

died, and was one of the witnesses of that closing scene, of which the following prayer forms an impressive incident:—

“Lord God, deliver me out of this miserable and wretched life, and take me among Thy chosen; howbeit, not my will but Thine be done. Lord, I commit my spirit to Thee. O Lord, Thou knowest how happy it were for me to be with Thee! Yet, for Thy chosen sake, send me life and health, that I may truly serve Thee. O my Lord God, bless Thy people, and save Thine inheritance! O Lord God, save Thy chosen people of England. Defend this realm from Papistry, and maintain Thy true religion, that I and Thy people may praise Thy holy name, for Thy Son Jesus Christ’s sake.”

After this he said, “I am faint. Lord have mercy upon me, and take my spirit.” Then looking towards Sir Henry Sidney, he fell into his arms, and so expired.

Philip, the subject of our present sketch, was the eldest son of Sir Henry and Lady Mary Sidney, and was born at the beautiful village of Penshurst, near Tunbridge Wells. Possessing parents of singular worth, it is not a matter of surprise that he should inherit so many excellent qualities. “Though I lived with him,” wrote Lord Brooke (who was educated with him at Shrewsbury School), “and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man, with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years; his talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind, so as even his teachers found something in him to observe and learn above that which they had usually read or taught.”

Education in those days was never divorced from religion. The cultivation of the intellect was not the chief thing which a parent had at heart. Sir Henry was indeed proud of his son; but the very first letter he ever wrote to him exhibits his own exalted idea of the primary purpose of mental culture. “*Let your first action,*” he wrote, “*be the lifting up of your mind to God by hearty prayer, and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer with continual meditation and thinking of Him to whom you pray, and of the matter for which you pray. Be humble and obedient to your master, for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you.*” A postscript was written, breathing the same devout spirit, by his excellent mother—“At this time I will write to you no other letter than this, whereby I first bless you with my desire to God to plant in you His grace; and, secondarily, warn you to have before the eyes of your mind these excellent counsels of my lord, your dear father, and that you fail not continually, once in four or five days, to read them over. And see that you shew yourself as a loving, obedient scholar to your good master, and that we may hear that you profit so in your learning as thereby you may increase our loving care for you. Farewell, my little Philip, and once again, the Lord bless you! Your loving mother, MARY SIDNEY.”

At the very early age of fourteen he was sent to Oxford, where he excelled in classical learning; but, being driven away by the