

**THE VALE OF
CEDARS; OR,
THE MARTYR**

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The Vale of Cedars; Or, the Martyr by Grace Aguilar

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GRACE AGUILAR

**THE VALE OF
CEDARS; OR,
THE MARTYR**

From -
Willie With the love of
his sister - Beckie.
Walt Point.
Jan 27th / 52.



THE VALE OF CEDARS;

62,

The Martyr.

BY

GRACE AGUILAR,

AUTHOR OF "HOME INFLUENCE," "WOMAN'S FRIENDSHIP," ETC.

"The wild dove hath her nest--the fox her cave--
Man kind their country--Israel but the grave."
BYRON.

NEW-YORK:

D. APPLETON & COMPANY, 200 BROADWAY.

PHILADELPHIA:

GEO. S. APPLETON, 164 CHESNUT-ST.

1851.

MEMOIR OF GRACE AGUILAR.

GRACE AGUILAR was born at Hackney, June 2nd, 1816. She was the eldest child, and only daughter of Emanuel Aguilar, one of those merchants descended from the Jews of Spain, who, almost within the memory of man, fled from persecution in that country, and sought and found an asylum in England.

The delicate frame and feeble health observable in Grace Aguilar throughout her life, displayed itself from infancy; from the age of three years, she was almost constantly under the care of some physician, and, by their advice, annually spending the summer months by the sea, in the hope of rousing and strengthening a naturally fragile constitution. This want of physical energy was, however, in direct contrast to her mental powers, which developed early, and readily. She learned to read with scarcely any trouble, and when once that knowledge was gained, her answer when asked what she would like for a present, was invariably "A book," which was read, re-read, and preserved with a care remarkable in so young a child. With the exception of eighteen months passed at school, her mother was her sole instructress, and both parents took equal delight in directing her studies, and facilitating her personal inspection of

all that was curious and interesting in the various counties of England to which they resorted for her health.

From the early age of seven she commenced keeping a journal, which was continued with scarce any intermission throughout her life. In 1825 she visited Oxford, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester, Ross, and Bath, and though at that time but nine years old, her father took her to Gloucester and Worcester cathedrals, and also to see a porcelain and pin manufactory, &c., the attention and interest she displayed on these occasions, affording convincing proof that her mind was alive to appreciate and enjoy what was thus presented to her observation. Before she had completed her twelfth year she ventured to try her powers in composition, and wrote a little drama, called *Gustavus Vasa*, never published, and only here recorded as being the first germ of what was afterwards to become the ruling passion.

In September, 1828, the family went to reside in Devonshire for the health of Mr. Aguilar, and there a strong admiration for the beauties and wonders of nature manifested itself: she constantly collected shells, stones, seaweed, mosses, &c., in her daily rambles; and not satisfied with admiring their beauty, sedulously procured whatever little catechisms or other books on those subjects she could purchase, or borrow, eagerly endeavoring by their study, to increase her knowledge of their nature and properties.

When she had attained the age of fourteen, her father commenced a regular course of instruction for his child, by reading aloud, while she was employed in drawing, needlework, &c. History was selected, that being the study which now most interested her, and the first work chosen was *Josephus*.

It was while spending a short time at Tavistock, in 1830, that the beauty of the surrounding scenery led her to express her thoughts in verse. Several small pieces soon

followed her first essay, and she became extremely fond of this new exercise and enjoyment of her opening powers, yet her mind was so well regulated, that she never permitted herself to indulge in original composition until her duties, and her studies, were all performed.

Grace Aguilar was extremely fond of music; she had learned the piano from infancy, and in 1831 commenced the harp. She sang pleasingly, preferring English songs, and invariably selecting them for the beauty or sentiment of the words; she was also passionately fond of dancing, and her cheerful lively manners in the society of her young friends, would scarcely have led any to imagine how deeply she felt and pondered upon the serious and solemn subjects which afterwards formed the labor of her life. She seemed to enjoy all, to enter into all, but a keen observer would detect the hold that sacred and holy principle ever exercised over her lightest act, and gayest hour. A sense of duty was apparent in the merest trifle, and her following out of the divine command of obedience to parents, was only equalled by the unbounded affection she felt for them. A wish was once expressed by her mother that she should not waltz, and no solicitation could afterwards tempt her. Her mother also required her to read sermons, and study religion and the Bible regularly; this was readily submitted to, first as a task, but afterwards with much delight; for evidence of which we cannot do better than quote her own words in one of her religious works.

“ This formed into a habit, and persevered in for a life, would in time, and without labor or weariness, give the comfort and the knowledge that we seek; each year it would become lighter, and more blest, each year we should discover something we knew not before, and in the valley of the shadow of death, feel to our heart's core that the Lord our God is Truth.”—*Women of Israel*, Vol. II, page 43.