

SONGS FOR THE SORROWING

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Songs for the sorrowing by H. N. & Wm. R. Williams

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H. N. & WM. R. WILLIAMS

**SONGS FOR THE
SORROWING**

Levelling

SONGS FOR THE SORROWING.

S O N G S

FOR THE SORROWING.

BY H. N.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY WM. R. WILLIAMS, D.D.

"Be like the bird, that halting in her flight
Awhile, on boughs too slight,
Feels them give way beneath her, and yet sings,—
Knowing that she hath wings."

VICTOR HUGO.

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1861.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE present volume of poems is the fragmentary memorial of one gifted and accomplished, but taken from her friends and from a widowed mother, by what, to the friends and kindred so bereaved may have seemed an untimely death. She was the only child of the late Stephen Griggs, Esq. The father, himself a man of genial temper, refined tastes, and literary culture, bestowed his best endeavors on the education of a daughter who repaid parental affection with the most attached, filial devotion. A child of early promise, her attainments were large and varied. Above all either parent felt the need of having the adornments and graces of earthly culture sustained by, and grafted upon, the great truths and controlling principles of Christ's blessed gospel. At a very early age she gave the evidence of true piety, and when between fourteen and fifteen she became a

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professed disciple of the Lord Jesus. During a summer excursion, spent in part on the sea shore of his own native Massachusetts, Mr. Griggs took boat for a days' fishing. Although some of the hands were experienced seamen, and in the morning there seemed little prospect of aught else than a day of fine weather, a storm came on: and none returned alive. The boat drifted ashore overturned, and after some few hours' interval, the corpse of Mr. Griggs, wearing an expression of the most peaceful repose, and bearing little mark of the drifting and buffeting to which the waves had subjected it, was also cast ashore upon another portion of the coast. The day of the excursion was by a melancholy coincidence the anniversary of his wife's birth. The feelings of the wife and child thus sorely and suddenly left alone were those of overwhelming desolation, relieved and chastened, however, by their entire trust in the Saviour, whose gospel the husband and father had long and warmly loved, and in whose wise Providence they themselves fully confided, even whilst thus "slaying them." A glad and kind home was then darkened. The sorrow of a daughter, remarkably

attached to her father, may be best described in the language which she used at the time in her diary from whose pages it is now transcribed :

“*November 4th, 1850.*—Well I am at home again. I have been home a long time. There is a long interval since my last entry and the present, and a longer period in my life. I have endured the greatest affliction that ever could befall me in that space of time. When last I wrote in this brief record of daily employments I was happy, I had no cares but those I made for myself, no reasonable wishes ungratified, and I was sheltered from every thing evil in the sweet, strong refuge of my father’s love. Now how changed. It is the same home, the same room, nothing around me is altered, but in one fearful day all earth’s hopes, peace, enjoyment, protection have left me forever. *I am fatherless.* Bitter, unwelcome truth, how gladly would I disbelieve it. The trials of past years, and they were neither few nor slight, are all swallowed up in this. We bore them patiently, cheerfully, because we had hope. Now we have none. The grave can not give up its trust; the precious clay will not revive at our

bidding ; the dear voice answers not our passionate invocations—we are alone. Alone, and oh how unutterably wretched. He used to think I had strength of character : I thought I had it myself, but it was the strength of the wild vine clinging to the strong trunk of its forest prop, and entwining the branches so closely with its tendrils that they could not be distinguished the one from the other. Such was my strength. He was beautiful, and noble, and powerful in his calm self-command, and I leaned upon him lovingly. When the decree went forth that he should be transplanted, if it had been done gently, and by degrees, instead of suddenly, roughly wrenching away, without a word of warning all that made life desirable, we might have borne it better. But such was not God's will. In the morning the tall tree stood without one token of decay, and bore up its feeble companions with a strong support, and at night the poor ones lay crushed and bleeding, in the mire—their prop had been cut down and carried away. But what is the use of metaphor ? The horrible truth, dress it as we may, remains the same. My poor mother is a widow and I am