

Poetry.

"ONLY WAITING."

Q. A very aged man in an almshouse was asked what he was doing? He replied "ONLY WAITING!"

Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown.
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam is down:
Till the night of earth is faded
From the heart, once full of day:
Till the stars of Heaven are breaking
Through the twilight soft and grey.

Only waiting till the reapers
Have the last sheaf gathered home,
For the summer time is faded,
And the autumn winds have come;
Quickly, reapers! gather quickly
The last ripe hours of my heart,
For the bloom of life is withered,
And I hasten to depart.

Only waiting till the angels
Open wide the mystic gate,
At whose feet I long have lingered,
Weary poor and desolate,
Even now I hear their footsteps
And their voices far away;
If they call me I am waiting,
Only waiting to obey.

Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown.
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam is down:
Then from out the gathering darkness
Holy, deathless stars shall rise,
By whose light my soul shall gladly
Tread its pathway to the skies.

Select Cule.

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

As the importance of education becomes more and more appreciated by the people, the difficulty of obtaining well qualified teachers, is proportionably realized. For- eigners may be profoundly learned, or highly accomplished, but the political and moral- dioms of our Republic are to be studied, and the mind in some measure weaned from established trains of thought, ere it can as- similate with those whom it is expected to modify. The inhabitants of different sec- tions of our own Union, must submit in some degree to the same subjugating pro- cess. The northern youth, who engages in the business of instruction at the sunny south, perceives a necessity of conforming to new usages, ere he can be in harmony with those around. Even natives of different por- tions of the State, must take pains to adapt themselves to a new neighborhood, or family where they are to operate, if they would hope their efforts to be attended with full success.

Is it understood, that in every family of brothers and sisters, there is a teacher whom it is not necessary to naturalise as a foreign- er? or as a stranger to incite to sympathy? While she aids intellectual progress, her influence on the disposition and manners— her moral and religious suasion, are still more visible and enduring. She enjoys and reciprocates the love of those who receive her lessons. Year after year, she continues her ministrations.

It will be evident, that I speak of the eldest daughter. Her sympathy with her pupils must doubtless be greater than that of other teachers. They are her bone, and her flesh.—They come to her with more freedom than even to the parent; so that the extent of her sway is not easy either to limit or to compute.

Many excellent elder daughters has it been my good fortune to know, who realised their responsibility to the Great Teacher, and were filled with tenderness to the mo- ther, whose mission they partook, and to the dear ones who looked to them for an example. I think, at this moment, of one who was the light and life of a large circle of little ones. They hung on the lineaments of her sweet countenance, and imbibed joy. From her lovely, winning manners, they fashioned their own. If temporary sadness stole over them, she knew the approach to their hearts, and her sweet music, and sweeter words cheered them back to happiness. If there were among them exuberance of mirth, or symp- toms of lawlessness, or indications of dis- cord, she clothed herself with the temporary dignity of the parent, and prevailed. When sickness was among them, no eye, save that of the mother, could so long hold waking as hers. No other arm was so tireless in sus- taining the helpless form, or the weary head. The infant seemed to have two mothers, and to be in doubt which most to love. Often, in gazing on her radiant countenance, I said mentally—"What a preparation are you giving yourself for your own future duties.— Happy the man who shall be permitted to appropriate to himself such a treasure."

Still, at her joyous bridal, there was sor- row; the tears of the little sisters. They clasped her in their tiny arms—they would scarcely be persuaded to resign her. After they had retired to rest, they were heard lamenting—

"Who now will sing us songs when we are sad? and teach us such plays as made us wiser and better? Now, when we tear our frocks, who will help us to mend them? and

when we are naughty; who will bring us back to goodness?"

