

CHAPTER I.

Morning * Hours.

TO trace the unfolding of the petals of the life now passed away is mine ; those early years on which the after life depends.

To lead by a few incidents from the opening bud to the flower of womanhood, through the first pulsing throbs in the life struggle for self-conquest and aspirations heavenward, through the "longings, yearnings, strivings" to the ideal ever in view.

JESSIE EWART ROBERTSON was born in Strabane, Wentworth Co., Ont., March 25, 1859. A description of her early home may be found in her own words in another chapter. Here she lived, Nature's own child. Bright, romantic, observant, she saw and loved the beautiful. The woods, the leaves, the flowers, the morning dews, the sparkling waters, the waving grain, the restless poplars and the sighing pines were friends who in her ears murmured praises to their Creator and taught their child to do the same. The little brook which, murmuring over its pebbly bed, left the woods and passed before the house, told to her ears many tales ; whether paddling it with bare feet in summer, or like a winding thread in winter it wound its silvery way to its parent stream ; whether sparkling in summer sunshine or seen by the moonlight which she ever loved so well. What the woman was, the child foretold. "Like an April day," sunshine, gay and bright, then clouds of thought, of the deep things of time and Eternity, passed over the changing surface as shadows pass over the ripening grain-fields. True and pure, an extremely sensitive and impulsive, perhaps wayward, child. Her plastic mind retained or expelled soon the impress taken ; if retained, to deepen with the years. No wrong impress long found quarter there. She was ever open and candid, guileless and free.