

FROM LADY WILLOUGHBY'S
DIARY.

Often times I seemo to have no power of giving my Mind to Prayer or Meditation,

Oct. 26, 1634, but walke about the house, or sit down with a Booke or

Wednesday. Needlework before me almost without

consciousness and well-nigh without life. What doe all past Trials and Vexations appeare, now a burthen of Sorrow is layd upon me, I am unable to beare? I had Known Grief and Disappointment, and already in my short experience of life had learnt that this State of Existence is onely a Preparation for happiness hereafter, not happiness itselfe: But a precious Life came from Heaven, my beautiful Child smil'd on me; I held it to my Heart, and did think it was my owne. What greates evil have I done in thy sight, O God, that thou hast thus stricken me?

At Prayer my Lord was sensibly affected by hearing the words, *Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*; the be told-

Oct. 27,

Thursday. ing him thus overcome by strong emotion, led me to consider my owne Conduct, and I do feare me, I have been very selfish in the indulgence of my own Sorrow, too regardless of him who equally with me hath lost the deare Sonne of his Love, and who doth ever strive to strengthen and support me, and would fain lead me to take an Interest in our family Concerns, and in the Welfare of our neighbours, but Grief lieth heavy on his Heart. I felt another reproof in his looke of tendernes and commiseration, as, at our mid-day meal, I sent away the plate, the food untasted: I roused myself to exertion, and was repay'd the effort when his Eye rested on me approvingly. The Servants left the room, he took my Arm within his, and we walked to and fro in sweet and solemn silence: My Heart, which had been strangely shut up, melted within me, when he utter'd a few gentle Words: and I felt there was yet something left to live for. Surely to him was due the poore remaining powers of my Mind and Affections.

Arose this morning with mind more composed than for sometime past, *Cicely's* Mother ill, and I went down to see her: She is a bright Example of Patience, her Trials and Sufferings have bene manifold, bodily pain the least, has lost three Children in infancy and one daughter grown up: and

Oct. 29.

Saturday.

yet, can it be, has known still deeper sorrow.

Return'd through the Park: never saw Chestnuts and Beeches more beautiful in the autumn tints, the fallen leaves crushed pleasantly beneath my Feet, the Sun was setting before I was aware, and the Aire grow suddenly chill. Taking the nearest way, I entered the house by a side door, and there, beneath the old Mulberry, saw the little Cart and Whip as they had bene left by my poore Child the last he was out, and where he looked so tired, and I carried him in; I stooped and hiding it beneath my cloke, went straight up stairs: no Hand had touched it since his: the tears I wept over it did me good: it seemed my innocent right to weep over this Token of my lost one.

Health and strength mend: make a point of walking in

Nov. 14,

Monday.

Long Gallery when-soever the weather admits not of my going out: while so employed repeat Psalms and other portions of Holy Writ, therein finding profitable subjects of meditation and peaceful Thoughts: Often has been brought to my mind the text, *I was brought low, and He helped me*: now is my deare Mother's Care repaid, in the help I find it to have by me such recollection of the Lessees she taught.

Nov. 15.

Tuesday.

My early habits in the morning have been sadly interrupted: frequent restless nights, often sleeplesse for hours together, and awakening languid and ill at ease: often in the long nights, my Fancy is disquieted in looking forward to again becoming a Mother, and that ere long, least happy the Infant nourished beneath a heart so saddened by Grief, should, if permitted to enter on existence, be deprived of that Joyfulness of nature which is the Birthright of the young Spirit; but whatever may be the Ordering of my Heavenly Father, let me submit; too often have I rebelled against his just Appointments. In the words of the Psalmist, let me pray, *Enter not into judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, my Spirit is overwhelmed within me. my Heart within me is desolate: hide not thy Face from me: in thee do I trust.*

Once more with a grateful Heart do I record the Mercy of our Heavenly Father, in that he hath permitted his upworthy Servant to live to behold the face of another Little One. Yet now must I rejoyce with trembling over a Being so fragile: the fulnesse and brightness of a young Mother can never againe be my Experi-

ence, since that joye had bene the Source of a Suffering and Agony never to be forgotten. Death follow'd into the Habitation wherein Life had just took up its abode. Not in short space of time can the Heart recover such Dispositions, and in the Excellency of no after joys can it ever forget the stroke that first destroyed its sweetest hopes: Death once seeme at our hearth leaveth a shadow which abideth there forever. During the long period of Sicknesse that, has been my portion, I have endeavour'd through the *Divine Grace*, profitably to employ the Solitary Houres, and do now see much Mercy in the return to Health graduall. The Needful Quiet led me to seek a Spirituall Communion, whereby I humbly hope I am the better fitted for the Performance of the several Duties of Life, trusting not in my own Strength, that truly would be a broken reed. *Lord! thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*: yea, even the rod, though it hath smitten me to the earth.

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3rd March, 1882.

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