I have seen another elder daughter; to whose sole care, a feeble mother committed one of her little ones. With what warm gratitude, with what a sublime purpose, did she accept the sacred gift. She opened her young heart to the new occupant. She took the babe to her room—she lulled it to sleep on her bosom—it shared her couch. Soon its lisping tones mingled with her applica- tions. She fed the unfolding mind with the gentlest dews of piety—"the small rain upon the tender herb." From her it learned to love the Bible, the Sabbath, and perseverance in the path that leads to heaven. And it was early taken there. In the arms of that eldest sister its soul was rendered up. But not until it had given proof, for a few years of happy childhood, that it was one of the lambs of the Saviour's flock. Afterwards I saw that same eldest daughter in a family of her own. To heighten the happiness, and elevate the character of those around her, were her objects. And she knew how, for she had learned it before. Thorough expe- rience in the culture of the disinterested affections, gave her an immense vantage ground, for the new duties of a wife and mother. They were performed with ease to herself, and were beautiful in the eyes of ob- servers. The children of others were en- trusted to her husband to be educated, and she became a mother to them. And I could not but bless the Giver of every good and perfect gift, that the hallowed influences to which that eldest daughter had given such exercise under the paternal roof, might now go forth into the bosom of strangers, take root in distant homes; and perhaps, in an- other hemisphere, or in an unborn age, bring forth the fruits of immortality.

The assistance which may be afforded to parents, by the eldest daughter, is invaluable. What other hand could so effectually aid them, in the great work of training up their children to usefulness and piety? Filial gratitude is among the noblest motive to this enterprise. Many young ladies have been thus actuated to become the instructors in different branches, of their brothers and sisters, or regularly to study their lessons with them, and hear them recite, ere they went to their stated teachers; or to assume the whole charge of their classical instruction.

I was acquainted with an elder sister, who every morning, when the younger children were about to depart to their separate schools, took them into a room by themselves, and imparted most kindly and seriously such ad- vice, admonition, or encouragement, as had a visible effect on their moral conduct, in enabling them both to resist temptation, and to be steadfast in truth and goodness.

But I have been much affected with the history of one, who amid circumstances of peculiar trial, was not only to those younger than herself, but to her parents, and espe- cially to her widowed and sorrowing father, as a guardian angel.

It is more than a century since Egde, a native of Norway, moved with pity for the benighted Greenlanders, left a pleasant abode, and an affectionate flock, to become their missionary. His wife, and four young chil- dren accompanied him. Their privations and hardships, it is difficult either to de- scribe or to imagine, amid an ignorant, de- graded people, and in that terrible climate, where rayless darkness is superadded to the bitter frost of winter, so that it is necessary to shrink into subterranean cells and feed incessantly the train-oil lamp, lest the spark of life should be extinguished.

Little Ulrica saw her mother continually sustaining and cheering her father, amid labors which long seemed to be without hope. She heard her read to him by the glimmering never dying lamp, from the few books they had brought from their father- land. She observed how cheerfully she de- nied herself, for the sake of others, and with what a sweet smile she discharged her daily duties. She perceived that light and warmth might be kept within the soul, while all around was dark and desolate, and gave her young heart to the God from whom such gifts proceeded.

When the sun, after long absence, once more appeared over the icy wastes, glorious, as if new-created, and in a few moments sank again beneath the horizon, the mis- sionary and his wife sometimes climbed the high rocks, to meet the herald beams, and to welcome their first, brief visit. Ulrica, fol- lowing in their footsteps, with the children, earnestly incited them to love and revere the Great Being, who called forth that wondrous orb with a word, and sent him on errands of mercy to the earth, and to the children of men. And when the light of a summer whose sun never set, was around them, and the few juniper and birch trees gleamed out in sudden foliage, and the reindeer brows- ed among the mosses, and the long day

which knew no evening, fell upon the senses with a sort of oppressive brightness, she sometimes led her little sister to the shore of the solemn sea, and raising her in her arms, as some far seen iceberg towered along in awful majesty, bade her to fear and obey the God who ruleth the mighty deep, and all that is therein.

