

white clover field, which lay beneath the windows they had so cruelly darkened. The gloom of that death-chamber made me very sorrowful, but I went to the bed, turned down the linen, and laid my hand caressingly on the pale face which lay so white and motionless in the dim light. It was cold as ice. I drew back affrighted, and stealing from the room, sat down alone, wondering and full of dread.

They buried her beneath a lofty tree on the high bank of a river. A waterfall raises its eternal anthem nearly, and the sunset flings its last golden shadows among the long grass that shelters her. I remember it all—the grave with its newly-broken sod—the coffin placed on the brink. The clergyman, with his black surplice sweeping the earth, and the concourse of neighbours gathered round that grave, each lifting his hat reverently as the solemn hymn swelled on the air, answered by the lofty anthem surging up from the waterfall, and the breeze rustling through the dense boughs of that gloomy tree. Then came the grating of the coffin as it was lowered into its narrow bed, the dull, hollow sound of falling earth, and those most solemn words of “dust to dust, and ashes to ashes.” With mournful distinctness were all these things impressed on my young mind, but my mother’s last prayer is written more forcibly than all in characters that but deepen with maturity. It has lingered about my heart a blessing and a safeguard, pervading it with music that cannot die. Many times, when the heedlessness of youth would have led me into error, has that sweet voice, now hushed for ever, intermingled with my thoughts, and, like the rosy links of a fairy chain, drawn me from my purpose. Oft, when my brow has been wreathed with flowers for the festival, when my cheek has been flushed, and my eyes have sparkled with anticipated pleasure, have I caught the reflection of those eyes in the mirror, and thought of the look which rested upon me when my mother died—that broken supplication to Heaven has come back to my memory, the cluster-

ing roses have been torn from my head; sad and gentle memories have drank the unnatural glow from my cheeks, and my thoughts have been carried back to my lost parent, and from her, up to the Heaven she inhabits. The festival and all its attractions, have been lost in gentle reflections, and I have been “delivered from temptation.” Again, when the sparkling wine-cup has almost bathed my lips, amid merriment and smiles and music, has the last sad prayer of my mother seemed to mingle with its ruby contents, and I have put away the goblet, that “I might not be led into temptation.” When my hand has rested in that of the dishonourable, and trembled to the touch of him who says in his heart there is no God, as that voice seemed to flow with his luring accents, I have listened to it, and fled as from the serpent of my native forests.

Again and again, when the throbbings of ambition have almost filled my soul, and the praises of my fellow men have become a precious incense, the still small voice of my mother’s prayer has trembled over each heart-string, and kindled it to a more healthy music. In infancy, youth, and womanhood, that prayer has been to me a holy remembrance—a sweet thought full of melody, not the less beautiful that there is sadness in it.



CHASTITY.—How large a portion of chastity is sent out of the world by distant hints—nodded away, and cruelly winked into suspicion by the envy of those who are past all temptation of it themselves. How often does the reputation of a helpless creature bleed by report—which the party, who is at the pains to propagate it, beholds with much pity and fellow-feeling—that she is heartily sorry for it—hopes in God it is not true; however, as Archbishop Tillotson wittily observes upon it, is resolved, in the mean time, to give the report her pass, that at least it may have fair play to take its fortune in the world—to be believed or not, according to the charity of those into whose hands it shall happen to fall.

—Sterne.