



Fanny Josephine Smith.





*In Memory of our Dear Child, FANNY JOSEPHINE SMITH,  
born in Londonderry, March 17th, 1863; died after a brief  
illness in Stratford-on-Avon, February 10th, 1895, and buried  
there, in the Cemetery, February 15th.*

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“Exult, O dust and ashes,  
The Lord shall be thy part;  
His only, His for ever,  
Thou shalt be, and thou art.”

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*Extract from Sermon preached in the Parish Church, Stratford-on-Avon, on Sunday Evening, February 17th, by the Rev. R. S. de Courcy Laffan, Head Master of Grammar School, on Rev. xiv., 13.*

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Normally and ordinarily, I think, the contemplation of death, the enforced contemplation of death, the compelling ourselves to dwell upon the thought of it, is not quite a healthy attitude for Christian men and women. But there are times, there are seasons, when circumstances, or rather God working through circumstances, seem to set the thought of death very plainly before us, and such a time, I think, has come to us to-night. The very fact that I am standing here to speak to you is a reminder that death has passed through our midst. Many of you will need no reminder. To many a one in this congregation the scene in this church of two days ago must still be very vivid, when we gathered in silent but deep and prayerful sympathy with those who were carrying to her last resting place what was left of their beloved. And in that congregation, in which there was scarce an eye that was tearless, the thought of many a heart must have been—*is death the end of all? Is the bond that bound our beloved to us broken for ever? And there crept upon our hearts the balm and comfort of those words—“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”* And that surely it is which is the essence of that feeling which overcomes our griefs, the thought that whether we live or die we are the Lord’s, that

in the hour of our darkest sorrow, in the hour of our deepest bereavement, we can feel in Jesus' keeping, that the deepest and truest bond that binds us together is not broken. Death makes no break in the Communion of the Saints, for all the lines of life, aye, all the lines of death, run up to the throne of God and of the Lamb.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." "Their works do follow them." In these words there is either a most blessed consolation, or a doom most terrible. Every one of us goes through life shedding influence perpetually. Acts and words of ours, aye, acts and words of ours which we have forgotten long ago, go on living in the world long after all thought of them has passed out of our minds, and it is well to remind ourselves that the account is not closed by death. We die, but our work remains, the influence that we have had upon the world goes on, working long, it may be, after many have forgotten the very fact of our existence. Now she, whom we mourn to-night, was taken from us too soon, as we in our ignorance count time. It seems to us as if there were still so much to do. It seems to us that the world could ill spare the work of love that she was doing as a loving daughter, as a tender sister, as a sympathetic friend, and our hearts are touched by the deepest pathos of a love that did not reach its earthly fulfilment. I think the example she has left behind her is not one that will easily die, is not one whose effects upon the community will easily pass away ; that example of ever-ready sympathy, of unwearied energy and untiring earnestness that strove to do with all her mind that which her hand found to do ; that constant striving after perfection more and more. All these things speak to us, though she be gone. All these things, I believe, will remain as a powerful influence in the place which she has left. It is sometimes God's way to seal, as it were, the work of a life which has been retired, and little known among men, to seal it by an unexpected death ; to force those who otherwise would have passed by, to notice what has been in their midst.

I cannot believe that that example of earnestness, that example of sympathy—those two great qualities of womanhood—will ever be lost upon the women of Stratford, and especially upon that rising generation of young women and girls in whom she was

so deeply interested. No, I know that through her training there will be sown in the hearts of many the seeds of those two great virtues, and that they will spring up and yield a harvest from generation to generation, and as our young women go forth from us to every part of England and of the world, they will carry the good seed and sow it far and wide. You can put no limit to the influence which a sweet and true and earnest life has, as the world goes on. We miss her in her place. Yes, but her works, even here, do follow her.