The mother was the teacher of her chil- dren. Especially, during the long solitude of the Greenland winters, was it her busi- ness and pleasure to form their minds, and to fortify them against ignorance and evil. Ulrica drank the deepest of this lore. Often while the younger ones slept, did she listen delighted to the legends of other days, and bow herself to the spirit of that blessed Book, which speaks of a clime where there is no sterility, or tempest, or tear. When the father, accompanied by the son, older than herself, was abroad in the duties of his vocation, among the miserable inhabitants of the squalid cabins, Ulrica sat at the feet of her mother, sole auditor, surrendering to her her whole heart. But what she learned was treasured for the little brother and sister. Every lesson was carefully pondered, and broken into fragments, for their weaken com- prehension. She dealt out to them daily portions of knowledge, as the bread from heaven. She poured it out warily, like water in the wilderness, bidding them "drink and live."

It was in the spring of 1733, that the poor Greenlanders were visited by a wasting epi- demic. The small pox broke out among them with a fury which nothing could with- stand. Egde assuming the benevolent office of physician, was continually among them. He gave medicines to the infected, and night and day, besought the dying to look unto the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Dwelling after dwelling was left empty and desolate, and the population, al- ways thin, in that sterile clime, melted away, as snow before the vernal sun. Orphans fled to their pastor for shelter, and sick, to be nursed and healed. Every part of his house was a hospital, where the sufferers lay thick- ly, side by side. Some, who had been his open enemies, and coarsely reviled his counsels; were there, in frightful agonies, soblont- ed and disfigured as scarcely to retain a res- tige of humanity. One of them, when re- covering, came to him with a penitent and broken spirit, confessing the worth of that religion which could enable him thus to bless his persecutors.

Through this fearful calamity, which lasted for many months, the wife of Egde, with her children, patiently and kindly tended the sick, who thronged their habitation. But when the judgment was withdrawn, and health re- visited the invalids, and among the diminished number of survivors, were indications of that religious sensibility which more than repaid all her toils, she herself became the victim of sudden decline. "Death has come for me," she said to her husband. "In the cold cup which he presses to my lips, there is no bit- terness, save that I must leave you, while your desires for the conversion of our people are unaccomplished." To Ulrica, her con- stant nurse, tireless both night and day, she committed the younger children, towards whom she had so long evinced a sweet com- bination of sisterly and maternal care. She heard these little ones wailing around her bed, and comforted them with the hope, wherewith she was herself comforted of God. She dictated messages of holy love, to her eldest son, who pursuing his theological stud- ies in Denmark, she must no more embrace on earth. And so, in that lone Greenland hut, she met the last enemy, and with the grasp and struggle, mingled a hymn of vic- tory and praise.

Around her grave, there stood only the lone missionary and his three children. He was borne down and bewildered by this ter- rible visitation. In all his forms of adver- sity, and they had been many, it did not ap- pear to have entered his imagination, that the beautiful being, so much younger than himself, so firm in health, so fresh in spirit, who from early youth had been to him, as another soul of strength and hope, should be taken, and he left alone. Then it was, that Ulrica realized, that her sacred charge com- prised not only the motherless children, but the sorrowing parent. Asking strength from above, to tread in the footsteps of her saint- ed mother, she came forward, and gave her arm firmly to the bereaved man, who, like a reed shaken by the blast, wavered to and fro, on the verge of the yawning, uncovered grave, where lay the lifeless form of his idol- ized companion. It was most touching to see the fragile nature of a beautiful young girl, gird itself both to shelter the blossom and to prop the tree which the lightning had scathed.

