental love; to listen to his infant prayer, or his gentle murmur, when we hummed the evening lullaby.

"His presence was like sunshine,
Sent down to gladden earth;
To comfort us in all our griefs,
And sweeten all our mirth."

But he is brighter, fairer, happier there ; and we shall soon rejoin him in our Father's house, a reunited family, all the more blessed because we have been for a little while separated, and then we shall part no more for ever. This is the comfort of faith, the assurance of hope ; and when we come to sit down in the mansions on high, with our children around us, those children over whose early graves we wept in bitterness, we shall be amazed to think how short has been the separation, and how blessed the love that ordered the parting, and permitted the meeting, in the presence of God.

“ Oh ! when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrows, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight ? ”

P o e m s .

THAT name! how often every day

We spake it and we heard;

It was to us, 'mid tasks or play,

A common household word.

'Tis breathéd yet, that name; but oh!

How solemn now the sound!

One of the sanctities which throw

Such awe our homes around.

TRENCH.

Poems on the Death of Little Children.

L i t t l e M a r y .

FROM the group of little faces
 One is gone—
In the old familiar places
 Sad and lone,
Father, Mother, meek-eyed Brother,
 Sit and moan.

Sit and moan for one departed,
 Pure and mild,
Little Mary, gentle-hearted,
 Sinless child—
And as nestling memories thicken,
 Griefs grow wild.

Home once bright how cold and dreary !
 Shadows deep
Fall on forms and hearts aweary,
 Eyes that weep—
Thought is in the church-yard seeking
 One asleep.

Still the merry laugh deceiving
 Fills the ear,
Tiny arms yet fondly cleaving
 Dry the tear;
Foot-falls, silvery foot-falls, patter
 Far and near.

Ears instinctive, pause to hearken,
 All in vain—
Days drag on and skies shall darken
 O'er with pain,
But the heart will find its lost one
 Ne'er again!

From the treasured fire-side faces
 Here to-day,
From the tender warm embraces,
 Dropped away,
Sleeps she 'mid forgotten sleepers
 In the clay.

Ah! what weary numbers sighing
 To be free,
Little Mary, would be lying
 Low with thee!
Where no care nor eating sorrow
 E'er shall be.

Weep not when ye tell the story
 Of the dead—
'Tis a sunbeam joined the Glory
 Overhead!
“For of such sweet babes is heaven,”
 Jesus said.

MY CHILD.

I CAN not make him dead !
His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study-chair ;
Yet, when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes—he is not there !

I walk my parlor-floor,
And, through the open door,
I hear a foot-fall on the chamber-stair ;
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call ;
And then bethink me that—he is not there !

I tread the crowded street ;
A satcheled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes and colored hair ;
And as he's running by,
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that—he is not there !

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin-lid :
Closed are his eyes, cold is his forehead fair ;
My hand that marble felt ;
O'er it in prayer I knelt ;
Yet my heart whispers that—he is not there !

I can not make him dead !
When passing by the bed,
So long watched over with parental care,
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that—he is not there ;

When at the cool, gray break
Of day, from sleep I wake,
With my first breathing of the morning air,
My soul goes up with joy,
To Him who gave my boy,
Then comes the sad thought that—he is not there

When at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I'm with his mother offering up our prayer,
Or evening anthems tuning,
In spirit I'm communing
With our boy's spirit, though—he is not there !

Not there !—Where, then, is he ?
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that he used to wear !
The grave, that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked : he not there !

He lives !—In all the past
He lives ; nor, to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair.
In dreams I see him now,
And, on his angel-brow,
I see it written : “Thou shalt see me there !”

Yes, we all live to God !
Father, thy chastening rod
So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That in the spirit-land,
Meeting at thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find that—Thou art there !

PIERPONT.

Hers was a Mother's Heart.

HERS was a mother's heart,
That poor Egyptian's, when she drew apart
Because she would not see
Her child beloved in its last agony ;

When her sad load she laid,
In her despair, beneath the scanty shade
In the wild waste, and stepped
Aside, and long and passionately wept.

