little-known documents

Two Texts on Children and Christian Education

MARIA W. STEWART

INTRODUCTION BY ERIC GARDNER

Introduction

THE KNOWN BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY AFRICAN AMERICAN WRITER AND LECTURER MARIA W. STEWART (1803–79) IS AS BRIEF AS IT IS FASCINATING.[1] After the childhood loss of her parents, she married James W. Stewart, a Boston shipping agent, in 1826. The Stewarts had close ties with the black radical David Walker, whose fiery 1829 *Appeal* kindled fears of slave rebellion and was in its third edition when Walker died under suspicious circumstances in August 1830. After James Stewart's own untimely death, in December 1829, his executors swindled Maria Stewart out of her inheritance, and she turned to the church and to writing and lecturing. Revising Walker's combination of jeremiad and Enlightenment-influenced political argument to reflect her own sense of faith, racism and racial uplift, and gender politics, Stewart became one of the first American women to address "promiscuous" audiences. She published a series of probing meditations as well as a set of her lectures—texts still startling for their power and bluntness—in pamphlets and, later, as *Productions of Mrs. Maria Stewart* (1835).

So stinging were Stewart's critiques of fellow free blacks and especially free black men—mingled with even-more-biting analyses of the failures of whites to live up to what God and the Constitution demanded—that she was, in essence, forced to leave Boston for New York in 1833. Soon after, biographers claim, she left the lectern and the pen altogether and lived for the next several decades on an unsteady income from teaching. According to previous scholars, only in 1879, when she was able to claim her husband's War of 1812 pension, did she return to writing—specifically, an expanded and self-published version of *Productions* titled *Meditations from the Pen of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart* (1879).

The two rediscovered texts by Stewart presented below were originally published in a periodical that is now rare and little studied, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church's *Repository of Religion and Literature and of Science and Art*.[2] The first, "The Proper Training of Children," was originally given as a lecture on 21 November 1860 at the Ladies Literary Festival in Baltimore; it was then published in the January 1861 issue of the *Repository*. The second, a short story entitled "The First Stage of Life," joined Frances El-

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len Watkins Harper's "The Two Offers" as one of the earliest examples of short fiction by a black woman when it was serialized in the April, July, and October 1861 issues of the *Repository*. Neither text has been mentioned in the biographical and critical work on Stewart, and, while "The First Stage" is included in the microform index to the Black Periodical Literature Project, neither text is listed in the project's online index or in any other bibliography or critical study of African American writers. These texts call on scholars to revise their sense of Stewart's biography, the spaces of and for early black women's writing, and Stewart's rhetoric and philosophy as she tried to find and shape such spaces.

The existence of these texts contradicts assertions that Stewart stopped writing and speaking in public forums, and their publication in 1861 means that scholars will need to delve more deeply into Stewart's midlife. We know that during this period she participated in a literary circle in New York, taught in and helped administer a school in Williamsburg, New York, and, in 1850, was boarding with the family of a middle-class barber in Williamsburg. We know little else; most important, we do not yet know her reason for moving to Baltimore in 1852—where, by 1860, she was struggling economically. Thus, we need ask, were the texts below, like Harriet Wilson's roughly contemporary *Our Nig*, written to provide their author with more financial stability? Or were they, as the autobiographical opening of "The First Stage of Life" implies, part of an effort to define herself as a writer? Or do they represent a combination of these or other goals? And—at a basic level—did Stewart write more during this period?

Beyond their biographical import, these texts tell us much simply by their place of publication. Like Harper's serialized *Christian Recorder* novels—and Julia Collins's even earlier serialized *Recorder* novel—the texts appeared in a periodical of the AME Church, a periodical that was run and largely written by blacks and designed primarily for black readers.[3] Thus, these texts emphasize Frances Smith Foster's repeated call for scholars to study (as well as find and preserve) black periodicals and other "nonbook" literature as we examine how early black women's voices interfaced with a range of public spheres. Given that Collins and Stewart were teachers (and Harper an education activist) and that the *Recorder* and the *Repository* regularly called for teachers to share their papers with their young charges, scholars must begin to consider applying more widely Nina Baym's suggestion that *The Bondwoman's Narrative* may have been written by a young teacher reading her work aloud to her students (323–25).[4]

The possibility that Stewart, Collins, and Harper—and other black teachers, mothers, and caregivers—were designing texts for this rhetorical context would reshape Foster's recognition of an African American print culture that was "undeniably pragmatic" and tied as much "to the desire to create a positive and purposeful self-identified African America as to any defensive gestures responding to racist attacks and libel" (717–18). It would also call for realigning the work of black literary foremothers—perhaps placing Susan Paul's 1835 *Memoir of James Jackson* closer to the center and seeing negotiation with white reformers' texts on children as key authorial work.

