

JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Torquet ab obscenis jam nunc sermonibus aurem."

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BIOGRAPHY.

EARLY LIFE OF LINDLEY MURRAY.

The name of Lindley Murray is well known, and justly respected, wherever the English language is spoken.* The following account of his early years we are confident will be read with much interest.

Lindley Murray was born in the year 1745, at Swetara, near Lancaster, in the State of Pennsylvania. His parents were respectable characters, and in the middle station of life. They often gave their children salutary admonition, and trained them up to attend the public worship of God. The holy scriptures were read in the family, and with so much real interest of feeling, that Lindley had observed his father so much affected as to shed tears, which he believed was frequently the case; and it made a pleasing and profitable impression on his young mind, and was often remembered by him with peculiar satisfaction. The family was numerous. Lindley was the eldest of twelve children, all of whom he survived. The first months of his life afforded so little promise, either of bodily or mental vigour, that his mother often said, that if at that time Providence had been pleased to take away her first born, she would have thought the dispensation merciful, both to the poor little infant and its parents. But after that period, his health improved; and his strength, and spirit, and activity, exceeded his age. From various accounts, and from many little anecdotes, it appears that his childhood and youth formed a natural and beautiful prelude to the wisdom, piety, and benevolence which his advanced years exhibited. Though from his extraordinary vivacity and exuberance of spirits, he was inclined to playfulness and frolic, and, at times to some degree of mischievousness, yet he possessed every quality that can adorn that period of life: activity of body and mind, an ardent desire for knowledge, docility in submitting to superior reason: a mild, obliging temper; a heart grateful, affectionate and highly susceptible of religious feelings. He describes himself as greatly injured

* The strong proof of this is contained in the extraordinary wide diffusion of his writings, which is unprecedented perhaps in the annals of literature.

by the injudicious fondness of his grandmother, till his irregular vivacity received a very salutary controul by his being placed under the care of a discreet and sensible aunt, who happily brought him into order and submission. On one occasion, he got out of a window, and climbed on the roof of a building from which a fall would have endangered his life, and which he could not be induced to quit till he had capitulated for impunity for his transgression. To this good aunt he viewed himself as under particular obligations, considering that her wise and salutary management may have prepared him for many enjoyments, and prevented many miseries of life.

About his sixth or seventh year, he was sent to a school in the city of Philadelphia, where he read with pleasure, even at that tender age, some passages in "The Travels of Cyrus;" and he expresses himself as having been "agreeably exercised in the business of parsing sentences." It would seem, therefore, that his grammatical propensities were of very early date. From this academy he was taken to accompany his parents to North Carolina. On landing he found a few shillings: which he expended in bread, for the refreshment of the sailors, who had been kind to him during the voyage. Their grateful acceptance and enjoyment of his little gift were a rich reward for his attention.

In the year 1753, the family left Carolina, and settled at New York, where Lindley was placed at a good school, in which he made the usual progress of young learners. About this period, a very happy impression was made on his mind, by a "piece" which was given him to write as a specimen of his penmanship. The "piece," or sheet, he describes as decorated round its edges with a number of pleasing figures, displayed with taste and simplicity, in the centre of which his performance was to be contained. This was a transcript of the visit & salutation of the angels to the shepherds, near Bethlehem, who were tending their flocks by night. The impression made on his mind by that narrative was so delightful, that it often occurred to him through life with great satisfaction, and was scarcely ever read by him without emotions of an interesting nature.

He had a strong propensity to observe the dispositions of animals; and his curiosity was, in some instances, so great as to lead him to acts of real, though not intentional, cruelty; so much so, he says, as to mark a depraved turn of mind, which, even late in life, it gave him pain to recollect. It is probable, however, that no person but the individual himself would have made such an accusation. On one occasion, many years after, he had nearly suffered severely for his curiosity. "When I was in England," he says, "in the year 1771, I went to see the elephants which were kept at the Queen's stables, Buckingham house. Whilst I was gratifying myself with observing the huge creatures, and their various actions and peculiarities, I took occasion to withdraw from one of them a part of the hay, which he was collecting on the

floor with his proboscis. I did this with my cane; and watched the animal very narrowly, to prevent a stroke from him which I had reason to expect. The keeper said that I had greatly displeased the elephant, and that he would never forget the injury. I thought but little of this admonition, at the time. but about six weeks afterwards, when I accompanied some other persons, on a visit to the elephants, I found that, though probably several hundred people had been there since my preceding visit, the animal soon recognised me. I did not attempt to molest or tease him at all; and I had no conception of any concealed resentment. On a sudden, however, when I was supposed to be within the reach of his proboscis, he threw it towards me with such violence that, if it had struck me, I should probably have been killed, or have received some material injury. Happy for me, I perceived his intention, and, being very active I sprung out of his reach. To every other person present, he was gentle and good tempered; and his enmity to me arose, as the keeper declared, solely from the circumstance of the little affront which I had formerly put upon him. The incident made some impression upon me; and perhaps contributed to subdue a curiosity which could not be gratified but at the expense of the feelings of others."

Lindley Murray was a youth of great vivacity, and by his imprudence was led into many follies: but he always venerated the character of those whom he deemed to be truly religious: and such was his opinion of their attainments and happiness, that he probably conceived them to be more exempt from trouble, and more raised above the anxieties of life, than they usually are. He listened, with reverence and affection, to their admonitions, which made a good impression on his mind; and sometimes produced regret at perceiving how distant he was from that felicity which he believed religious persons possessed. His principles were never disturbed by infidelity or scepticism. Some of his acquaintance were either deists or sceptics: but he always found replies to their reasonings which perfectly satisfied his own mind. Thus he attributed, under Divine Providence, to his having occasionally, early in life, looked into Leland's View of the deistical Writers; Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature; Sherlock on Providence; and Sherlock's Discourses. These books, with some others, were the means of communicating to his mind, such a survey of the Christian religion and the divine economy, that he was never embarrassed by the plausible schemes and objections which men of prejudiced minds and short sighted views of religion had fabricated and produced. He was firmly persuaded, that the perplexity and doubts, with regard to Christianity and its evidences, which he considered that many sensible and well-disposed minds have encountered, and the absolute infidelity of others, may be attributed to the scanty information which they had received on these subjects during the period of