

Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely little things,
Playing around the den of sorrow, clad
In smiles"—

how different when such an one struggles for a brief period with some overmastering disease, or, it may be, like the Shunammite's son, sits upon his mother's knee but from morn till noon, and then dies! Are the words, "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time," applicable with any propriety here? Is there aught beautiful in that form of sickness which has seized upon the little sufferer, banishing the bloom from his cheek, the lustre from his eye, the liveliness and action from his limbs? Aught beautiful in the shadows of dissolution evidently deepening around his head as hour succeeds to hour? Aught beautiful in the felt presence of what has been called "the king of terrors" hovering over the bed, and just about to launch his dart? Is there aught beautiful in this coffin, where the beloved object is hid for ever from view? or in this wide and yawning grave, where the mouldering body shall mingle with its kindred dust? "No!" would be the melancholy but necessary response of one who was unhappily a stranger to divine truth. "No!" is frequently the first impulsive answer of afflicted nature, even where the power of religion is not unknown—"there is nothing beautiful in all that has been mentioned; the dispensation is gloomy and forbidding." But Faith, when stirred into exercise, answers differently. To the inquiry, "Is it well?" its lips, though trembling with emotion as they speak, rejoin, "It is well."

How or in what sense well? Here our answer must of necessity be given in the conjectural form. Perhaps that child, had he been spared to grow up to mature years, might have lived only to pursue a course of iniquity, and thus to be a source of disgrace to his parents, and to bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Perhaps his removal may be a salutary lesson to those who feel his