

XXII. THE DYING BOY.

(Anonymous.)

It must be sweet in childhood, to give back
The Spirit to its Maker ; ere the heart
Has grown familiar with the paths of sin
And sown—to garner up its bitter fruits.
—I knew a boy whose infant feet had trod
Upon the blossoms of some seven springs,
And when the eighth came round and called him
out
To revel in its light, he turned away,
And sought his chamber to lie down and die.
’Twas night—he summoned his accustomed
friends,
And, in this wise, bestowed his last bequest :

“Mother, I’m dying now !
There is deep suffocation in my breast,
As if some heavy hand my bosom pressed ;
And on my brow

I feel the cold sweat stand ;
My lips grow dry and tremulous, and my breath
Comes feebly up. O, tell me is this death ?
Mother, your hand—

Here—lay it on my wrist
And place the other thus beneath my head,
And say, sweet mother, say, when I am dead,
Shall I be missed ?

Never beside your knee
Shall I kneel down again at night to pray,
Nor with morning wake and sing the lay
You taught to me.

Oh, at the time of prayer,
When you look round and see a vacant seat ;
You will not wait then for my coming feet :
You’ll miss me there !”

“Father—I’m going home !
To the good home you spoke of, that blest land

Where it is one bright summer always, and
Storms do never come.

I must be happy then,
From pain and death you say I shall be free ;
That sickness never enters there, and we
Shall meet again !”

“Brother—The little spot
I used to call my garden, where long hours
We’ve stayed to watch the budding things and
flowers.

Forget it not.

Plant there some box or pine ;
Something that grows in winter, and will be
A verdant offering to my memory,
And call it mine !”

“Sister—The young rose tree—
That all the Spring has been my pleasant care,
Just putting out its leaves so green and fair,
I give to thee.

And when its roses bloom—
I shall be gone away, my short life done ;
But will you not bestow a single one
Upon my tomb ?”

“Now, mother, sing the tune
You sang last night ; I’m weary, and must sleep.”
“Who was it called my name ? Nay, do not weep,
You’ll all soon come !”

Morning spread over earth her rosy wings
And that meek sufferer, cold and ivory pale,
Lay on his couch asleep. The gentle air
Came through the open window, freighted with
The savoury labours of the early spring—
He breathed it not. The laugh of passers by
Jarr’d like a discord in some mournful tune,
But marr’d not his slumbers. *He was dead.*

XXIII. A MOUND IS IN THE GRAVE YARD.

(By Mrs. Judson.)

1.
A mound is in the grave yard,
A short and narrow bed ;
No grass is growing on it,
And no marble at its head :
Ye may go and weep beside it,
Ye may kneel, and kiss the sod,
But ye’ll find no balm for sorrow,
In the cold and silent clod.

2.
There is anguish in the household,
It is desolate and lone,
For a fondly cherished nursling,
From the parent nest has flown :
A little form is missing,
A heart has ceased to beat ;
And the chain of love lies shattered,
At the desolator’s feet.