

**PASSING AWAY: BEING
SOME ACCOUNT OF
THE LAST ILLNESS
OF MY ADOPTED CHILD**

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Passing Away: Being Some Account of the Last Illness of My Adopted Child by Anonymous

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"We have loved her during life, let us not forget her after death."

S. AMERSON.

"Innocens manibus et corde."



LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

1878.

210. m. 915.

TO the many and dear friends of Dora, who have begged me to furnish them with an account of her last illness, I offer these pages, together with the prayer that they will of their charity say a "Hail, Mary" for her and for her adopted Mother.

AIGLE, 1878.

PASSING AWAY.

January, 1877.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.—What a lovely warm day it was, the air balmy as in summer, the sun bright, flowers blooming in sheltered places in the fields, the rose hedges showing buds and leaves, the sun unclouded. It seemed a day full of bright promise, and I, too, was full of hope for my Dora.

When I came from church in the morning she was much amused at my account of the people I had met, women and children all carrying large parcels and hurrying along with happy faces. "Le jour de l'an" is the great day of all the year here in Switzerland, as it also is in France; families meeting together—friends and relatives exchanging presents.

In the afternoon our doctor's wife and daughters came to see us, bringing with them a goodly

basket of "gateaux" as a New Year's "cadeau." Dora was in great spirits, showing them all the presents we had received from home, and offering them her little gifts. She looked so animated, so well just then, that it was hard to realise the delicate state in which she really was. But still her cough clung to her, and every day she seemed to become a little weaker. For the first time she began to have her breakfast in bed, and though I endeavoured by every means in my power to tempt her to eat, it was very seldom I succeeded. She tried one thing after another, but tea, milk, coffee, and chocolate—all seemed, after a while, to disagree with her. Frequently, after having taken food, she rejected it; still when she got up about ten o'clock she was always busy—had no difficulty about dressing herself or doing her hair, and never asked or seemed to want any help. She was, as she had ever been, bright and lively, and always ready to enter into any little project which was on foot. For instance, I had bought a fox skin, and wished to have it properly tanned. We had the address given us of a person at Lausanne

who was a very good furrier, and she proposed to write and ask him his price before sending him the skin. "One must always be on one's guard in dealing with these people," she said. "You had better not write yourself, Auntie dear, you cannot write sufficiently like a man; let me do it, and I will only sign my name D. T——." She was greatly delighted when the answer came addressed to M. T——, and flattered herself that the reasonable price the furrier had asked was entirely due to his having imagined her to be a Swiss, and of the male sex. "He would have asked four times the sum if he had guessed who we were," she remarked; and indeed I believe he would.

In addition to her other occupations, she would often employ herself in concocting little dishes for dinner, having all the materials brought into her room. She liked very much to make curries, a dish in which she especially excelled; and, with the aid of an Etna, she managed all her little cookerries wonderfully well. Then she would generally spend an hour or two every day in drawing, of which she was

very fond, and I always encouraged and excited her to persevere in it. Had I, however, known the state in which she was, I should not have insisted, as I often did, on her employing herself in household matters. But alas! I had no conception then of the weariness it must have caused her to attend to her accounts and direct the servants. She never made any complaint, never objected to performing any of her accustomed duties, only sometimes she would ask me to speak to the "bonne" when any fault was to be found. How often have I since reproached myself that I did not fully appreciate her nervousness and weakness, and that I did not prevent her from taking so much to heart the doings of our cook, a rough, unpolished specimen of a Swiss domestic, whom she strongly suspected of keeping her own family out of our store of provisions. One circumstance which occurred at this time I may mention here, as it places in beautiful evidence a striking trait of her character. She was about to engage a servant, who had been highly recommended to us, when our landlady came into the room to

warn us against her. In order to give us a reason for not taking her, Madame G. began to tell us of some very dubious passages in Marie's previous life. She was so voluble that I could not stop her; but very soon after she commenced her story Dora rose with her cheeks aflame and quitted the room. "Oh, Auntie," she said to me afterwards, "I cannot tell you how miserable it made me when Madame began to talk in that way of Marie. I never knew anything at all about such things until I read 'The Home of the Lost Child,' which Mrs. — lent me, and I cannot bear to hear about them." She spoke with unusual energy and earnestness, her cheeks were crimson, and her eyes brimming with tears. "My darling, I wish I could prevent you from ever hearing anything of the kind," I replied, "but as long as you hate it and shrink from it you will get no harm. Look upon it as a trial, and offer it up to God and all will be well." She sobbed and was greatly distressed, but I began to talk of something else, and after a while she became cheerful and placid. It had always been the same with her,