

Family Reading.

SCHOOL LIFE.

I sat in the school of sorrow,
The Master was teaching there;
But my eyes were dim with weeping,
And my heart was full of care.

I sat in the school of sorrow,
And seeing his face divine,
As full of the love of God,
For weary hearts like mine.

I only thought of the burden,
The cross that before me lay,
So hard, and heavy to carry,
That darkened the light of day.

So I could not learn my lesson,
And say, "Thy will be done!"
And the Master came not near me,
As the weary hours went on.

At last, in my heavy sorrow,
I looked from the school above;
And I saw the Master watching,
With a glance of tender love.

He turned to the cross before me,
And I thought I heard Him say—
"My child, thou must bear thy burden,
And learn thy task to-day."

"I may not tell the reason;
Thy will be done for thee to know,
That I, the Master, am teaching,
And give this cup of sorrow."

So I stooped to that weary sorrow,
One look at that face divine
Had given me power to trust Him,
And say, "Thy will, my mine."

And thus I learnt my lesson,
And by the Master's hand;
He only knows the tears I shed;
For He has won His own.

But from them came a brightness,
Straight from the Home above,
Where the school life is ended,
And the cross will show the love.

—Elizabeth A. Godwin, Clifton.

COME HOME, MOTHER!

By Nellie Brook.

Day after day passed by, and Mr. Morton grew rapidly better. His was by no means a bad case of fever; but with poor little Lucy it was different; and the kind-hearted doctor looked grave when he called to see her.

Her sunny gleams were all cut off for the sake of keeping her head cool, and the sweet eyes that had so often beamed with love, or glistened with tears of sorrow and anxiety, now gleamed wildly with delirium. Since the day when Lucy was taken ill, Mrs. Morton had not left the house once; neither had she taken anything but the most necessary food.

One who would trust her, or she might have taken something on the first day or two of her child's illness. But as time passed on, the desire for it grew weaker; and as her attention became absorbed with her husband and Lucy, she seemed to forget or be unconscious of the cravings of her fatal appetite.

Mr. Morton soon got about again; and in his weakness he watched beside the bed of his suffering child, assisting his wife as much as he could. He did not express any surprise at seeing his wife at home all day, sober; but it filled him with a thrill of joy, for he had long length, Lucy would have long delirium.

The disease was now to take a turn either for better or worse. It was a dim, snowy afternoon, and she had been sleeping for several hours. The house was quiet; and in the room where the sick child lay, sat her father, dozing, and her mother, who was watching the baby who lay on the sofa.

The mother's eyes were fixed on the shabby bed, and presently she noticed a slight movement beneath the clothes. The next moment Lucy turned a glance of quiet wonder round upon her mother, and said, in a voice so low and weak that it did not reach her father's ears, "How long have I been to sleep, mother?"

"Not very long, dear," whispered her mother.

"Dear," poor Lucy drank in the word eagerly, and it to herself two or three times, and then fixed her sunken eyes upon her mother.

"But I have been dreaming a long time," continued the child. "Have I been ill?"

"Yes; you have had the fever, Lucy. But you will soon be well now, dear."

"Dear," Lucy could scarcely believe her own ears. It was such a long time since she had heard words of endearment from her mother's lips. She closed her eyes to keep back the starting tears.

"How have you managed since I have been ill?" she whispered, with an old feeling of anxiety, which she had so often in the habit of manifesting.

"I have managed very well, Lucy; I've been at home every day. Now you mustn't talk, or else you'll never get well. Go to sleep a little bit longer," said the mother, softly.

"At home every day?" Lucy thought of the murmurs and thanksgivings to God. Then she lay for a long time with closed eyes; but she was not asleep.

When her father awoke, and found that his child was conscious once more, he was very glad and thankful. He stooped to kiss her hand, and then he sat looking at her as she looked up at him, with a sweet smile. She was too weak to talk to him, and he forbade her to try; but every now and then she pressed his hand with her thin fingers.

She took a little delicate food during the evening which her kind-hearted doctor had supplied her with; but it did not seem to do her any good. When he called to see her, the parents looked anxious, for his face was very grave. Mr. Morton tremblingly asked him if he thought she would recover, and the doctor answered, "If it be God's will, my friend, she will. His will is best; try to be contented with whatever it may be."

When the children were all gone to bed, the mother took her place for the night beside Lucy's bed. She tried to persuade her husband to go and lie down; but he would not. He had always loved Lucy very tenderly; and now that her life was in danger, he could not bear the thought of leaving her for his own gratification.

At midnight Mrs. Morton heard a voice call, "Mother."

