

“Lord, Help Thou My Unbelief!”

CLOSED blinds, and on the door-bell a long scarf of black crepe told its story to the passer-by, who looked up at a pretty home in a quiet village of New York. Within the little parlor the casket lay. The odor of flowers hung in the air, and beautiful emblems were scattered around the room. They were living and he, whose life was worth so much to those who loved him, was lying there pulseless and cold, unresponsive to the heart-broken words and caresses of those who called him father, and on whom his life had been lavished until this cruel separation.

They could not yet believe it! So short a time ago he had been in their midst—with his smile, his vigorous manliness, his earnestness, his devoted affection, striving to take the place of a loving mother, beside whom they were now going to lay his remains! It was too much! Both were gone, and their hearts refused to be comforted!

Oh Death! how cruel dost thou seem, sometimes! Did we not know thou wert the messenger of the Most High, we would hate thee!

Among the heart-broken children was Margaret, a bright, innocent girl of fourteen. Idolizing her father, she was stunned with the agony of the blow. Because she was quicker and of finer feeling; because she had a deeper sense, perhaps, of the exquisite joys of loving, she felt his death most and so, when the long silent cortege filed out of the hitherto happy home to a solemn city of the dead Margaret felt as if the sun would never shine again for her; as if the world were draped in the blackest morning. Poor girl! we have all felt so! What heart that has suffered thus, cannot ache with hers?

When the lonely home was regained, relatives had already come to a decision about the orphans. Aunts and