

**AMIR KHAN, AND OTHER POEMS: THE
REMAINS OF LUCRETIA MARIA
DAVIDSON, WHO DIED AT
PLATTSBURGH, N. Y. AUGUST 27,
1825, AGED 16 YEARS AND 11 MONTH**

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Amir Khan, and Other Poems: The Remains of Lucretia Maria Davidson, Who Died at
Plattsburgh, N. Y. August 27, 1825, Aged 16 Years and 11 Month by Samuel F. B. Morse

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SAMUEL F. B. MORSE

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LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON,

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AUGUST 27, 1825, AGED 16 YEARS AND 11 MONTHS.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY

SAMUEL F. B. MORSE, A. M.

"In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely, should have a lot so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was, that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers."
Bryant.

NEW YORK.

G. & C. & H. CARVILL,—108 BROADWAY.

1829.

THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, SS.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the thirteenth day of April, A. D. 1829, in the fifty-third year of the Independence of the United States of America, G. & C. & H. CARVILL, of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"AMIR KHAN, AND OTHER POEMS: the Remains of LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON, who died at Plattsburgh, N. Y. August 27, 1825, aged 16 years and eleven months. With a Biographical Sketch, By SAMUEL F. B. MORSE, A. M.

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In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an Act, entitled "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

FREDERICK J. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

R. & G. S. WOOD, PRINTERS.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

IN the autumn of 1827, while at Albany, a friend of mine brought to my lodgings a number of volumes of manuscripts, in poetry and prose, which he informed me were the productions of a little girl, a protégé of his, by whose early death, before she had attained the age of seventeen years, the fondest expectations of a distinguished maturity were suddenly blasted.

Considering the youth of the fair authoress, I had prepared myself, before I opened the volumes, to make many abatements of the praises which were lavished upon her. I was prepared to allow much for the natural blindness of that affection for a beautiful child, which leads us unconsciously to overlook its faults; and much to that enthusiasm which often exaggerates a little uncommon sprightliness and intelligence, into extraordinary genius, and anticipates for its possessor a brilliant career, but seldom realized. But with all the abatement thus made, I found, from the emotions produced, while hastily reading her productions, that I was perusing the works of a child of genuine poetic feeling; and the exclamation would often involuntarily escape me, "Can this be the work of a girl of fourteen?" I must not, however, forestall the judgment of the reader. I urged upon my friend the propriety of their publication, and in the enthusiasm of the moment, I assented to his request, to prepare a *biographical sketch*, and to make a *selection* from such of her writings as her friends

might deem proper to meet the public eye. I feel the responsibilities of the services I have undertaken. The time devoted to the task, (if that may be called a task, where the attendant pleasures have so greatly exceeded the pains,) has necessarily been those moments of relaxation from the duties of a profession which scarcely admits of leisure.

The materials for the biography of this interesting girl have been furnished me by many of her friends, but especially by her mother, who early perceived and appreciated the genius of her daughter, and watched and fostered it with all a mother's solicitude.

EDITOR.

New York, May 1, 1829.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON, the second daughter of Dr. Oliver and Mrs. Margaret Davidson, was born at Plattsburg, on Lake Champlain, in the state of New-York, on the 27th day of September, 1808. There was nothing that occurred during her infancy worthy of notice, unless it be the early developement of a disposition, which seemed to be composed of the two extremes of thoughtfulness and vivacity. She showed, even at the early age of four years, that fondness for studious retirement which was observable in after life. She shunned the childish pastimes of her schoolmates, and when sought for, was generally found with her little books, her pen, ink, and paper, in some secluded spot, where she might study undisturbed. All efforts to ascertain what was the nature of her writing, proved unavailing for a long time ; for, upon any sur-

prise, she would conceal, or hastily destroy all her labour. The constant and rapid disappearance of the writing-paper, which was always within her reach, at length excited the curiosity of her parents, and led them to question her as to the use she made of it. Tears were the only answer they obtained, until one day, accident revealed what other means had hitherto failed to discover. Her mother, while searching in a dark and unfrequented closet, found a large quantity of the writing-paper folded in the form of little books, and written full of strange, and apparently illegible characters. Upon examining them more closely, however, the characters were found to be printed letters, some formed backwards, some standing sideways, and with no spaces between the words. These, after much difficulty, were decyphered, and found to consist of regular rhymes and metre, having for their subject the explanation of a picture which she had generally rudely drawn upon the opposite page. When Lucretia learned that her treasures had been found, she appeared greatly distressed, and could not be pacified until she had recovered them; and as soon as they were in her possession again, she secretly committed them all to the flames. Thus it may be said of this little girl, with as much justice, perhaps, as of Cowley, Milton, and Pope, that she "lisp'd in numbers."

As she grew, her thirst for knowledge increased; her desire for books was unbounded. She did not read carelessly, but was intent on knowing every thing that seemed obscure; she laid the knowledge of each one in the family under contribution to satisfy her inquiries. She early discovered a propensity for drawing, but not more remarkable, perhaps, than is frequently observed in children of her age.

The earliest specimen of her versification which is left, (since she destroyed her little books,) is an Epitaph, (composed before she was nine years old,) upon an unfledged robin, killed, as children's pets generally are, by too much kindness and nursing.

Her application increased with her years. The field of knowledge seemed, at times, to open so vast before her, as almost to overwhelm her, and she would frequently exclaim with impatience, "*Oh that I could grasp all at once.*" The pecuniary state of her father's family, was such as to render it proper that much of her time should be devoted to domestic duties. For these, however, she had no taste: she never hesitated to perform the duty that was assigned her, but completing her task with surprising alacrity, she would be found in her retirement, surrounded with her books, pen, and papers, thus showing that the passion for literature was predominant and unconquerable.

At eleven years of age, her father took her, on the