She leaped down to the sick child, and said, "Now, don't speak, Lucy; I have got to go. Don't say that, mother," pleaded Lucy, in a low and weak voice, "I must talk to you just a little bit before I go, because I really am going."

Mrs. Morton feared that her mind was wandering again, and she said, "Going where, dear?"

"Home!" said the child, with a faint smile. And she added, with tears glistening in her bright eyes, "I almost wish God had let me stay longer to help you, because I'm afraid you'll want me. But He knows best, don't He, mother?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said the mother, in a tone of anguish. Mr. Morton woke up from a doze at this moment, and he drew near to the bed.

"Dear father!" said Lucy, in a low, loving tone.

"What is it, my dear?" he said.

"We shall all be happy together some day, don't you think?" she said, her face glowing with a heavenly light.

"I hope so indeed," he replied fervently.

"But up there I mean," she responded, looking upward. "You will be sure to come, won't you, father? Since I have been ill it seems as if I had been dreaming all the time—sometimes lovely things about the angels in white robes, and the city of pure gold, and the sea of glass, and the harpers with crowns on their heads; but most often I was dreaming things that made me feel so dreadful."

"She paused, and then continued, almost in a whisper, "I thought I was following you about the world, looking dreadful places—over rough hills, and through thorny roads, and up dark streets full of evil men, wicked people, who knocked me about, and made me feel, because I could not help crying while I called out to you every minute to come home. And you wouldn't come, mother."

though we were all crying for you; and my heart seemed as if it would break. O it was so dreadful! But you are at home now, mother, dear; and your face looks so kind, not like it used to. It would always look so if you would always stay at home; and you will, won't you, mother? I won't have any more of that dreadful dream."

"No, no, never!" interrupted her mother, with choking sobs; for she knew that the child was going to speak about Lucy. I am sorry, my child, to think how wicked I've been to you all! Oh I seem in despair when I think of the children—how I've left them, and what an awful example I've left to them! Poor little things, all in rags, left without any one to care for them and love them, for years! Oh, I'm too wicked to be forgiven; there's no punishment too bad for me."

She sank down by the bedside, and covered her face with her hands, while her body shook with emotion.

Lucy reached out her hand, and laid it on her mother's head. "Dear mother," she said, "God doesn't think you are too wicked to be forgiven: He loves those who are sorry for their sins. You have done what the Bible says; 'He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus tell everybody to come and be pardoned, no matter how many sins they have done.'"

"Ah, I've forsaken Him," moaned her mother. "I used to love Him; but I have wandered from Him."

"But you can come home, mother, if you have wandered," whispered Lucy. "Do come; ask God to lead you home to his fold, and then we shall all meet in the heavenly home. O do come, come home, mother!"

"Yes I will, God helping me!" cried the mother. "But now you mustn't talk any more, Lucy," she added, as the child closed her eyes in utter exhaustion.

Lucy's lips moved; but no sound came forth. She lay for a minute or two motionless as the dead; then making a great effort she unclosed her eyes, and said, "I won't speak any more now, but I promise to come home. God bless you, mother. Kiss me, and father, too."

They both leaned down and kissed her, but she had not strength to return the pressure of their lips. Then she lay perfectly still, and they thought that she slept. Ah, visions of beauty were breaking on her enraptured spirit. In company with bright-winged angels, she was going up the shining way to her home!

So calmly did the soul leave the little world, that her watching parents did not know that their child was no longer feeling alarmed by the awful stillness of her repose, they ventured to call her name, and touch her little hand. Then they discovered that the child's short but painful pilgrimage was over, and that she had entered into the rest of her everlasting home.

Some one has beautifully said that "the mother of angels should walk softly." Yet, how many mothers are there who, although they have children in heaven—angels always beholding the face of our Father who is in heaven—do not walk in remembrance of the solemn fact. How and why?

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plemented by any fresh conceit of your own? Are you faithless? God is faithful. With you, it may be you and nay; with him it is yes and amen. Some of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt depended upon God. They saw that he had divided the Red Sea, and rained down the manna, and refreshed them with streams in the desert, and so they believed; but their faith did not hold out. While they could see miracles of mercy, they relied on God, with nothing else to rely on; but when they were into a little difficult place, they held fast the beginning of their confidence unto the end, for they began to lose faith in Moses, or to confide in a golden calf. So there are some that begin, in a time of weakness, calamity, or despondence, by saying, "I trust in Christ, as a sinner. They get beyond that, and they recover from their temporary depression. Then they qualify their confessions after their altered circumstances, and elect their religion after their own deliberate choice. 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