In a broader sense, Stewart's texts below, like those of Collins, Harper, and their fellows, demonstrate that some early black women writers seized on a sense of domestic womanhood centering on a revision of republican motherhood and teaching and combined it with Afro-Protestant Evangelicalism and nascent black nationalism to fashion public spaces for themselves. For Stewart, who, as Joycelyn Moody rightly points out, had been "rejected as a woman by church patriarchy and lay people of both races" (44), creating a sphere for public expression meant that she had to temper her criticism of black men—a group that included the editors of the *Repository*. Making this concession—or perhaps revising her earlier thinking—allowed her to continue to offer a jeremiad-style critique of free black culture because she could frame such work around the evangelical nationalism of the AME Church. She could also begin to argue for shared ground for men and women: in both of these texts, raising (in terms of child care and racial uplift) the black child becomes a black-nationalist duty, public and private, conjoining black men and women.

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As Stewart sometimes chafed against the genre of the jeremiad and black women's limited access to the pulpit in the 1830s, she strained, at times, against the limits of church periodicals. Beyond revising her critique of gender relations, "Proper Training" shows less certainty than her earlier writing about how heavenly judgment (a key piece of her theology) plays out vis-à-vis race. Indeed, after Stewart holds up the Puritans as models (over the "unholy tempers" of Native Americans), she is forced to ask, "Oh, can we curse whom God has blessed?" "The First Stage" opens with the similarly blunt and self-effacing recognition that "[a]ll are not born to govern"—and that Stewart has thus taught herself to take on "humble" tasks, "to contribute a straw as it were, if nothing more to aid the press" and "the church."

Still, the nascent black-nationalist components of black church periodicals allowed Stewart—as they did women such as Collins and Harper—to envision, in "Proper Training," a "David, ruddy, and withal a beautiful countenance" slaying the Goliath that keeps black children from aspiring to "the Presidential chair." In this, the texts below show Stewart pragmatically revising what Moody calls her "theology of survival" (26) and, in so doing, offering a model for other "public" black women.[5]

In addition, focusing in church periodicals on the child—a figure already at the center of sentimental literature—gave Stewart the revolutionary chance to write fiction. The story of Letitia, a young black girl who loses her parents (as Stewart did) and comes to God only after great trial, "The First Stage of Life" reenvisions sentimental figures like *The Lamplighter*'s Gerty and lets Stewart make some of her most fascinating comments on memory and perception and do both direct (as first-person narrator) and indirect (through Letitia's story) autobiographical work. All these moves demand reassessment of Stewart's oeuvre, but perhaps most stunning about "The First Stage" is its emphasis on Letitia's sense of the world. Where sentimental literature, evangelical tracts, and jeremiads are often definitive, much of what Letitia experiences is enveloped in a hazy unknowing—an indistinctness—that largely characterizes the narrator's own voice. Though Stewart rushes to sentimental fiction's trademark happy ending, her choice of closing moral—from Zechariah 4.10—seems to fit her experiments in sharing the perceptions of an orphaned black girl. As such, that passage from Zechariah might address the public spaces Stewart was trying to carve out for herself and other black women as much as it does the specifics of Letitia's story: "we must never despise the day of small things."

Notes

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1. Most of the early work on Stewart can be credited to Marilyn Richardson; see Stewart, *Maria W. Stewart*, which Richardson edited. (Stewart's full 1835 collection was republished as part of the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers a year after Richardson's volume.) See also Romero; Moody; Peterson. In addition to the documents Richardson cites, basic biographical information can be found in Stewart's listing on page 500 of the 1850 federal census of Williamsburg, Kings County, New York, and on page 61 of the 1860 federal census of the eleventh ward of Baltimore, Baltimore County, Maryland.

2. According to WorldCat, Harvard, Yale, the University of Virginia, and the Indiana State Library are the only institutions that hold issues of the *Repository*. While Bullock mentions the *Repository*, Foster, McHenry, and Zboray and Zboray offer the only scholarly considerations of this periodical.

3. Harper, who also published a brief piece in the *Repository*, serialized three novels in the *Recorder*, which were rediscovered by Foster and published in book form in 1994. Foster's "conservative" editing—preserving as completely as possible the text of the periodical original—has been a model for my work here. Collins's 1865 novel *The Curse of Caste* was recently republished. The *Recorder* remains understudied.

4. Baym's suggestion not only echoes her earlier comments on white women teachers writing for and reading to their pupils but also addresses a growing sense that Harper's novels may have been in part designed for—or at least employed in—pedagogy.

5. These texts were written as Stewart was shifting from Baptist to Episcopalian (see Peterson 58–59); she may have seen denominational identity as less important than finding a venue that accepted her calling. (The *Repository* regularly asserted that it was designed for a readership of African Americans both inside and outside the AME Church.)

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Two Texts on Children and Christian Education

THE PROPER TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

BY MRS. MARIA W. STEWART.

Delivered Nov. 21, 1860, at "The Ladies' Liter-a[r]y Festival," in St. James' Protestant Episcopal Church, Baltimore.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The proper training of the young is a subject that ought to excite the religious attention of the community at large. But the force of precept and example at home has a more powerful influence over the mind of children and youth than all the instruction that teachers can impart to them in christendom.

