

**THE CHRONICLES OF A
GARDEN: ITS PETS
AND ITS PLEASURES,
WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR**

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The Chronicles of a Garden: Its Pets and Its Pleasures, with a Brief Memoir by Henrietta Wilson & James Hamilton

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HENRIETTA WILSON & JAMES HAMILTON

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A DREAM OF OUR PETS.



THE
CHRONICLES OF A GARDEN:

ITS PETS AND ITS PLEASURES.



BY THE LATE
MISS HENRIETTA WILSON,
AUTHOR OF "LITTLE THINGS," ETC.

WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR
BY
JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., F.L.S.

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Love my Garden ! dearly love
That little spot of ground !
There 's not, methinks, (though I may err
In partial pride,) a pleasanter
In all the country round."

Mrs SOUTHEY.

" God Almighty first planted a garden : it is the purest of human
pleasures ; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man."

LORD BACON.

Harb. des.
Dublin
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MEMOIR

OF

MISS HENRIETTA WILSON.

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THE good and gifted writer of the following pages was the daughter of Andrew Wilson, Esq., Main House. In early life she lost her mother, and for some years found a home with her grandmother in Queen Street, Edinburgh, under the same roof with her father's celebrated brother, Professor John Wilson. But there was another uncle, at whose pleasant abode in the then secluded suburb of Morningside she was a frequent visitor, and in whose society from the first she greatly delighted. His garden was so fragrant and so bright with blossom, there were about the place so many tame and happy creatures, and his own ways were so gentle and so loving, that it was no wonder Woodville became to her a little paradise, and its kind owner dear beyond

all others. Nor was it long before she ceased to have any home besides. Her aunt, Mrs James Wilson, to whom she was tenderly attached, was an invalid, and in ministering to her during a lengthened illness Henrietta found the first outlet for that generous self-devotion which distinguished her through life. Notwithstanding habits eminently active, and with a fondness for flowers and rural walks little short of a passion, many were the summer days when nothing could tempt her from the bed-side of the sufferer, and many were the long and silent nights which she spent anxiously watching in that dim chamber. Some would have pitied as well as admired such sacrifice in one so young; but of *self* there was so little in Henrietta Wilson, that victory over it always seemed quite easy. And the labour of love had its own reward. With her large acquirements and her earnest piety, there were always good lessons to be learned in Mrs Wilson's society. She delighted in books, and many was the volume with which her youthful companion first became acquainted from reading it aloud to her aunt; and, best of all, she then acquired those habits of tender sympathy and considerate kindness, which afterwards so endeared her to her friends. It is thus that "many are made white and purified." From that sick-

room one passed away to join spirits made perfect ; the ministering attendant who remained came forth an angel unawares.

To the little boy and girl, her cousins, now motherless like herself, she became more than ever as an elder sister, and to their heart-stricken father her quiet unassuming helpfulness was a strong consolation, as well as that glow of goodness which nothing could quench, that cheerful hope in God which nothing overclouded. Her beloved uncle she greatly resembled in her playful good sense and pleasant ways, as well as in that warmth of affection which was continually gleaming forth from behind the veil of a habitual retiringness ; and she was like him in his love of humour, and, we may add, honourably like him in possessing a power of satire which was never used for the purpose of giving pain. Many of his tastes had also become her own. She was an excellent entomologist, and, as this volume shews, she fully shared with the kind-hearted naturalist his attachment to plants and animals, along with a great admiration of Wordsworth, and such poets as have looked on nature through their own eyes, and not through the eyes of others. So, mainly through the subtile charm of one bright presence, the winter retreat in George Square and the summer residence at Wood-

ville, continued to retain that look of shaded happiness as when the hope full of immortality shines out through a great sorrow, till the dayspring gradually returned, and with it that voice of rejoicing which is heard in the dwellings of the righteous.*

A fear is sometimes expressed lest the love of the lower creatures should absorb that benevolence of which the more legitimate objects are the indigent and suffering members of our own human family. Of this fear Miss Wilson was a daily confutation. Her piety, comprehensive and practical, took in the entire range of being as far as she was acquainted with it, and instead of evaporating in sentiment, it sought out its objects very diligently, and laboured to make them happy. At the Disruption she became an ardent adherent of the Free Church, and along with her uncle joined the congregation of her cousin—the Rev. John Sym, of Free Greyfriars—and gave herself to all his plans of Territorial improvement. Shortly before her death she had become superintendent of a mothers' meeting, where her readings and explanations of Scripture were greatly prized, as well as her plain and friendly counsels, and her earnest, affectionate prayers: as one of the poor women expressed it, "Miss Wilson's prayers aye gaed

* See Memoirs of James Wilson, Esq., chap. vi.