

[ORIGINAL.]

MAGGIE'S LAST MESSAGE TO HER MOTHER.

It was a cold, dreary night, towards the close of November. The wind was howling and sweeping in fierce, irregular gusts, threatening every moment to level to the ground a wretched and dilapidated tenement, situated in a dark, gloomy street, in one of the worst localities of the city of R. In a room belonging to this building, if a place presenting such a picture of utter misery and discomfort could be dignified by such an appellation, sat, or rather crouched, a woman. Her face was buried in her hands, and she seemed lost in reflections of a most painful and bitter nature. As she raised her head, she disclosed a countenance wearing an expression of hard, silent grief—like one upon whom some great sorrow had fallen, and who was rendered unnaturally calm by the very intensity of the blow. There were no tears in her eyes, but they seemed to burn with a fierce, feverish light. She rose from the crouching attitude which she had hitherto assumed, and drawing out an old box, began carefully folding and arranging in it various little articles of dress, which had evidently belonged to a child. It was with a sort of deep, lingering tenderness, that she laid aside each little worn and faded garment; for oh! with what a strange, mystic sanctity does the great poet, Death, invest every object, however apparently trivial or insignificant, that is associated with the memory of a loved one, who has crossed the dark river! When she had finished folding the last article, she carried the box to a closet that stood at the farther end of the room. No sound of weeping escaped her, as she consigned to their place of concealment those relics of her lost little one. Lost, indeed, to that poor mother, for no sweet voice whispered in her ear those words of heavenly consolation, "Not lost, but gone before," and to her there was no hope of a glorious reunion. Mechanically she took up a little well-worn bible, evidently with no expectation of receiving either comfort or direction from its sacred teachings, but probably in fulfilment of a promise made to her dying child. As she opened the book, there fell from between its leaves a piece of paper. She was about carefully to replace it, supposing it to be one of her little Maggie's marks, when her attention was suddenly arrested by these words, traced in the irregular characters of a child's hand: "Mother, Jesus loves you; won't you love him too, and meet Maggie in heaven?" Again and again the poor woman read those simple, childish words. There was nothing new in them. Often and often had Maggie pleaded with her mother in those very words: but now they seemed to come home to that poor mother's heart with an irresistible power, as if they were, through her child, a direct message from God to her guilty soul. The fountain of her deep, stony grief was broken up; the eyes, which had burned before, but refused to weep, were now streaming in tears.

The one miserable candle, that had lighted her dreary room, had long since gone out, and the few scattered embers on the hearth had exhausted themselves; but still she sat, heeding neither cold nor darkness, her whole soul absorbed in the one burning desire to find the Saviour of her little Maggie. During the hours of this dreary night every sin of her life seemed to pass in dark array before her memory's eye, and to overwhelm her soul with the deepening thought that the love of Jesus could not embrace a sinner of so deep a dye.