Yet higher, more sublime,
How many a mother since that ancient time,
Has shown the mighty power
Of love divine, in such another hour !

Oh ! higher love to wait
Fast by the sufferer in his worst estate,
Nor from the eyes to hide
One pang, but aye in courage to abide.

And though no angel bring
In that dark hour unto a living spring
Of gladness—as was sent,
Stilling her voice of turbulent lament—

Oh ! higher faith to show
Out of what depths of anguish and of woe
The heart is strong to raise
To an all-loving Father hymns of praise.

TRENCH.

A Sunbeam and a Shadow.

I.

I HEAR a shout of merriment,
A laughing boy I see ;
Two little feet the carpet press,
And bring the child to me.

Two little arms are round my neck,
Two feet upon my knee :
How fall the kisses on my cheek ;
How sweet they are to me !

II.

That merry shout no more I hear,
No laughing child I see ;
No little arms are round my neck,
Nor feet upon my knee !

No kisses drop upon my cheek ;
Those lips are sealed to me.
Dear Lord, how could I give him up
To any but to Thee !

R.

The Child of James Melville.

BORN, JULY 9, 1586. DIED ABOUT JANUARY, 1588.

This page, if thou be a pater [parent, father] that reads it, thou wilt apardone me ; if nocht, suspend thy censure till thou be a father, as said the grave Lacedæmonian, Agesilaus.—*Autobiography of James Melville.*

ONE time my soul was pierced as with a sword,
Contending still with men untaught and wild,
When He who to the prophet lent his gourd,
Gave me the solace of a pleasant child.

A summer gift my precious flower was given ;
A very summer fragrance was its life ;
Its clear eyes soothed me as the blue of heaven
When home I turned, a weary man of strife.

With unformed laughter, musically sweet,
How soon the wakening babe would meet my kiss ;
With outstretched arms its care-wrought father greet :
Oh ! in the desert what a spring was this !

A few short months it blossomed near my heart ;
A few short months—else toilsome all and sad ;
But that home solace nerved me for my part,
And of the babe I was exceeding glad !

Alas! my pretty bud, scarce formed, was dying—
 (The prophet's gourd, it withered in a night!)
And He who gave me all, my heart's pulse trying,
 Took gently home the child of my delight.

Not rudely culled—not suddenly it perished,
 But gradual faded from our love away!
As if still, secret dew, its life that cherished,
 Were drop by drop withheld, and day by day!

My blessed Master saved me from repining,
 So tenderly he sued me for his own;
So beautiful he made my babe's declining,
 Its dying blessed me as its birth had done!

And daily to my board at noon and even
 Our fading flower I bade his mother bring,
That we might commune of our rest in heaven,
 Gazing the while on death without its sting.

And of the ransom for that baby paid,
 So very sweet at times our converse seemed,
That the sure truth of grief a gladness made—
 Our little lamb by God's own Lamb redeemed!

There were two milk-white doves my wife had nour-
 ished;

And I too loved, erewhile, at times to stand,
Marking how each the other fondly cherished,
 And fed them from my baby's dimpled hand!

So tame they grew, that, to his cradle flying,
 Full oft they cooed him to his noon-tide rest;
And to the murmurs of his sleep replying,
 Crept gently in, and nestled in his breast.

'Twas a fair sight—the snow-pale infant sleeping,
So fondly guarded by those creatures mild;
Watch o'er his closed eyes their bright eyes keeping :
Wondrous the love betwixt the birds and child !

Still, as he sickened, seemed the doves too dwining,
Forsook their food, and loathed their pretty play ;
And on the day he died, with sad note pining,
One gentle bird would not be frayed away.

His mother found it, when she rose sad-hearted,
At early dawn, with sense of nearing ill ;
And when, at last, the little spirit parted,
The dove died too, as if of its heart's chill !

The other flew to meet my sad home-riding,
As with a human sorrow in its coo—
To my dead child and its dead mate then guiding,
Most pitifully plained, and parted too !