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*Extract from Sermon preached by the Rev. W. C. Allsebrook, on Sunday Morning, in the Parish Church, on Isaiah lvii., 1.*

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We may surely believe that God looks for sorrow and mourning when, by the death of the righteous, He speaks to us. He does not look for such losses to be calmly passed by as things inevitable, matters which must take place in the ordinary course of events; though the righteous, like his Master, make his grave with the wicked, yet God looks that the death of the righteous be differently regarded from the death of the wicked. He looks that it be "laid to heart" as a message from Him.

And who shall say that God has not thus been speaking to us during the past week. But a week ago to-day, there was taken from our midst one whose private virtues make her death a public loss. Six months is not a long period to have spent in a parish, but it is sufficiently long to hear both good and bad about the majority of one's parishioners (and who is there but against whom, at least, one can be found who will cast a stone?) but of Fanny Josephine Smith, I know nothing but good, for I have never heard anything but good from any of her friends, and of enemies I know she had not one. And on this first perfect Sabbath of "rest from her labours," it is my duty, no less for your sakes than for her sake, to tell you publicly thus much in this holy place, where, on so many earthly Sabbaths, she joined her prayers and praises to yours. For, of how many of us could the same be said? I fear, of but few. Such sweet natures are not often met with, and it was a privilege for those who were here last Sunday evening to be permitted to pray for her in her last moments, for, almost 'ere the last strains of our evensong were wafted up into the Courts of Heaven, her sweet soul had sighed itself away.

O, may the lesson of her death, which cannot be separated from that of her life, be deeply impressed upon our hearts, and let it not be laid against us, as against Israel of old, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart."

But for those who sorrow most for the faithful departed, how that sorrow is tempered with heavenly joy when they consider that "the righteous is taken away from the evil to come," taken away from "the miseries of this sinful world," to that other Eden, whose matchless purity becometh souls so pure.

Though rejoicing not in length of days, our dear sister is indeed highly blessed, for, if she has been cut off in the midst of her age, so was her dear Lord and Master whom she loved and served, and having, like Him, fulfilled her course, having finished the work which He gave her to do in showing us how a Christian can live approving in all things the law of love, is she not highly honoured in being like her Master, thus taken from the evil that is in the world? Surely she is, and so those who most deeply mourn her departure from our midst, are they who must, in the fullest measure, experience thankful joy in the blessed change—a joy which, as it cometh not of the world, it is without the power of the world to take away; and with full assurance may they find comfort in the inspired words of the old Book:—"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace."

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*Extracts from Letters of sympathising Friends.*

From the DEAN OF CLONFERT, Ireland:—"You were surely right in believing that you would have the sincere sympathy of myself and my wife in your present grievous affliction. Not only our affectionate friendship with you and Mrs. Smith would make us feel with you both in your sorrow, but also the many attractions and beauties of dear Fan fill us and Liza with sorrow at her removal. What sweetness! what nobleness! how practical, and how elevated! I always thought from everything I knew or learned about her that she followed an ideal of life and character poetical in its elevation, which she carried out in the ordinary

details of conduct to a most uncommon degree. She was real and genuine as gold. You know better than I do the source from whence this excellency came, and whose breath of life sustained it; and your faith will enable you to hold fast the assurance of the blessed reality of what the great change is to her.”

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From a Lady who knew her from her infancy :—“I know what that sweet child was to you all, her unselfish love, and her wisdom. I always said she was the most perfect type of girlhood I ever knew. Her beauty, you know how I admired it; and I did love her for her sweetness, her cheerfulness, her great gifts, her perfect conduct in all relations of life. None like her—no wonder that you all found her the light of home and home life. My dear, sweet Fan—well, dear friend, she was not to be left to you, and you can and will trust the love that called her up higher. Her life was a happy one, but it had its sharp lessons of patience. She learned them all, and she is among the blessed ones who know no sorrow, nor need of patience.”

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From a young married Lady of about her own age :—“I cannot believe that she has passed away, so young, so noble, so holy. Surely she was too good for this world. When I think of the happy days at Stratford, it is her sweet, lovely face rises before me. I loved her dearly, and I respected and admired her noble character more than I can find words to say. . . . The world is the poorer, far, from the loss of her sweet reasonableness, her loving, brave heart, her noble devotion to duty, all the sweet winsomeness of body and mind that made up that dear, dear Fan. I feel from my heart thankful I was allowed to know her and to love her.”

