

MARY LUNDIE DUNCAN.

HER SCHOOL DAYS.—(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 207.)

Her education was now in progress under private tuition, and before she was fifteen she had read the Latin poets, and amused herself in versifying Greek. The school days of the child are the trying period of her life, and it would be of use to our young readers to follow, with some minuteness, the history of Mary Lundie during these important years. It was thought best to send her away from home to complete her education, and when she was introduced to a distant boarding-school, her moral and intellectual superiority over those with whom she was now associated, made her at once an object of envy, and some of the sweetest traits of her character rendered her a chosen subject of those petty tricks of persecution of which such schools are too frequently the scene. How often are we pained to know that those domestic virtues which fill parents' hearts with joy and hope, are derided and despised among boys and girls away from home! The very feeling of attachment to home, the love of mother and sister, is made the subject of ridicule, so that the new comer in such a circle is ashamed or afraid, unless gifted with more moral courage than falls to the share of many, to discover that she has a heart in her bosom that beats in sympathy with those far away. Thus Mary Lundie, found in her room with her mother's miniature in her hand and a tear in her eye, was at once laughed at by her companions, shunned by many, annoyed by others, till it would not have been strange indeed if her spirit had yielded, and she had fled from a scene in which there was so little to love. But it was a good school for her heart. She had always been loved, and these first exhibitions of unkindness served to bring out and test new virtues, as she sought help from God to bear with patience the wrongs she endured, to forgive those who used her despitefully, to turn away wrath by a soft answer, and to disarm by love those who sought to make her unhappy. And she did triumph—not only over her own spirit, but at length over those who persecuted her, so that they learned to love the traits of character which they had heretofore despised.

"An incident puerile in the eyes of the world without, but capable of exciting a considerable sensation within a boarding-school, developed her character and purposes, in a way that turned the scale in her favor. The spirit of frolic, or the pleasantness of eating bread in secret, had tempted the young people to enlist the cook (whose integrity they had means to turn aside) in their service, to purchase for them a variety of cakes, which were to be enjoyed in an upper chamber, when the seniors of the establishment supposed them to have retired to rest. One young lady, who had so far dared to judge for herself as not to join in any act of persecution against this lonely being, entreated her to engage in the scheme. She urged her by the motive, that if she did not, it would only render her more unpopular; that the rest expected, that if she did not, she would certainly betray them; that the cook would lose her place, &c. &c. In short, in the form of the tempter, she made it appear that the only amiable and safe mode was to follow the multitude to do evil. Mary was enabled steadily to resist, and was left alone in her chamber by the gentle girl who had urged her, and who was herself so convinced by her arguments, that she only joined the revellers above stairs, from the fear of sharing in Mary's persecution if she stayed with her. After the secret banquet was over, the same kind friend brought a portion of the spoil to the bed where Mary lay in tears. She urged her to accept of her dainties, she even pressed a bunch of grapes against her feverish lips, but she steadily declined to taste them. Her conduct excited great alarm in the little band, who saw a fair occasion afforded her for vengeance for all their wrongs, by a simple statement of the truth. But when some days passed, and the same quiet deportment was observed, neither threat nor insinuation exciting their fears, first one, then another, became convinced of their injustice and unkindness. Time after time she found notes of apology and overtures of reconciliation slipped into her work-box, and at length the most adverse threw down the weapons of their petty warfare, and sought her friendship;—thus verifying in their confined circle, the saying of the wise man, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he causeth even his enemies to be at peace with him.'"

The holidays came, and Mary Lundie received the prize for lady-like deportment, and when another pupil received the music prize, which some had thought was due to Mary, she congratulated her rival and kissed her with such affectionate sincerity, that it was marked by the whole school, and from that time she was the general favourite of the school.

Here too, and in another school in London, in which she was afterwards placed, the power of her Christian example was felt by her companions, and she was thus enabled to exert a silent but not unseen influence, that restrained from evil and encouraged the young in that which was lovely and of good report. A friend writes to her mother:

"Mary shines among her school-fellows with meek radiance; she is humble but dignified; she has learned a great deal of that kind of experience which is absolutely necessary for getting through this world, and does not now speak of what she considered hardships, when she first went to school. She excites admiration, and the greatest interest in all our circle, yet seems to be quite insensible to it."

The time for her return home from school had now arrived, and her parents, thinking there might be some collections of art or other exhibitions not yet visited she might wish to see, or some purchases to make before she left London, sent her five pounds for this purpose, the whole of which she spent for herself, in buying tokens of love to give to every member of the family to whose bosom she was soon to be welcomed.

HER FATHER'S DEATH.

She had just completed her seventeenth year, in the bloom of youth and beauty, when she returned from school in the great metropolis, and entered again the domestic circle in the quiet manse of Kelso, on the banks of the Teviot and Tweed. It was a great change, and it would have been only natural that one so attractive in person, and now so accomplished, should have desired a more conspicuous field for the display of her charms. But her charms seemed to fix every eye but her own. She sought to employ her talents and accomplishments in the instruction of her younger brothers and sister, and in the Sabbath school; and visits of kindness among the sick and the poor she found sources of pleasure far more congenial to her spirit, than those which attract the hearts of many thus gifted. "It would be worth living for," she says in a letter, "if we could benefit but one immortal soul." "There is far more peace and satisfaction in living to be useful than in anything else, if the action spring from that animating motive, love to Him who so much loves us." With cheerfulness of temper she combined great energy of character, so that she entered into every judicious scheme for doing good; and with readiness that made her presence doubly pleasant, she sought to promote the pleasures of others, at such times her countenance beaming with love and joy, being the index of her warm and sympathizing heart. Yet her deepest enjoyments were of the contemplative class; her views of eternal things being so clear that a shade of sober reflection, unusual to her years, was almost constantly upon her brow. "The banks of primroses, the groves, the woods, the rivers of her native place, gave zest to every other enjoyment," and in these scenes she delighted to dwell even when in memory only could she be among them. As she wrote, years after she was in other scenes, speaking of the hawthorn,

"O! in my happy childhood,
How well I loved its flowers;
I wandered through the wild wood,
And sought its richest bowers.

Beside the waters meeting,
The fairest Scotland knows,
I gave it joyous greeting,
And wreathed its blossomed snows."

In the midst of such scenes her first sorrow came. Mary had been absent a week, and was returning from an evening visit in Edinburgh, when the sad news came to her ear, that her fond father had been translated, in a moment, without time to take leave of one of those he loved, to a better world. "Her sympathizing and weeping friends would have hung around, and watched her in that long pang of woe, but she entreated to be left alone; and when after an interval, their solicitude brought them back, they found her still on her knees, with her arms extended on the bed. Her eyes were streaming, but her heart was deriving strength and consolation, even under that crushing blow, from Him who 'hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted.' Tranquilized and sustained by this divine strength, she returned to the house of mourning; and it was remarked by those who were spectators of that sorrowful return, that no loud cry or unseemly wailing attended the meeting of the bereaved ones; and that Mary's bearing was that of one long