'Twas my first “hansel”* and “propine”† to Heaven :
And as I laid my darling 'neath the sod—
Precious His comforts—once an infant given,
And offered with two turtle-doves to God !

MRS. A. STUART MENTEATH.

* Present.

† Earnest, pledge.

The Mission of the Angel of Death.

“Go forth,” said the Heavenly Father,
To one of his seraph-train ;

“Go forth on an errand of mercy
To the world of trouble and pain ;

“And away from earth’s noxious vapors
Some buds of beauty bring,
To bloom in the heavenly gardens,
’Neath the smiles of perpetual spring.”

And the angel, with wings resplendent,
Went out from the heavenly band,
’Midst a chorus of joyful voices,
Resounding at God’s right hand.

Slowly night’s gathering shadows
Closed round a mother mild,
Who tearful, and heavy-hearted,
Watched by her dying child.

Fevered, and restless, and moaning,
On his little bed he lay,
When the bright-winged angel drew near him,
And kissed his last breath away.

So softly the chain was severed
So gently was staid the breath—
It soothed the heart of the mourner
And she blessed the angel of death.

For she knew that the soul of her darling
Had gone to his Saviour above—
Clasped in the arms more tender
Then even her fondest love.

JENETT.

Little Bessie :

AND THE WAY IN WHICH SHE FELL ASLEEP.

Hug me closer, closer, mother,
Put your arms around me tight ;
I am cold and tired, mother,
And I feel so strange to-night !
Something hurts me here, dear mother,
Like a stone upon my breast ;
Oh ! I wonder, wonder, mother,
Why it is I can not rest !

All the day, while you were working,
As I lay upon my bed,
I was trying to be patient,
And to think of what you said ;
How the kind and blessed Jesus
Loves his lambs to watch and keep ;
And I wished he'd come and take me
In his arms, that I might sleep.

Just before the lamp was lighted,
Just before the children came,
While the room was very quiet,
I heard some one call my name.

All at once the window opened ;
In a field were lambs and sheep ;
Some from out a brook were drinking,
Some were lying fast asleep.

But I could not see the Saviour,
Though I strained my eyes to see ;
And I wondered, if he saw me,
Would he speak to such as me.
In a moment I was looking
On a world so bright and fair,
Which was full of little children,
And they seemed so happy there !

They were singing, oh ! how sweetly !
Sweeter songs I never heard ;
They were singing sweeter, mother,
Than the sweetest singing-bird.
And while I my breath was holding,
ONE, so bright, upon me smiled ;
And I knew it must be Jesus,
When he said, " Come here, my child.

" Come up here, my little Bessie,
Come up here and live with me,
Where the children never suffer,
But are happier than you see !"
Then I thought of all you'd told me
Of that bright and happy land :
I was going when you called me,
When you came and kissed my hand.

And at first I felt so sorry
You had called me : I would go
Oh ! to sleep and never suffer !
Mother, don't be crying so !
Hug me closer, closer, mother,
Put your arms around me tight ;
Oh ! how much I love you, mother,
But I feel so strange to-night !

And the mother pressed her closer
To her overburdened breast ;
On the heart so near to breaking
Lay the heart so near its rest.
At the solemn hour of midnight,
In the darkness calm and deep,
Lying on her mother's bosom.
Little Bessie fell asleep.

R.

The Little Sleeper.

No mother's eye beside thee wakes to-night,
No taper burns beside thy lonely bed,
Darkling thou liest, hidden out of sight,
And none are near thee but the silent dead.

How cheerly glows this hearth, yet glows in vain,
For we uncheered beside it sit alone,
And listen to the wild and beating rain
In angry gusts against our casement blown.

And though we nothing speak, yet well I know
That both our hearts are there, where thou dost keep
Within thy narrow chamber far below,
For the first time unwatched, thy lonely sleep.

Oh ! no, not thou !—and we our faith deny,
This thought allowing : thou, removed from harms,
In Abraham's bosom dost securely lie,
Oh ! not in Abraham's, in a Saviour's arms—

In that dear Lord's, who in thy worst distress,
Thy bitterest anguish, gave thee, dearest child,
Still to abide in perfect gentleness,
And like an angel to be meek and mild.

