

requiem, but she heard it not. As the clods fell on the coffin the words of the beautiful liturgy reached her ear, but her heart failed to comprehend their meaning, and the lines about the mouth only grew firmer, while the face took to itself a more stony pallor. As the voice of the minister ceased, the friends turned from the grave wondering why she, whom he had loved more than them all, could feel his death so little, for "she did not shed a tear," said one. But He who knew her best knew that as the bell tolled its burden of sorrow, her every feeling was "bewailing and toiling within like a funeral bell." Silently she returned to her now desolate home, and heaven alone heard the mournful cry, "O God, my heart is broken! my heart is broken! O for death, for rest!" But the time for tears is not yet, for voices say "mamma," and childish wants must be met. Perhaps it is better so, God knows. Perhaps there is comfort and rest in activity alone, and though she wearily feels there is work for her to do, the children are calling her from her selfish sorrow to show her that there is yet something left to live for, and it may be that there is yet happiness in store, though their father's place be vacant. It may be that the father shall live again in the son, and the wise Controller of destinies shall, by the hand of the children, bring her "out of darkness into light," for He alone can tell the blackness of that darkness, the fear and the sorrow; the aching of heart; the restless, unsatisfied longing; the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish.

"Mamma," and the voices sound impatient, "we haven't seen you to-day, won't you tell us the story about the boy that said, 'My head?'" and the little faces looked so troubled that she could not resist, and, taking the baby in her arms, while Willie leaned on her knee, she repeated that story which has touched so many a mother's heart. "And now my children must go to bed," but the baby pleaded "Sing 'Jesus Loves Me,' mamma?" Could she sing that of all hymns, for was it true? No, it could not be. It was no loving hand that had loosed the silver cord and borne away the thing she had loved best; no loving hand that had orphaned her babes, and left her own heart crushed and bleeding, and she would have said, "I cannot sing to-night, baby," but the little head nestled on her

shoulder, and the little eyes looked into hers so trustingly that she could not, and yielding to the request, sang that hymn that lulls to sleep so many little ones. Then the prayers had to be said before the good-night was exchanged, and mamma must repeat them as usual. Never before had the task seemed difficult. "Our Father which art in heaven"—what did that mean? She could not feel that the petition was hers. "Thy will be done." No, she could not say that, but the baby even remembered it to-night, and both the children thought mamma had forgotten her prayers, as Willie said, "because papa had gone away, and was not there to teach her to say them."

Soon the little tongues were still, and the little eyes closed for the night, but the mother could not sleep. Hour after hour she sadly communed with her bereavement. At last, from force of habit, she opened the Bible that lay in its accustomed place on the table—Gerald's Bible. Mechanically she turned the leaves. It was full of marked passages, and one underscored with red caught and detained her eye, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Rest!" What did it mean? Was there rest for her? "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. . . . And ye shall find rest unto your souls." Surely her soul needed rest. But learn of Him who had thus grievously afflicted her? and she turned once more to the window. Through the darkness one star was shining faintly but surely, and as the clouds rolled away it shone out in all its strength and clearness, seeming to repeat, "I will give you rest." And as the moon rose above the horizon, in her quiet beauty she whispered, "I will give you rest." Again she turned the sacred pages, and this time the message was "I, even I, am he that comforteth you." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Yes, that was what she wanted, and from the depths of despair burst the petition, "Lord, teach me." Long and bitter was the struggle, but as the morning sun crept in at the casement, it fell upon a mourner who had been comforted, a heavy-laden one who had found rest.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]