

The Pious Mother.

For the Calliopean.

In whatever rank or situation in life woman may be placed, religion is the crowning grace of her character. It adds fervor and stability to a sister's love—warms and enlivens the daughter's affection, and casts a sacred halo around the domestic circle. But it is in the daily walk and conversation of a mother, that religion is exhibited in its noblest, purest aspect. What scene on earth more lovely, in the sight of men or angels, than that of a faithful and devoted mother, surrounded by her infant band, who, with childish earnestness and simplicity, inhale the sacred precepts she imparts. Such a scene as this, it was my privilege not long since to witness. One fine autumnal day, during a late recess of our school, I set out to visit an old and esteemed friend, whose devotedness to the cause of God, and zeal for the salvation of souls, had long rendered her an acceptable member of the Church of Christ.

The spot where she resided was one of rural simplicity and wildness. Though not far removed from the busy mart, it still retained all the characteristics of a back-woods' home. The newly cleared fallow-ground, which surrounded the dwelling, plainly indicated that the woodman's axe had not long been laid aside, and the dense forest which skirted the little enclosure on every side, showed that his labors were not yet to cease. In this retreat of nature dwelt one whose labors, though unseen and unappreciated by the eye of man, were nevertheless registered in heaven. What I beheld in this rude spot during the short period of a few hours, demonstrated emphatically, that this was the residence of a pious mother.

Mrs. ——— had, in early life, been deprived of the guidance of an affectionate mother, and though still a child, was left to soothe the anguish of a father's bereavement, and supply to the younger members of the family the loss they had sustained. Here affliction, severe as it was, was borne with meek submission to the will of heaven. In her new sphere she found many and arduous duties devolving upon her. In addition to the cares of a young and numerous family, her spirits were often weighed down by the impiety of an elder brother, who, regardless himself, of the divine injunction "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," sought to draw aside his sister from the path of piety. Still, with humble reliance on the strength of Him, who has promised to be the orphan's protector, she continued to adorn the doctrines of our holy religion, until the hitherto obdurate and impenitent brother, struck with the beauty and excellence of that heaven-born principle, which could render its youthful possessor gentle and forbearing amidst scoffs and frowns, and even willing to suffer persecution for the cause of Christ, bowed before the cross, and arose, transformed by the soul-renewing influence of redeeming love. With this fresh stimulus to duty, the christian sister continued to cleave closer to the Rock of Ages.

Her affections now entwined themselves still more closely around the family circle. Each passing scene, as it floated by, seemed illumined with sacred peace, and blissful serenity, while earth itself appeared but as a prelude to the skies. The house of God was to her the gate of heaven; His people her chosen companions, and His worship her delightful exercise. In the retirement of the closet, as well as in the public sanctuary, she enjoyed sweet communion with the King of kings. Many and strong were the ties which bound her to the scenes of her childhood's happiness and youthful enjoyment; but duty called, and she prepared to quit forever the parental roof. Her aged father gazed in silent sadness on his departing daughter; while the remembrance of by-gone days rushed back upon his mind. That countenance which had beamed with delight to welcome him to a cheerful home, after the duties of the day were closed, was soon to vanish from his sight. That voice, whose tones had often brought gladness to his dejected spirit in the hour of trial and affliction, must soon be heard by him no more. Those hands which had ministered to his wants in health, and soothed his pillow in sickness, he must soon grasp in a long, a final farewell.

The parting came, and like the venerable patriarch, when called upon to send forth his beloved Benjamin, the heart-strick-

en father felt to exclaim "If I am bereaved of my child, I am bereaved." With aching eyes he watched the stately vessel which bore away his richest earthly treasure, until it disappeared in the horizon. Then, with faltering steps, he turned to seek his lonely dwelling. Never but once before had he approached it with feelings such as now occupied his mind—and that was after listening to the cold clods, as they fell heavily upon the coffin of her, to whom he had plighted his vows. Now, he felt that he was indeed alone; that a stranger's hand must close his eyes in death, and lay him in his last resting place. As he thus reflected, tears coursed down his time-worn cheeks, while she who had been wont to wipe them away, was now far distant. Yet, from the volume of sacred writ, a ray of heavenly light shone upon the old man's pathway, and pointed to brighter scenes above.

Meanwhile, the travellers reached the distant port. A short and pleasant voyage brought them to the coast of America; and in the peaceful retreat of a Canadian village, they found a quiet home. The affectionate daughter and devoted sister had now assumed another character and sphere. The filial and sisterly virtues, for which she had hitherto been distinguished, were superseded by conjugal ties; and a faithful discharge of the duties connected with these relations, pre-eminently qualified her for the more responsible situation of a wife and mother. It was in the latter capacity that I first became acquainted with her; and never before had I been so deeply impressed with the efficiency of maternal piety, in moulding the youthful character. Certain portions of each day were set apart for the moral and intellectual improvement of her two little daughters. These seasons of instruction were, by a mother's kind and gentle bearing, rendered even more attractive than the sports of childhood. Her genuine and unaffected piety, developing itself in every department of life, and overflowing towards them in all the rich effusions of a mother's love, caused the little ones to greet with joy the return of that hour, when, shut in from the world, they bowed with their beloved parent at the throne of grace, and listened to her soul-emanating petitions, as she sought the Divine guidance in her humble efforts, and implored the blessing of heaven on her tender charge. Then, with a simplicity suited to their infantile views, she explained their relations to God, and man; their high and holy destination and the wondrous story of a Saviour's love.

This delightful appropriation of the interims of duty, rendered the domestic circle one of happiness and mutual enjoyment. In the daily development of these youthful minds, were perceptible the rewards of virtuous precept and example. In their self-sacrificing, and untiring acts of kindness towards each other, might be traced the elements of that ennobling principle, which, in mature years, would widen in its sphere until it embraced in the arms of sympathy and love, the whole human race.

At the time in which our narrative commences, the pious mother had exchanged the privileges of Divine worship, attendant upon a village life, for the less advantageous modes of a back-wood's settlement. Here, for several months, she had been deprived of meeting with the people of God. On enquiring in what light she viewed her religious privations, she replied with soul-felt earnestness, "Never before was the power and willingness of God to keep his believing children under every variety of circumstances, so clearly demonstrated to me, as in my present situation. Though deprived of worshipping in the public sanctuary, I can bow more frequently in the closet. Though seldom visited by the ministers of Christ, I have innumerable witnesses of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator—I gaze upon the ascending sun, and it reminds me of the rising of the Sun of righteousness—I listen to the music of the birds, as they chant their happy notes, and it calls to mind the songs of the redeemed above—I look upon the stately trees of the forest, and they seem to speak of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations—I listen to the murmur of the brook, as it glides along in its pebbly bed, and am referred to that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. Thus does nature lead me up to its great Architect. Each little blossom, as it unfolds its delicate organs to the light, tells of Him who gave it fragrance