Sweet corn of wheat, committed to the ground
To die, and live, and bear more precious ear,
While in the heart of earth thy Saviour found
His place of rest, for thee we will not fear.

Sleep softly, till that blessed rain and dew,
Down lighting upon earth, such change shall bring
That all its fields of death shall laugh anew—
Yea, with a living harvest laugh and sing.

TRENCH.

Little Lucy,

AND THE SONG SHE SANG.

I.

A LITTLE child, six summers old,
So thoughtful and so fair,
There seemed about her pleasant ways
A more than childish air,
Was sitting on a summer eve
Beneath a spreading tree,
Intent upon an ancient book,
Which lay upon her knee.

She turned each page with careful hand,
And strained her sight to see,
Until the drowsy shadows slept
Upon the grassy lea ;
Then closed the book, and upward looked,
And straight began to sing
A simple verse of hopeful love—
This very childish thing :
“ While here below, how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story,
And then, though grace, to see His face,
And live with him in glory !”

II.

That little child, one dreary night
Of winter-wind and storm,
Was tossing on a weary couch
Her weak and wasted form ;

And in her pain, and in its pause,
But clasped her hands in prayer—
(Strange that we had no thoughts of heaven
While hers were only there)—

Until she said : “ O mother dear,
How sad you seem to be !
Have you forgotten that HE said,
‘ Let children come to me ’ ?
Dear mother, bring the blessed Book,
Come, mother, let us sing.”
And then again, with faltering tongue,
She sung that childish thing :
“ While here below, how sweet to know
His wondrous love and story,
And then, through grace, to see His face,
And live with him in glory !”

III.

Underneath a spreading tree
A narrow mound is seen,
Which first was covered by the snow,
Then blossomed into green ;
Here first I heard that childish voice
That sings on earth no more ;
In heaven it hath a richer tone,
And sweeter than before :
For those who know His love below—
So runs the wondrous story—
In heaven, through grace, shall see his face
And dwell with him in glory !

The Good Shepherd.

WHEN on my ear your loss was knelled,
And tender sympathy upburst,
A little rill from memory swelled,
Which once had soothed my bitter thirst.

*And I was fain to bear to you
Some portion of its mild relief,
That it might be as healing dew,
To steal some fever from your grief.

After our child's untroubled breath
Up to the Father took its way,
And on our home the shade of death,
Like a long twilight, haunting lay ;

And friends came round with us to weep
Her little spirit's swift remove,
This story of the Alpine sheep
Was told to us by one we love :

"They in the valley's sheltering care
Soon crop the meadow's tender prime,
And when the sod grows brown and bare,
The Shepherd strives to make them climb

"To airy shelves of pasture green,
That hang along the mountain's side,
Where grass and flowers together lean,
And down through mists the sunbeams slide.

“ But naught can tempt the timid things
The steep and rugged path to try,
Though sweet the Shepherd calls and sings,
And seared below the pastures lie,

“ Till in his arms the lambs he takes,
Along the dizzy verge to go ;
Then, heedless of the rifts and breaks,
They follow on o’er rock and snow.

“ And in those pastures lifted fair,
More dewy soft than lowland mead,
The Shepherd drops his tender care,
And sheep and lambs together feed.”

This parable, by Nature breathed,
Blew on me as the south wind free
O’er frozen brooks, that float, unsheathed
From icy thraldom, to the sea.

A blissful vision through the night
Would all my happy senses sway,
Of the Good Shepherd on the height,
Or climbing up the stony way,

Holding our little lamb asleep ;
And like the burden of the sea
Sounded that voice along the deep,
Saying, “ Arise and follow me.”

MARIA LOWELL.

The Little Boy that Died.

I AM all alone in my chamber now,
And the midnight hour is near ;
And the faggot's crack and the clock's dull tick
Are the only sounds I hear ;
And over my soul in its solitude,
Sweet feelings of sadness glide,
For my heart and my eyes are full when I think
Of the little boy that died.

