

From that period, the Bible became her study, and He who hath declared Himself "meek and lowly in heart," her instructor. Celestial light dawned on her spirit, leading her from step to step in the christian pathway; and guiding her amid surrounding error, in the narrow steps of truth and peace.

About this time, she caught a severe cold, which settled on her lungs; making her a constant, but most patient sufferer for twelve long years, and at length dissolving her clay tenement and placing my fragrant mignonette beyond the danger of decay. It was during this period of suffering that her resemblance to the lovely flower I have selected for her type became increasingly evident. Ranking herself as the chief of sinners, and ever conceding to others the utmost meed of respect their deportment permitted, she often held those individuals in high estimation whose christian attainments were far beneath her own, while her meek spirit was beclouded and harassed with fears for her own eternal safety. Mary was too fearful to appropriate the triumphant and consolatory language of St. Paul, when he exclaimed, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Many times have I marked the silent tears chasing each other down her pallid cheek, while her attenuated finger pointed to some precious promise in the Book of Life, which she dared not claim for herself. I was at that period but a little girl, and did not fully understand all her feelings; but I used to throw my arm around her neck and endeavor to comfort her. Through the incessant endeavors of my beloved parents, the way of salvation had early been impressed on my heart, as far as human agency could impress, and I well knew that the Redeemer had atoned for sin; that every sinner who felt his sinfulness, had a right to claim that atonement; and it was a deep problem to my young heart, how any who acknowledged the Saviour's veracity and benevolence, should doubt His willingness to receive them. I wonder not now. Years have rolled over me, bringing trials which have produced experience; and though I would not for one moment encourage unbelieving thoughts, yet I feel there is an imperative necessity for strict investigation on this overwhelming topic. When the tempest of divine wrath shall arise and beat over our unsheltered spirits, what will it avail us to have reared our structure of religious profession *very near* the Rock of Ages, if we have not laid our foundation on its eternal base?

Believe me, young reader, though the poetry of religion may be very pleasant amid the halcyon days of prosperity, it is the inwrought principles of our most holy faith which alone are capable of sustaining the soul through the boisterous scenes of this mortal life; it is deep penitence and sincere and lively faith in a crucified Redeemer, which must irradiate the gloom of the valley of death, or the lamp of humanity must expire amid the shadows of eternal night. Do I speak strange language? Am I as one who utters dark sayings? Rest not, I implore you, till you know something of this subject, till the Holy Spirit reveal to you the reality of those truths you have lisped from infancy; till you can say, without presumption, yet without hesitation, "my Lord, and my God."

But to return to Mary. Equally unconscious of her daily deportment and holy example, as her fragrant antitype is of its delicate odour, she flourished beneath the approving smile of her heavenly Father. Her hatred of sin and dread of evil, kept pace with her knowledge and love of the Divine commandments. The law she found to be holy, and just, and good; but she often bewailed most affectingly that there was in herself another law warring against the law of her mind, "so that when she would do good, evil was present with her."

And here I would remark, that as far as my limited experience extends, I have ever observed that the path to the heavenly Canaan is strewn with briars, and interspersed with rough and toilsome steps. To some of the "heirs of the promise" are given heart-rending afflictions—trials which pierce in the most sensitive part—griefs, from which frail human nature shrinks, even in the contemplation; but with these sorrows there is usually given firm faith, and much inward peace and consolation. To others, again, is given every earthly blessing—no cloud ever arises to obscure their temporal horizon—but these mercies are

balanced by distressing doubts, as to their final acceptance with God; and oppressive fears of their eternal happiness. Rest assured, reader, whoever you are, that if you are a real child of God, a member of that little flock for whom is reserved a kingdom, you will find something spring up to harass and annoy. It may be overwhelming affliction—it may be only the frequent recurrence of disagreeable minutias; but it will be sufficient to sully the bloom of earthly glory—to take off the edge of earthly enjoyment. And it must of necessity be so. What sweetness can there be in promises of pardon to those who do not feel their need of it? What consolation can we gather from the declarations of the surpassing peace and beauty of a better world, if this scene is our portion and our home? It is when every earthly hope has perished that we turn with increasing eagerness to Him, who is "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

But I find I am wandering from my subject. Mary was exceedingly anxious for the spiritual welfare of those around her. With her mother, and brothers, and sisters, she conversed long and earnestly. To the religious instruction of the domestics she constantly, when her health permitted, devoted her Sabbath evenings; whilst she left no means untried which delicate and dutiful affection could suggest, to present these truths to the consideration of her beloved father. Of her unceasing anxiety for her nephews and nieces, I am a grateful witness. It was my privilege to pass many happy hours in her society—I bear her name; would to God I could equally claim her spirit!

Years glided away in the peaceful routine of domestic life. Each revolving period found Mary weaker than its predecessor, till at length the hour came which was to transplant our fragrant mignonette to an amaranthine clime. Then was fulfilled in her experience, that precious promise, "at eventide it shall be light." The clouds, which had for years dimmed her spiritual horizon, parted and passed away, leaving the gorgeous tints of the summer sunset; and she who had been all her life-time subject to bondage, through fear of death, became "more than conqueror" through Him who loved her. As her feet touched the dark river of Jordan, the water rolled back, and io! the Ark of the Covenant was seen standing in the midst of the stream. Then she realized the glorious truth, that she was indeed one of that number "whose iniquities are forever blotted out as a thick cloud;" then it was given to her, feeble as she was, to bear triumphant testimony to the power of consolation, couched in that religion she had for many years professed; then, indeed, those who stood around her dying pillow were compelled to exclaim, "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

I did not witness the parting hour. My beloved mother and myself left her two days before her decease. We had seen her ill, very ill, often: though not as we quitted her then. We both felt that we should see her no more on earth; but the message for our return was imperative, and we reluctantly yielded to the necessity.

She summoned her relatives around her—fearlessly and faithfully she warned the impenitent—affectionately and touchingly she conversed with those who had professed their faith in the Redeemer—gently she remembered those who were absent—then commending each to the Redeemer, she turned on her side as though to sleep—after awhile she opened her eyes, and requested to know the hour. Her sister replied to her question, "One more kiss; one last kiss, dear Elizabeth, and then I go." Elizabeth bent over her for some moments, at length she feebly disengaged herself and laid her head on her hand. Her breath came shorter and fainter; and ere those who waited round her couch were aware, the emaciated spirit of Mary W— stood before the unveiled presence of Jehovah.

Thus passed from earth one, of whom, but for this imperfect record, no trace would be found in man's chronicle; but one whose name is enrolled in the archives of heaven; and one who shall beam with ineffable glory, even amid the surpassing radiance of cherubim and seraphim.

And now, my young reader, suffer me to conclude this little and imperfect sketch in the words of one well known and honored,—I allude to the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham. "Let me," says that eminent divine, "implore you to keep in mind this sentiment—that whatever and whoever may educate you for