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*Extract from the Parish Magazine.*

The Parish Church has been enriched by the kindness of Mr. W. B. Beesley, with a beautiful gift, which supplies a want long felt. It consists of a Silver Chalice and Paten, for use when the number of Communicants does not render the large Chalice and Paten hitherto in use, necessary or convenient. The gift is

in memory of Fanny Josephine Smith, as an inscription on the Chalice records, and has thus an additional value for those who knew her and lament her. The Priest-Chaplain dedicated it to the Service of the Altar at the Celebration on Whitsun Monday.

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### A DREAM.

*Written by her some time ago, and suggestive of an early, happy death.*

I thought in my dream that I stood on the side of a dark hill. Gloom was everywhere around me. It was not utter darkness, for here and there I could distinguish huge rocks and smaller stones, over which I stumbled frequently as I toiled onward. I felt a fearful sense of loneliness, yet there were others near me, and far below in the valley there was the stir and hum of a large town. I seemed ever toiling upwards, oh, so wearily and longing so to stay. Every limb ached with my journey. I could hear voices around me, many of which I recognised, but nowhere could I see anyone, yet I knew that they were there. Once, above all others, rose one voice, calling me to stand, to wait only a little. I longed to do so, but I knew it was impossible, I must go on. As I hesitated I became aware of some one standing by my side, gently urging me upwards, guiding my failing steps, and cheering me with a promise of a speedy end to my toil. Then casting one last long look backwards down the gloomy mountain, and breathing in the darkness one fond farewell, I followed slowly and painfully in the footsteps of my guide.

At last the summit was gained, the darkness was past, and my toil seemed ended. The mountain which had been so dark on the further side, was on this a blaze of light. Far below the blue waves rolled in, and broke in gentle ripples on the smooth, golden sand; and the sun was sinking grandly in the west.

All now seemed easy; my strength returned, and we descended gently till we found ourselves on the sloping beach. As we reached the water's edge, I saw a tiny boat awaiting us with a snow-white sail, which my guide bade me enter, and we floated away gently and peacefully into the golden glories of the setting sun.—FANNY J. SMITH.



*A QUESTION.*

Why are we weary sometimes ere the dawning  
 Of our life's day is o'er,  
 Before the sun has reached its noontide splendour,  
 And all that lies before  
 Should be by Hope's fair rainbow hues encircled,  
 And brightened more and more ?

Why is it sometimes that all seems so lifeless,  
 Useless to strive or pray ?  
 Why do the clouds around us hang more blackly  
 And dark from day to day ?  
 While through the gloomy shadows round us piercing,  
 Falls no soul-cheering ray.

It may be as we toil along life's pathway  
 We miss the heavenly light,  
 Because our eyes, grown dim with looking earthward,  
 Now fail to pierce the night ;  
 And everywhere 'tis gloomy clouds and shadows  
 Which meet our darkened sight.

It may be that behind the cloudy curtain  
 There is a light afar,  
 Tho' we may never with our tear-dimmed vision  
 See where such glories are ;  
 Yet, beyond the blackest clouds and thickest darkness,  
 There still must shine a star !

*January 8th, 1887.*

F. J. S.

*TO A CLOUD.*

Oh, snow-white cloud, that sails so gently onward !  
Thou soon wilt change to golden in the west ;  
Would that within thy fleecy arms enfolded,  
I, too, might journey on to endless rest !

No more the turmoil and the useless striving,  
The failing faith, the hands stretched out in vain ;  
But in thy snowy folds to lie for ever,  
Free from all sense of failure and of pain.

Wilt thou not bear me with thee gently upwards,  
Till all the weariness of earth be past ?  
And there, on high, amid thy snowy cloud peaks,  
The troubled soul may find its rest at last.

*July 3rd, 1887.*

F. J. S.