

# **SKETCHES**

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Sketches by Mrs. Sigourney

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**MRS. SIGOURNEY**

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S K E T C H E S,

BY

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

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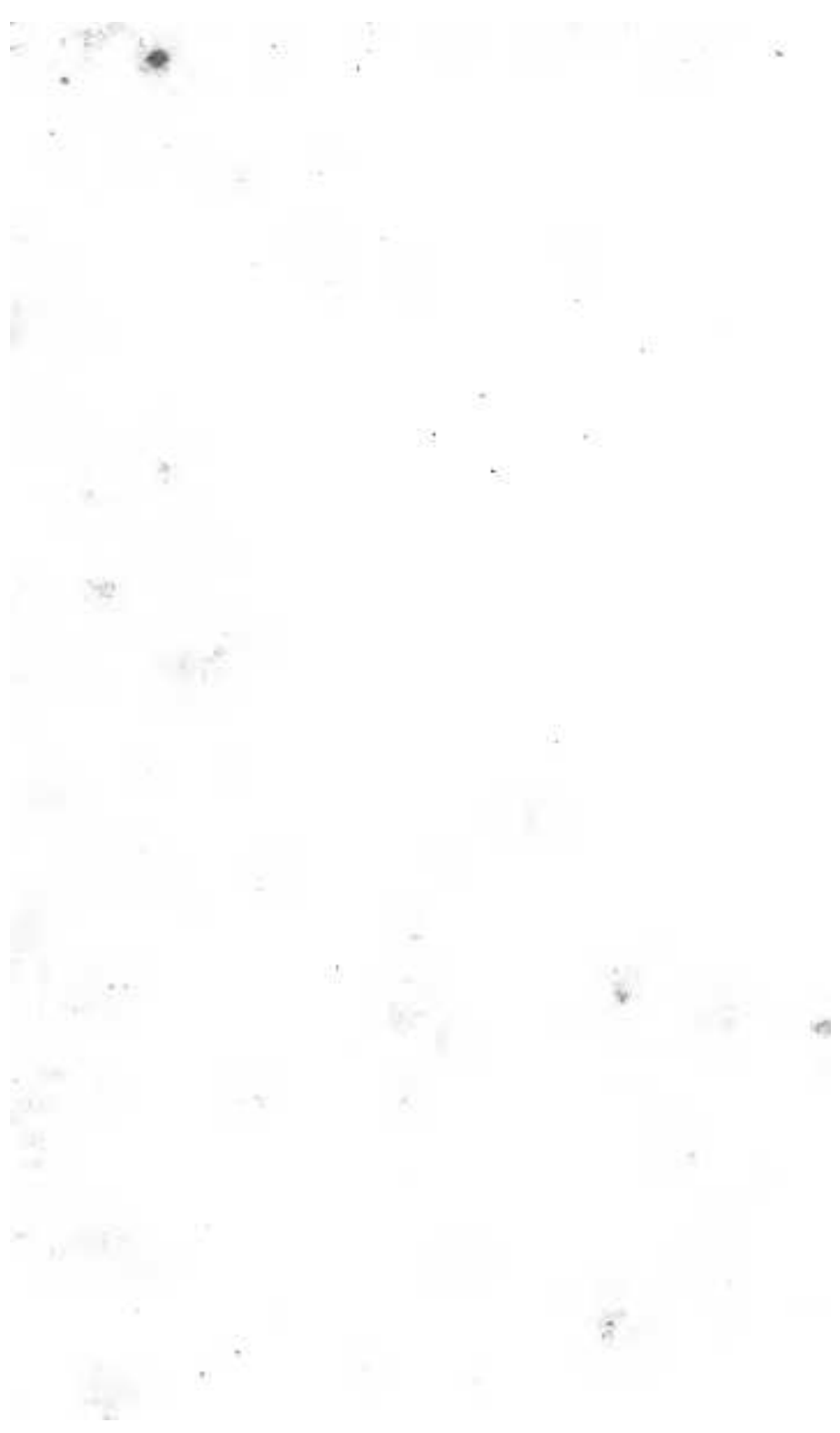
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## THE FATHER.

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"Yes,—I am he,—who look'd and saw decay  
Steal o'er the lov'd of earth,—the ador'd too much—  
It is a fearful thing, to love what Death may touch."

MRS. HERMAN.

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I WAS in the full tide of a laborious and absorbing profession,—of one which imposes on intellect an unsparring discipline, but ultimately opens the avenues to wealth and fame. I pursued it, as one determined on distinction,—as one convinced that *mind* may assume a degree of omnipotence over matter and circumstance, and popular opinion. Ambition's promptings were strong within me, nor was its career unprosperous.—I had no reason to complain that its promises were deceptive, or its harvest tardy.

Yet as my path was among the competitions and asperities of men, a character combining strong elements might have been in danger of becoming indurated, had it not been softened and refined by the domestic charities. Conjugal love, early fixing on an object most amiable and beautiful, was as a fountain of living water, springing up to allay thirst, and to renovate weariness. I was anxious that my home should be the centre of intellectual and polished society, where the buddings of thought should

expand unbilled, and those social feelings which are the life-blood of existence, flow forth, unfettered by heartless ceremony.—And it was so.

But my present purpose is to delineate a single, and simple principle of our nature,—the most deep-rooted and holy,—*the love of a father for a daughter*. My province has led me to analyze mankind; and in doing this, I have sometimes thrown their affections into the crucible. And the one of which I speak, has come forth most pure, most free from drossy admixture. Even the earth that combines with it, is not like other earth. It is what the foot of a seraph might rest upon, and contract no pollution. With the love of our sons, ambition mixes its spirit, till it becomes a fiery essence. We anticipate great things for them,—we covet honors,—we goad them on in the race of glory;—if they are victors, we too proudly exult,—if vanquished, we are prostrate and in bitterness. Perhaps we detect in them the same latent perverseness, with which we have waged warfare in our own breasts, or some imbecility of purpose with which we have no affinity; and then, from the very nature of our love, an impatience is generated, which they have no power to soothe, or we to control. A father loves his son, as he loves himself,—and in all selfishness, there is a bias to disorder and pain. But his love for his daughter is different and more disinterested; possibly he believes that it is called forth by a being of a higher and better order. It is based on the integral and immu-