

Family Reading.

THE LITTLE SOWER.

Sow in the morn thy seed at eve hold not thine hand;
To doubt and fear give them no heed, broad cast it o'er the land.

The summer sun was setting and shedding its golden rays over a quiet village churchyard, where many a white stone told its simple yet solemn tale. In a retired corner of the ground a child bent over a grave, resting her young head on the green turf, while tears chased each other down the sweet face, so touching in its silent grief. This little one had been early called to pass through the deep waters of trouble and sorrow. That grave held all that was dear to her—father, mother, lay sleeping there. The next day she was to travel far away from her loved and familiar home to a strange place, and to new, and as yet stranger, friends, and now she had stolen away by herself to take a last fond look at this spot so sacred. But think not, young reader, that this lonely little one was without comfort; she had a Friend whose eye was ever upon her, whose hand guided all her steps, and led her all her way. She had given her young heart to the Saviour, who did not—who could not—forsake her in her sorrow.

An old man, in passing through the churchyard, saw the little girl, and stopped when he came up to her: "Don't cry so, dear child;" and he laid his rough hand on the sunny curls, while a tear trickled over his weather-beaten cheek, for he, too, had known what it was to part from loved ones, and in another part of that same churchyard lay the child of his old age, his last darling. When the little girl saw that she was no longer alone, she raised herself, and looked up inquiringly at her companion, "Don't cry so; it won't bring back the dead from the grave," said he. "They are not there—only their bodies, you know," quickly replied the child. "And where are they, then?" asked the old man. "Oh in heaven—they are quite happy!" and the little girl looked up into the clear, blue sky with a joyful, trusting smile. "How do you know they are there?" said her questioner. "Because they loved Jesus, to be sure. Don't you know that He died to save sinners? Its all in the Bible." "Well I can't say I know much about these things. I have a Bible at home, but—I'm no scholar; still I hope to go to heaven, too, when I die. I should like to be certain." "Oh, but you can't go, if you don't love Jesus! Don't you love Him?—don't you? Oh, do go to Him. Do love Him, then you'll be certain—yes, you will!" and the child stood by her parent's grave, and her blue eyes lit up with love and earnestness. She told the old man in her simple words that all are sinners, and that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."—(1 John i. 7.) Long they stayed there talking together, and the little girl repeated what her dear father used to tell her, when, seated on his knee, she listened while he spoke to her of Jesus,—how He came down from heaven and became a little child, and how, when He grew to be a man, they crucified Him, and how he bore it all to save sinful men. And more than this: how He rose from the grave and went up again into heaven, and how all that love Him and believe him shall go there, too, when they die, and live with Him there for ever. She told him, too, that her father said to her just before he died, "The God of the fatherless will be your God, my own dear child!" And how her mother grew thinner after she was a widow, and one day, after she had been in prayer a long time, she was taken very ill and died, and they laid her, too, in that grave. And again the tears would come; and the little girl and the old man—they wept together there, and then they parted.

The next day the child was far away, but the old man—what of him? He still lived in his humble cottage, and in the morning when he awoke, and in the evening when he went to bed, and when he was at work, and at all times, the words of the little girl sounded in his ears—"Do go to Jesus!" It was a little seed dropped by a tiny hand. And did it grow? You shall hear. A few weeks after that evening in the graveyard the old man became seriously ill, and unable to go to his daily labour. And now the child's words came with two-fold force into his mind. He thought, "Perhaps I am going to die now, but I am not fit to enter heaven; I am a sinner—what shall I do?" "Do go to Jesus!" seemed to ring in his ear. He started! He almost fancied he really heard the silvery voice, and he looked round the room as if he expected to see the little childish form. But, no; she was not there, but the Bible—that precious book that she loved so well!—was there. It lay where it long had lain, on the window-sill, and the sick man asked the person who attended him to read it. From that time he constantly had the Bible read to him—it was his only comfort. How sweet those precious words