

THE
WIDOW AND HER SON.



YE parents, who have labour'd long
T' instruct your tender youth ;
But find their evil passions strong
Rebel against the truth ;

And after many sighs and tears,
And many an earnest prayer,
While no faint beam of hope appears,
Are yielding to despair ;

Come, listen to my simple tale,—
Let not your hope expire ;
God, when your expectations fail,
May grant your heart's desire.

From hence let children also learn
 The sinner's path to shun ;
 Deep is his sorrow, if he turn,—
 If not,—he is undone.

A mother by death's stroke bereft
 Of her best earthly friend,
 With a large family was left,
 Who on her care depend.

It was her first, her highest care,
 To guide them in that way,
 Where wisdom's pleasures they might share
 Which leads to heavenly day.

Blest was her toil, because she view'd
 Her seven fair daughters, who
 Their parent follow'd, and pursued
 The path to glory too.

She had a son, in whom she loved
 His father's form to trace ;
 Oh that her darling child had proved
 Adorn'd with early grace !

But when we look for comforts here,
 Our joys in sorrow end ;
 The Christian hence is taught to fear
 On creatures to depend.

Her son was thoughtless, proud, and gay,
 Lov'd with the vain to meet,
 He chose the broad, the dangerous way,
 And took the scorner's seat.

A course so profligate soon ends
 In shame and poverty,
 It drives him from his home and friends,
 To cross the boisterous sea.

Who can describe the last adieu,
 The mother's care and pain ?
 For much she fear'd she ne'er should view
 Her only son again.

The Christian volume which records
 A dying Saviour's grace,
 She, ere he goes, with tender words,
 Presents to him and says ;—

' This book, my child, to you I give,
 My name's inscribed therein
 With your dear name, nor, while you live
 Forget this parting scene.

' I charge you, by a mother's love,
 Never with this to part ;
 But read it, love it, for my sake,
 Oh keep it near your heart !

‘ You little think what woes betide
 This widow’d anxious breast ;
 But if this book your footsteps guide,
 ’Twill lull my fears to rest.’

They part.—Past is the fond embrace,
 Now from each other torn ;
 He sails o’er ocean’s trackless space,—
 She stays behind to mourn.

To various ports the mother goes,
 And asks at every one,
 If any can the fate disclose
 Of her beloved son.

When many a time her efforts fail’d,
 She ask’d of one who knew
 The ship in which her son had sail’d,
 And knew her poor Charles too.

With keen suspense and boding fears,
 She fix’d on him her eye ;
 With heart o’erwhelm’d too soon she hears
 The captain’s rash reply.

‘ Madam, the ship has prov’d a wreck ;
 And of the boy you name,
 I know of nought, but what declares
 His folly and his shame.

‘ So vile, and profligate, and base,
 ’Twould be a public good,
 If all like him, a worthless race,
 Were whelm’d in ocean’s flood.’

No more can converse give relief,
 She seeks for solitude ;
 At once to hide her hopeless grief,
 And over it to brood.

‘ My time,’ she says, ‘ I now must spend
 In melancholy gloom,
 And mourning for my son, descend
 Into the silent tomb.’

Years had elaps’d, when at her door,
 An ill-cloth’d sailor stands,
 Some food and clothing to implore
 From pity’s bounteous hands.

To tell what feelings crowd her breast,
 My feeble pen would fail,
 At such a sight, and when address’d
 With such a melting tale :—

‘ Good madam, I have often seen
 Shipwreck, and want, and woe ;
 But ne’er till lately have I been
 So destitute as now.

- ‘ A fine young gentleman and me
 God rescu’d from the waves,
 When all our gay ship’s company
 Sunk to their watery graves.
- ‘ On a lone island’s barren heights
 Both he and I were cast,
 And after seven long days and nights
 I saw him breathe his last.
- ‘ Poor fellow !’ streaming tears now wet
 His weather-beaten face ;
 ‘ The scenes I never shall forget,
 I saw in that lone place.
- ‘ A book sav’d from the wreck he read
 To me, by day and night ;
 “ This was my mother’s gift,” he said,
 “ Now ’tis my sole delight.”
- ‘ He kiss’d the book,—for grace he pray’d,
 And, fill’d with conscious shame,
 Wept for his sins,—then mention made
 Of his dear mother’s name.
- ‘ With hearty thanks to me he gave
 The book, with solemn air ;
 “ Here, Jack, take this, ’tis all I have
 To give you for your care.

“ Read this, it is my last command,
Ne'er from it turn aside ;”

Kindly he clasp'd my trembling hand,
And peacefully he died.’

‘ And is this true ? I hope—I fear,’—
Th’ astonish’d mother cries ;

‘ Yes, very true, the book is here,
The faithful tar replies.

Batter’d and time-worn, soon he drew
The precious relic forth,
She gaz’d, she wept, the book she knew,
To her of matchless worth.

Her own name and her son’s she read,
Midst anxious feeling’s strife ;
And seem’d to hear a voice which said,
‘ Thy son’s restor’d to life.’

‘ Lord, I can leave this world in peace,
Salvation I have seen ;
Thy mercy bids my anguish cease,
And makes my soul serene.

‘ My honest fellow, will you part,’
She eagerly inquires,
‘ With this rich treasure, which my heart
So earnestly desires ?’

‘ No, madam,’ says the gallant tar,
 ‘ I’ll keep it while I live ;
 I prize this volume more by far,
 Than all the world can give.

‘ ’Twas from my dear friends dying hands,
 This pledge of love I took ;
 I’ve lost all else in foreign lands,
 But never lost this book.

‘ I feel its worth, it cheers my heart,
 Shall be my guide to death,
 And never will I with it part,
 Till I must yield my breath.’

May all who read these simple lines
 Be kept in danger’s hour,
 Safe from the tempter’s dark designs,
 By an almighty power.

Have any gone in folly’s road ?
 ‘ Return,’ the Saviour cries,
 ‘ To seek your Father and your God,
 Poor prodigal arise.

‘ See how your heavenly Father waits,
 The outcasts to receive
 Within his mercy’s open gates,
 All who in me believe.’