Suppressing her own grief, she taxed every energy to soothe and comfort her father.— Strongly resembling her mother, in person, she had the same clear, blue eye, the same profuse, flaxen hair, the same mild, yet re- solved cast of features. So much like hers, also, were the sweet, inspiring tones of her voice, that the poor bereaved sometimes start- ed from his reverie, with a wild hope, that sank but in deeper dejection. Hourly, it was her study to minister to his comfort. Care- fully did she provide his raiment, and when he went forth, so wrap his furs about him, as to defend him from the cold, for he seemed less assiduous than formerly to guard his own health and life. She spread his humble board as her mother had been accustomed to spread it; but often, when she urged him to take refreshment, he was as one who heard not, and bowed himself down to pray. Then she knelt softly by his side, and her supplications ascended with those of the deeply-stricken soul. He would sit for hours in silence, with his head resting upon his bosom, or during their long, long evening, gaze motionless on the seat, which his best beloved had so long occupied. Amazed at the weight, and endur- ance of his grief, the younger children, who often strove to wait on and cheer him, as they had seen their mother do, sobbed forth their sorrows, as if they anew bade her farewell. But Ulrica never faultered, was never dis- couraged, though her heart was pierced at his despair.

One morning her voice sounded in his ear like that of an angel; Dear father; dear fa- ther! your son is here! And the next mo- ment the young missionary, Paul Egde, rushed into his arms.

He had returned from Europe, his educa- tion completed, to share in the labors of his father. Scarcely had he embraced his sis- ters, ere the bereaved parent said: "Come forth, my son, and see the grave of your mother. Let me hear you pray there." The re-union with his first born, and the tender assidues of Ulrica, aided by the blessing of heaven, began to lift up his broken spirit. He employed himself in his parochial duties, particularly in translating into the rude dialect of Greenland, simple treatises, and ca- techisms, which he circulated as widely as possible among his people. He accepted with kindness the attention of his children, and spoke tenderly to them; but it was evi- dent that he looked for consolation only to- wards heaven, and to the hope of meeting his beautiful kindred spirit, where they could be sundered no more.

Three years of his mournful widowhood had past, when a request came from the king of Denmark, that he would no longer exile himself, but return, and accept a professor- ship in a newly founded seminary for orphan students.

Infirm health admonished him that he could not much longer hope to resist the severity of a Greenland climate, and bidding an af- fectionate adieu to the people, among whom he had so painfully labored, and entrusting them to the care of his eldest son Paul, he committed himself, with his three remaining children, to the tossing of the northern deep. What joyous wonder filled their young hearts at the prospect of a country where there was no long night, where the grain would have time to ripen, ere the frosts came, and where they might be able to live on the surface of the earth, the whole year.

A return to the blessings of civilization, the warm welcome of friends, and the re- kindling of early, healthful associations, re- newed the spirit of Egde, and gave him vigor for the duties that devolved upon him. Ulrica was in his path, as an ever-gliding sunbeam, while the pleasures of intellectual society, with the heightened advantages for educating her brother and sister, filled her heart with delighted gratitude, and added new radiance to her exceeding beauty. Her early history and peculiar virtues excited the inter- est of all around, while the loveliness of her person and manners won many admirers.— Yet she steadfastly resisted every allure- ment to quit her father, sensible that his enfeebled constitution required those attentions which she best knew how to bestow; and the holy light which beamed from her eyes, while thus devoting herself to him, and to his children, revealed the exquisite happiness of disinter- ested virtue.

But it was not long ere Egde was con- vinced that the approaching infirmities of age demanded repose. He, therefore, retired to a lovely cottage in the island of Falster, sepa- rated from Zealand by only a narrow chan- nel of the sea. There, amid the rural scen- ery which he loved, and in the faithful dis- charge of every remaining duty of benevo- lence and piety, he calmly awaited the sum- mons to another life. Ulrica read to him that sacred Book which was his solace, for his failing sight was no longer equal to this office; and no voice entered his ear so read- ily, and so much like a song-bird, as her own. With the help of her brother and sister, she cultivated a small garden, and it was touch-

ing to see them, in a dewy summer's morn- ing, bearing his arm-chair out among his favorite plants, and aiding his tottering steps to a seat among them.

