

"No, mamma; and I am sure God would take you to himself; quite sure. My reason tells me I do wrong, I ought to trust patiently, because I have done what I could, And yet I feel so troubled; I cannot be happy. Either there is nothing in my mind, or else it is full of hateful thoughts and pictures of the future. Mamma, you have been very, very kind, and I have been happier than any one till now; but now I wish you had never had such a child as Lydia."

"Lydia, you should not speak so!"

"Forgive me!" she said, forming her lips to signify she wanted a kiss as a silent pledge of the renewed affection. "But, mamma, let me tell you how dreadful it is to be as I am. I am dying, and my soul—Oh! that must live for ever; whatever you say, I am not sure where;" there was a pause; for her mother hardly knew how to infuse the wished-for certainty and rest into a spirit so troubled. "You say I am certain of going to the paradise of God and angels. If I only *knew* I should! It seems cruel to create a being to make it suffer as I do; indeed it does. Indeed I cannot like God. I couldn't use anybody so. I don't know what to make of such a life. I won't believe there is a God!" and Lydia burst into a passion of tears.

I believe it was in this fit of weeping that a Rabbi was announced.

"I do not wish to see him," said Lydia. "He makes me feel worse. I cannot believe what he says."

"Try to resign yourself more," said her mother. "You hardly think Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, felt as you do?"

"No, mamma. But there was a difference. God told them he would save them, did he not?"

"And so he has every Jew; that was the promise made to Abraham."

"Yes; you are right," she returned, pensively. "I will try not to sin as I have about it. But we have no high priest to atone for us, and no sacrifices, except what the Rabbis have directed, and this made me doubt. And the Bible is so different from Rabbis; and it is my soul, mamma, that is concerned. You know several of our very wisest teachers have felt quite as wretched as I do."

"Yes, my dear; but that must be no excuse if they proved weak in the moment of final trial and conquest. It is

very wicked to doubt the wisdom of Jehovah."

"I know it," she replied; "I will try to do better. Pray for me."

After a short sleep Lydia woke. A profound and touching sadness was expressed in the depths of her eyes, lit up too, as they were, by the fever that was taking her away. Suddenly they brightened, and her lips were wreathed in a gay smile.

"Oh! mamma, I'm so glad you are here. I feel surprisingly well. I am confident I'm much better, since that last medicine. I shall get up at once."

That was a wondrous evening. Lydia's conversation flashed with brilliant thought. She played—and even sung—such singing! "She sang like a seraph." Love blinded her parents to the reality. They were bewildered with exultation. That voice—those bright imaginations—that dazzling flow of language!

Her head droops heavily upon her bosom—her breathing quickens—she has fainted!—"Help! support her!—she is dying!" shrieks the frightened mother. They gather around her, and bathe her pale face and motionless hands. She recovers a little.

"Mamma, what is this?"

They bear her to her room; and there on her bed she lies, silent and still as a piece of sculpture.

Starry solemn midnight arrives, and then Lydia is able to speak again.

"Do you think I shall die, mamma?"

"It is my fear, darling. It would be mistaken kindness if I were to tell you it is not."

"Oh! mamma, I'm afraid to die! I have been very happy here; and now

—Earth will still be as fair, and the silent moon will still ride on as beautifully, and my flowers will still bloom when I am gone. It is dreadful to know nothing about the future."

Morning dawned. A Rabbi and other Jews came to see her.

"Is it well with the child?" asked one.

Lydia heard the words. Oh! sir, you have taught me much that is good, but the most important thing of all you have left undone—I am dying now—you never taught me how to die."

"These thoughts are not the offspring of Jehovah's counsels. I have laid down to you the same rules as those obeyed