

break free from the little cap that seemed too fragile to confine it, was damp with the dews of death. She was alone. For the physician had just gone, and the nurse had left the room to consult with him and Lydia's mother. Her white hands were crossed on her bosom; her eyes were closed; her lips moved as if in silent prayer.

Her brother, the father of Leila Ada, stepped lightly into the room, and laid his hand lovingly on the young sufferer's head and stroked back the hair from her forehead. Her eyes softly opened. Folding her arms around him fondly, as he stooped to kiss her she strained him to her bosom, while affectionate tears fell like rain from her eyes.

"How are you now, Lydia?" said her brother, striving to check the warm tears.

"I shall die! I always knew it. Now I am quite sure of it."

"God forbid! I can never let you go. You must not die!"

"Hush! dear Abraham. The doctor has just left with mamma. They thought me asleep; but I heard all. There is no hope whatever. He can only give me ease, and lengthen my life for a little while. But I knew it from the first," she pursued sadly.

Her brother could answer nothing. He loved Lydia so dearly, and to lose her was very dreadful. He would not believe such a sorrow could menace him.

"Oh! Abraham," she said, again pressing him, "I wish I had never been born! Dying is a horrid thing."

"But we must submit to it, Lydia. It is a way through which we must pass to heaven."

"Ah! to heaven! I shouldn't care if I knew I was going there directly. It is not the pain of dying that I mind. I don't mind that, worth speaking of—though I suffer a great deal sometimes—because it will end."

"But I believe you will go to heaven, as soon as your spirit leaves us, Lydia. I feel quite sure of that. If you should not be taken there, who of us all could hope for it? Your life has been entirely pure and holy, as God commands."

"I have tried to serve Him and be good. Oh! if Messiah would but come to set us right, and reign over us for ever! Why, why, Abraham, should those things which are of the most importance for us to know, be the most secret and mysterious! Even to go to hell, as the Rabbins say, and be judged there eleven

months—Oh! what suffering! I cannot bear it! And as Rabbi Albali said to his disciples, 'How do I know how I may feel while I am there? May not the agony arouse me to rebellion, cause me to curse God, and thus be lost forever?'"

"For my own part, I believe nothing of the kind," replied her brother. "I believe the soul goes at once to heaven."

"I am so unhappy. I know not what to do," and she tossed restlessly. "Lead me out in the snow," she pursued in a mournful voice that her brother never forgot, and directing her eyes to the window; "I think I shall feel better in the cold!"

He tried to soothe her. He was not very religious, and Judaism supplies few comfortable suggestions; but he said the best he could think of.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "it is very beautiful! very! But the reality is dreadful. It's of no use to think these lovely thoughts about God, when you cannot feel any rest notwithstanding." She ceased for a moment. "Oh, this fever!—my head!—do press my head!—I have hurt myself thinking." And with a flood of tears she buried her face in the white pillows. Just at this time her mother returned to the room.

"Speak to her; I cannot," said her brother.

"My own dear Lydia!" said her mother, bending over her.

Slowly she raised her eyes and smiled. "My sweet mamma! How good you are! I am glad you have come!"

"I wish I could do something to make you better."

"Oh, if you could!" she said, quickly. But after a moment she resumed sadly, "Death would yet come at last. I wonder any one can be happy when they know this."

"My dear! why will you kill us all by exciting yourself this way! It is my belief that even now you might be made well again if you would keep quiet. Nothing could do worse than what you do. Give yourself calmly up to God, and you will be safe."

Oh! mamma, I am so very unhappy; have patience with me."

"My dear, you have kept the law, the Rabbis are fasting and praying for you, and making vows for your sake; a special prayer will be read in several synagogues. If you die, you will certainly be taken to heaven. I shouldn't be the least afraid to die like you."