There, dignified and peaceful, like the pa- triarch beneath the oaks of Mamre, he com- muned with the works of God, or gave les- sons of wisdom to his descendants. Every new shoot, each tendril that, during the night, had thrust further onward its little, clasping hand, were to him as living friends. The freshness of a perpetually renewed creation seemed to enter into his aged heart and pre- serve there somewhat of the lingering spirit of youth, while the clay tended downward to- ward the dust. When neither his staff nor the arms of his children could longer sup- port his drooping form, and he went no more forth amid the works of nature, Ulrica brought her fairest flowers to his pillow and duly dressed the vase on the table by his bed- side, and his dim eye blessed her. Thither, with slow and downy footsteps, death stole, and Ulrica, overcoming the emotion that swept over her, like deep billows, girdled herself to sing the hymn with which he had been wont to console the dying; and when his parting smile beamed forth, and the white lips, for the last time, murmured "peace," she pressed her trembling hand on his closing eyes, sooth- ed the wild burst of grief of the wailing chil- dren, and kneeling down, in her orphan bit- terness, commanded them to that pitying Father who never dies.

It was affecting to see her forgetting her own sorrow when others were to be cheered or cared for, and attending with a clear mind to every duty, however minute; but when there was no longer any thing for her to do, her brother and sister had retired to their apartments, she leaned her beautiful head on the corpse of the old man, and wept as if the very fountains of her soul were broken up. She made the spot of his lowly slumber plea- sant with summer foliage and with the hardy evergreen. She planted the grassy mound with the enduring chamomile, which rises sweeter from the pressing foot or hand, and the aromatic thyme, which allures the sing- ing bee. There, at the close of day, she often went with her brother and sister, enforcing precepts of that piety which had led their beloved father through many trials, to rest with his dear Redeemer.

Once, as she returned from her mournful, yet sweet visit to the grave, she was met by Albert, the young, dark-eyed clergyman of a neighboring village, who drew her arm with- in his own. It would seem that his low, mu- sical voice, alluded to a theme not unfamiliar to her ear.

"Ulrica, why should you impose a longer probation on my faithful love? He to whom you have been as an angel, is now with the spirits of just men made perfect. Dearest, let my home henceforth be yours, and this brother and sister mine."

The trembling lustre of her full, blue eyes, met those of Albert in tenderness and trust. His pleasant and secluded parsonage gained a treasure beyond tried gold; for she who, as a daughter and sister, had so long been a model of disinterested goodness and piety, could not fail to sustain, with dignity and beauty, the hallowed relations of a wife and mother.

Humboldt.

Among the brilliant corps of scientific men who adorn Europe at the present day is one acknowledged chief, who towers over all others. This is the venerable Alexander Von Humboldt who at the age of four score and five years, still prosecutes with vigor and success his researches in the broad domains of science. A writer in Blackwood's Maga- zine thus describes the eminent philosopher:

"Age—it's slightly upon his active head." Still full of recorded facts and thoughts, he labors daily in committing them to the page; for the grave he tells you, waits him early now, and he must finish what he has to do before he dies. And yet he is as full, at the same time, of the discoveries and new thoughts of others, and as eager as the young student of Nature gathering up fresh threads of know- ledge, and in following the advances of the various departments of natural science. And in so doing it is characteristic of his gener- ous mind to estimate highly the labors of others to encourage the young and aspiring investigator, to whatever department of Na- ture he may be devoted, and to aid him with his counsel, his influence and his sympathy. We found him congratulating himself on the possession of a power with which few sci- entific men are gifted, that of making science popular of drawing to himself, and to the knowledge he had to diffuse, the regard and attention of the masses of the people in his own and other countries, by a clear method and an attractive style.

Humboldt resides in Berlin. He is repre- sented as having a lofty, massive brow, which as it overarches his reflecting, observing eyes, seems at first sight almost too large for the dimensions of the body and the general size of them itself. His massive chin is indica- tive of a rare tenacity of purpose, of a per- severance which, for a long life has enabled him unceasingly to augment the accumu- lated knowledge of his wide experience, and as continuously to strive to spread it abroad.