

**A MEMOIR OF MISS  
HANNAH ADAMS**

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A memoir of Miss Hannah Adams by Hannah Adams

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**HANNAH ADAMS**

**A MEMOIR OF MISS  
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A  
MEMOIR  
OF  
MISS HANNAH ADAMS,  
WRITTEN BY HERSELF.  
WITH  
ADDITIONAL NOTICES,  
BY A FRIEND.

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### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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THE autobiography of Miss ADAMS is written with the modesty and unobtrusiveness which distinguished her character. It appears as if composed reluctantly, under the feeling that the community could hardly care to know anything about the struggles, disappointments, hopes and purposes of an individual so humble as herself. She undertook the task at the request of some of her friends, who thought that the circumstances of her life, and the traits of her character, well deserved to be remembered. But her principal motive in executing it, was to leave it as a legacy, which she hoped might be of some small benefit to an aged and very infirm sister, to whose comfort she had devoted her little savings for many years. It presents a lithographic drawing of herself, which will recall the features of her mind to those who knew her, and give some idea of them to those who did not.

The continuation of her life is by a lady, one of

those friends whose kindness she has acknowledged with warm gratitude towards the conclusion of her own narrative. It could not have been confided to better hands. The discrimination and delicacy with which the retiring virtues, and nicer shades of her character are delineated and produced, will explain to those who did not know her, what was the charm that drew genius and wealth, and youth and beauty, to minister with so much interest to the infirmities of a poor old woman.

MISS ADAMS was indeed deserving of such interest. Her life is, in many respects, full of instruction. Among those who have overcome great and peculiar difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge, she holds a distinguished place. She became a literary woman, when literature was a rare accomplishment in our country. She has produced one work, her *History of Religions*, which is the best of its kind, eminent for its great impartiality. But it was not merely for her powers of mind that she was remarkable, but for her warm affections, her glow of gratitude, and her childlike simplicity. It is honorable to the community in which she lived, that an individual, destitute as she was of all adventitious claims to distinction, should have been properly estimated and respected.

This note is prefixed by the gentlemen to whom she left the charge of publishing her manuscript.

A. N.

J. T.



## CHAPTER I.

BEING arrived at an age in which I cannot reasonably expect my life will be long continued, at the request of a highly esteemed friend I am about to give a concise outline of my past life; notwithstanding I am sensible that a retrospect of past errors, faults and misfortunes, will be exceedingly painful.

I was born in Medfield, a country town about eighteen miles from Boston. My father early imbibed a love of literature, and prepared to enter the university. But as his constitution then appeared to be very infirm, and he was an only son, his parents were strenuously opposed to his leaving them. Accordingly, to his inexpressible disappointment, he was obliged to settle upon their large farm, without a suitable knowledge of, or taste for, agricultural pursuits. This induc-

ed him to open a shop, for the sale, principally, of English Goods and Books. His taste for reading continued unabated till his death, which took place at the advanced age of eightyeight years.

From my infancy I had a feeble constitution; in particular, an extreme weakness and irritability in my nervous system. Hence I can recollect uneasiness and pain previous to any pleasurable sensations. My mother was an excellent woman, and deservedly esteemed and beloved; but as her own health was delicate, and she possessed great tenderness and sensibility, I was educated in all the habits of debilitating softness, which probably added to my constitutional want of bodily and mental firmness.

My father's circumstances then appeared affluent, and it was not supposed I should be reduced to the necessity of supporting myself by my own exertions. Partly from ill health, and an early singularity of taste, I took no pleasure in the amusements to which children are generally much attached. My health did not even admit of attending

school with the children in the neighborhood where I resided. The country schools, at that time, were kept but a few months in the year, and all that was then taught in them was reading, writing and arithmetic. In the summer, the children were instructed by females in reading, sewing, and other kinds of work. The books chiefly made use of were the Bible, and Psalter. Those who have had the advantages of receiving the rudiments of their education at the schools of the present day, can scarcely form an adequate idea of the contrast between them, and those of an earlier age; and of the great improvements which have been made even in the common country schools. The disadvantages of my early education I have experienced during life; and, among various others, the acquiring a very faulty pronunciation; a habit contracted so early, that I cannot wholly rectify it in later years.

In my early years I was extremely timid, and averse from appearing in company. Indeed, I found but few with whom I could happily associate. My life, however, was