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A Mother's Last Prayer.

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“First our flowers die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.”

I was very young, scarcely beyond the verge of infancy; the last and most helpless of the three little girls who were gathered around my poor mother's death bed. When I look on the chain of my varied existence—that woof of gold and iron woven so strangely together—the remembrance of that young being who perished so early and so gently from the bosom of her family, forms the first sad link which ever gives forth a thrill of funeral music when my heart turns to it—music which becomes more deep-toned and solemn as that chain is strengthened by thought, and bound together by the events of successive years. The first human being that I can remember was my invalid mother, moving languidly about her home, with the paleness of disease sitting on her beautiful features, and a deep crimson spot burning with painful brightness in either cheek. I remember that her step became unsteady, and her voice fainter and more gentle day-by-day,

till at last she sunk to her bed, and we were called upon to witness her spirit go forth to the presence of Jehovah. They took me to her couch, and told me to look upon my mother before she died. Their words had no meaning to me then, but the whisper in which they were spoken thrilled painfully through my infant heart, and I felt that something terrible was about to happen. Pale, troubled faces were around that death pillow—stern men, with sad, heavy eyes—women overwhelmed with tears and sympathy, and children that huddled together shuddering and weeping, they knew not wherefore.

Filled with wonder and awe I crept to my mother, and burying my brow in the mass of rich brown hair that floated over her pillow, heavy with the damp of death, but still lustrous in spite of disease. I trembled and sobbed without knowing why, save that all around me was full of grief and lamentation. She murmured, and placed her pale hand on my head. My little heart swelled, but I lay motionless and filled with awe. Her lips moved, and a voice tremulous and very low came faintly over them. Those words, broken and sweet as they were, left the first dear impression that ever