

**MEMOIR OF
AMELIA OPIE**

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Memoir of Amelia Opie by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell

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CECILIA LUCY BRIGHTWELL

**MEMOIR OF
AMELIA OPIE**



M^{rs} Opie

Religious Tract Society, 1805.

MEMOIR
OF
AMELIA OPIE;

BY
CECILIA LUCY BRIGHTWELL.

" Still thankful alike, if the thorn or the rose
Was strew'd on the pathway that led her to God."
LAYS FOR THE DEAD.

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PREFACE.

It seems desirable, in bringing out a short Memoir of Mrs. Opie, under the auspices of the Religious Tract Society, to preface it by a few observations, introductory and explanatory.

The present Life differs, in some essential respects, from the larger "Memorials;" having for its object more particularly the record of Mrs. Opie's religious history; and, consequently, it will be found to contain but a general summary of the events of the earlier years of her life.

Since the publication of the former work, I have received many pleasing letters, and extracts from correspondence, communicated to me by the friends of Mrs. Opie, which have been thought likely to interest the general reader, and to bring out into clearer light the character of the departed, as a Christian woman.

While I do not desire to convey the impres-

sion, that in writing this short Memoir, I feel the wish to retract or alter anything I have given in the "Memorials," I avow the hope and the expectation, that there will be found in this little volume much additional and interesting material. It is, therefore, with pleasure I indulge the belief that it will, through the medium of this Society, be put within the reach of a far larger number of readers than it could otherwise have obtained.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words with reference to the sterling character of Mrs. Opie's religious views and conduct. There can be no stronger test of the genuine nature of a change of heart, than corresponding life and action; and while, in her case, there was simple reliance on the great fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith in the Redeemer, there was a "bright evidence" that this faith was genuine in the fruits it produced.

For proof of this I must refer to the narrative given in these pages, and I may further say, that the character of Mrs. Opie's religious reading, and of her favourite devotional authors, also showed the soundness of her views. Dr.

Chalmers' "Home Sabbaticæ," was one of the books in which she principally took delight during the latter period of her life; and the various marks of approval and feeling, traced by her pencil, in the volumes she read, show the bent of her heart and mind.

I know not that any doubt has ever been entertained of the sincerity and truthfulness of Mrs. Opie, in the change she adopted, when she left the world, and gave herself to Christ as his disciple. The old reproach has indeed been uttered by one critic, who says, "When she began to grow elderly, Amelia Opie became *dévote*." Beneath the sting lies the honey-bag; and this trite sneer will only assure the Christian reader that the object of it had not offered in vain the prayer of the psalmist, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

C. L. BRIGHTWELL,
Norwich.



LIFE OF AMELIA OPIE.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

There is, perhaps, no kind of reading more universally interesting than biography, or "life-writing"—as that word signifies. Some of the most ancient literary compositions in existence are works of biography, or of mixed biography and history. The historical parts of the Old Testament are the most remarkable examples of the kind, and are everywhere intermixed with records of the lives of individuals; in some instances, the composition is purely biographical, as in the case of the book of Ruth. Who has not delighted himself in that record of true friendship, so pure and disinterested—so abiding and faithful? Fresh with Nature's own breath, that world-old tale is ever new and attractive. The old and the young alike take pleasure in it; and all hearts respond to the touching appeal: "Entreat me not to leave