

of my Saviour—that no privations, no toils, no sufferings, are too great for his children to endure for his sake.”

And in her diary the following remarks, written about the same period, show that her mind was not altogether a stranger to such thoughts:—

“When I reflect on the multitudes of my fellow-creatures who are perishing for lack of vision, and that I am living at ease, without aiding in the promulgation of the gospel, I am almost ready to wish myself a man, that I might spend my life with the poor heathen. But I check the thought, and would not alter one plan of infinite Wisdom. I can, however, cheerfully think of enduring pain and hardship for them and for my Redeemer. Has he not given his life for multitudes now perishing, as well as for my soul? And Oh, how basely ungrateful and selfish in me, to sit down quietly in the care of self, without making any exertion for their salvation! But what can I do? A weak ignorant female. One thing only do I see—my prayers may be accepted. Yes I will plead with my heavenly Father, that he may be a Father to the poor benighted heathen.”

It was not long before an opportunity occurred of testing the sincerity of these feelings in regard to the heathen. Having become acquainted with Mr. Winslow, who was then a student in the seminary at Andover, an attachment sprung up between them. Her young friend was preparing for the ministry, but his inclinations were decidedly in favour of a Missionary life. Harriet's mind was accordingly directed more than ever to the great subject of missions, and it became with her a matter of serious inquiry whether it was her duty to leave all for the sake of the heathen. She set herself to a careful self-examination and earnest prayer, that she might be fully assured as to the will of the Lord in regard to her. For some time her mind was tortured with anxiety on the subject, and in a letter to her mother she thus gives vent to her feelings:—

“Sometimes I feel an absolute necessity for determining whether I can leave all that my heart holds most dear on earth, and encounter the toils and hardships of a missionary's life; but again I realize my insufficiency to decide a thing of so much importance. Indeed I would not decide for myself: I cannot. I must trust solely to Him who has promised grace and strength. When I ask myself if I can endure a separation from such friends as mine, my answer, is uniformly, ‘We must be separated in a few days; and can I refuse to suffer a little for Him who has redeemed my soul by the sacrifice of himself? Oh! dear mother, I need your prayers. Admitting that Mr. W. continues in doubt on the subject of a mission; that he may not decide for a year; and that then the probability that he will go or stay is equal; must I decide on my own course this spring? Do tell me your opinion. Although willing to leave the event to Providence, trusting that I shall be satisfied with His appointments, I cannot wholly drive the subject from my mind; and there are seasons when I am almost overpowered by it.”

The parents of Harriet were by no means friendly, for a time at least, to her projected undertaking, and the decided opposition which they evinced, was to her affectionate heart, peculiarly painful. And in addition to the harassing circumstances in which she was

thus placed, it may be mentioned, that her disposition was constitutionally of a melancholy cast, and this tendency had been considerably aggravated by the injudicious indulgence, in early childhood, in the perusal of novels and romances—a practice which by inducing a sickly sentimentalism of feeling, and imparting distorted views of men and things, leads, in general, to a total unsuitness for the active duties of everyday life. The anxiety, however, of Miss Lathrop's mind at length gave place to a settled conviction that it was her duty to embark in the Missionary cause. The letter in which she conveyed this her decided resolution to Mr. Winslow, is expressed in strong language.

“Had I ten thousand tongues, methinks they could not all express the gratitude I feel for ‘light and comfort from above.’ Oh, let us magnify the Lord, and exalt his name altogether!” For many weeks I looked, (and I thought earnestly) for light, but behold, obscurity; for brightness, but I walked in darkness. The last week, however, God has been pleased to bring me, with more child-like dependance, to the foot of the cross, and there led me, step by step, until I have communion with Him from his mercy-seat; with more delight, perhaps, than ever before. The grand objections of health and friends, seem now to have become comparatively of little consequence. For the first, I am assured that my prospect of enduring the voyage and climate, is quite as good as Mrs. Nott's, when she left America; though the previous preparation might be a subject of concern, did I not believe that if God has a work for me to do in a heathen land, he will prepare me for it. The silent tear of parental affection and solicitude would indeed overpower me, had I not confidence that He who thus afflicts, will support my beloved parents. Surely, if I can trust in this Almighty arm for my support in so great an undertaking, I cannot question but my God will be their God. And what though we are early separated, and that under peculiarly painful circumstances, ‘Our journey here, though darksome, joyless, and forlorn, is yet but short.’ I feel an inexpressible pleasure in recommending them to heaven; assured that they will be enabled to give up their child, without regret, in the hope that she will do good to perishing souls. Let them be constantly in your prayers; and, O, my friend, may we be henceforth faithful to our own souls, as well as the cause of Christ. It is possible that we may yet be in an error; let us ‘pray always, with all prayer and supplication; making known our requests unto God.’”

This resolution which was formed in the winter of 1816, led Harriet to commence preparing herself for the important work in which she expected to be ere long engaged. With this view she removed, in the following summer, to Litchfield, Connecticut, that she might pursue a course of theological reading, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Beecher. In a short time, however, she was compelled, by ill health, to return home. It was during this brief absence that her parents seem to have become reconciled to the step which their beloved Harriet was about to take. Nay, the language in which the change in her mother's feelings is couched breathes so much of a truly christian spirit of submission to the divine will, that we cannot refrain from quoting them.