I went one night to my father's house,
Went home to the dear ones all,
And softly I opened the garden-gate,
And softly the door of the hall.
My mother came out to meet her son—
She kissed me, and then she sighed,
And her head fell on my neck, and she wept
For the little boy that died.

I shall miss him when the flowers come,
In the garden where he played ;
I shall miss him more by the fire-side,
When the flowers have all decayed.
I shall see his toys and his empty chair,
And the horse he used to ride ;
And they will speak with a silent speech,
Of the little boy that died.

We shall go home to our Father's house—
To our Father's house in the skies,
Where the hope of our souls shall have no blight,
Our love no broken ties.
We shall roam on the banks of the river of peace,
And bathe in its blissful tide ;
And one of the joys of our heaven shall be
The little boy that died.

CHALMERS.

“O MOURNER ! who, with tender love,
Hast wept beside some infant grave,
Hast thou not sought a Friend above,
Who died thy little one to save ?

“Then lift thy weary weeping eye
Above the waves that round thee swell ;
Is not thy darling safe on high ?
Canst thou not whisper, It is well ?

“Yes, it is well—though never more
His infant form to earth be given ;
He rests where sin and grief are o'er,
And thou shalt meet thy child in heaven.”

Little Willie's Last Words.

'SURELY JESUS CHRIST DIED TO SAVE US.'

THE Sabbath-day was nearly spent,
The week that Willie died,
And o'er his pillow still we bent,
Or kneeling at his side
We watched the waves that came and went
In life's fast-ebbing tide.

Through all the silent hours—the deep,
Deep silence of our woe—
We watched, with eyes that could not weep,
The parting spirit go ;
We heard the moanings of his sleep,
His breathing faint and slow.

But ere his upward flight he took,
The fevered slumber broke ;
His mind the troubled dream forsook ;
Our dying Willie woke ;
And with an earnest heavenward look,
These precious words he spoke :

“The blessed Jesus surely died
To save us from our sin.”
He said no more, nor turned aside
His gaze, that pierced within
Those gates of glory opened wide,
Where soon he entered in.

I thank thee, Father ! Lord of light,
That, hidden from the wise,
Thou hast revealed to infant sight
The secrets of the skies.
Yea, Father ! even so, for right
It seemeth in thine eyes.

I thank and praise, O Saviour Christ !
Thy mercy rich and free,
That six short cloudless years sufficed
To bring our child to thee ;
Thus early to thine arms enticed,
Suffered thy face to see.

And when the holy and the just,
Who taketh what he gave,
Shall call me to that sacred dust
Reposing in the grave,
Be mine as sure and simple trust
That Jesus died to save.

C. W. B.

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

WHEREFORE should I make my moan,
Now the darling child is dead ?
He to rest is early gone,
He to paradise is fled !
I shall go to him, but he
Never shall return to me.

God forbids his longer stay,
God recalls the precious loan !
He hath taken him away,
From my bosom to his own.
Surely what he wills is best ;
Happy in his will I rest.

Faith cries out, " It is the Lord !
Let him do what seems him good :
Be thy holy name adored,
Take the gift a while bestowed ;
Take the child, no longer mine ;
Thine he is, for ever thine !"

CHARLES WESLEY.

L e t u s p r a y .

LORD, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchéd grounds refresh, as with a shower !
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower ;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear :
We kneel, how weak !—we rise, how full of power !
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ?

TRENCH.

"As one whom his Mother comforteth."

BENIGHTED on a lone and dreary wild,
Perplexed, exhausted, helpless, in despair,
I cast me down, and thought to perish there,
When through the gloom a face appeared and smiled;
And a sweet voice said: "Courage! rise, my child!
And I will guide thee safely on thy way."
As to night-watchers comes the morning ray,
So came that voice to me; and on that face
I seemed a loving tenderness to trace,
That soothed and cheered me as, forlorn, I lay;
I felt as feels the child whose throbbing grief
A mother's love assuages in its source;
And asking strength of Him who gave relief,
I straightway rose, and onward held my course.

W. L. ALEXANDER.