Again, the parental duty of teaching children the first lessons of piety and obedience at home, in some cases appear to be little thought of, if not altogether neglected. And when the children of such parents are sent abroad for instruction, they appear ignorant of God, the reading of his Holy Word is irksome to them, and they pay little or no attention to the prayers that may be offered up in their hearing. And unless reproved for their irreverent behavior, they by their actions say, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice." Hence arises want of respect and reverence for their Spiritual pastors, ministers and teachers, and those whom God has placed in authority over them. They are not taught to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. They

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are not taught to rise up before the hoary head and honor grey hairs. Thus the poor, the decrepit, and the old, are ofttimes treated with scarce common respect by the giddy young, and are cast aside as things of naught.

We are not always to bloom in youth and beauty, and God has wisely arranged that the old and the middle-aged, by their wisdom and discretion, should counsel and guide the young. And there is as much need of pious missionary labor in different parts of this city as there is among the Hottentots or the wild Hindoo. There, were wicked and insolent children, in the days of the prophet Elisha, and there are wicked and insolent children now, and though God may not perform a miracle by sending the bears out of the wood to destroy them, yet their punishment is certain and sure, for the sins of youth follow them to old age.

Again, lying is one of the grand characteristics of children; and if all liars are to have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, what a fearful doom awaits the many; and those children that are distinguished for always telling the truth, like the illustrious General George Washington, may be considered gems of rare value. And this fact and observation gives rise to the thought, that there must have been some first great cause. Why? We as the citizens of the State of Maryland are denied our oath.

Again, the unruly tempers and passions of some children when let loose, are like the ragings of a *bear*; and unless children are taught self-government of temper at home, their tempers will govern them and become fastened upon them as iron bands. Thus, many for want of being early taught the fear of God, and self-government of temper at home, in after-life become the authors of their own misery and the misery of those around them. And such children, with such tempers, could never enter the kingdom of heaven were they to die, according to God's Holy word, and if permitted so to do, they would deprive its inmates of their happiness. Oh, horrible! to allow children to possess ungovernable tempers and unbridled tongue to have the last word, to call ill-names, to wrangle, quarrel, and fight.

As you pass along the streets, look at the votaries of vice and shudder. Says the poet:

> "Soon as we draw our infant breath,
> The seeds of sin grow up for death."

And well might the Psalmist exclaim. "Deliver me from the strife of tongues. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness. O God, thou that art the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness."

God overthrew the house of Eli, because he restrained not his sons; and what has happened to others should prove a warning to us. And Saul lost his kingdom by his disobedience to the commands of the prophet Samuel, and, Oh, wretched man was he, for the Lord departed from him. And unless those whom God has placed in authority over our children take this matter into a more serious consideration than heretofore, there will a generation spring up, among whom the Lord will not delight to dwell. And God has put a rod in the hand of this great American nation, to scourge those of us who are living in the neglect of this one great and important duty, and He alone prevents them from doing it. But if we make up our minds from this time henceforth, to train up our children in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from it, He will fight our every battle and defend us from every foe.

Again, as God punishes nations and individuals for their disobedience to His commands, Lo, He abundantly rewards those that are obedient. He established the throne of David His servant, forever, because He knew that David would teach his children the fear of the Lord. And as the Lord declared there should not fail Him a man to sit upon the throne of David, who knows but the nobility of England, her kings and her queens, her princes and her princesses, her dukes and her duchies, her

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lords and ladies, may have descended from David's royal line? And who knows but what the royal sovereignty of England shall stand until the end of time. For righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Mrs. President and Gentlemen,—Look at this great American continent. It is supposed to have been inhabited twelve hundred years by native Indians, before its discovery by Columbus. And what did they do for God? Their delight was to hunt the buffalo and wild deer; and being ignorant of God's Holy will and commandments, they and their children gave vent to their unholy tempers, until some of their altars became literally drenched with the blood of human victims. Therefore, God in his wise and holy providence, saw fit to take this goodly land from them, and to give it to a nation wiser and better than themselves, and suffered that nation to exterminate millions of their race, and to drive their posterity on our far Western borders.

Behold! yonder, that feeble band of Pilgrim fathers, landing in this dreary wilderness, on Plymouth Rock, at an inclement season of the year, amid sufferings indescribable. But their first effort was to rear an altar to the living God, and lay the foundation of piety, obedience, and intelligence, for their children to walk upon. They had made themselves acquainted with the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the Bible was the chart by which they steered their course. And however much the present race may have degenerated from the religious principles of their forefathers, yet see by their union and by their strength, by their industry, and energy of character, by their self-determination, to equal, if not to excel, other nations. From the Northern Arctic to the South Antarctic, from the Atlantic on the East, to the Pacific on the West, what mighty achievements they have accomplished in three hundred and sixty-eight years! They have leveled forests, reared cities, their fields wave with the finest of the wheat; and this vast continent is besprinkled from one end to the other with towns and villages. Look at their churches, their colleges, their schools, and their academies of giant intellect,

Their men,
Their mighty men,

Their valiant men, their men of renown, their House of Congress, their Senate, their House of Representatives, and their Legislature, their State Department, their War Department, and their military, their Naval Department by sea and by land, their their [sic] commerce, second to none but Europe; their Agricultural Department, and their manufactures, their Arts, their Sciences, their Steam inventions, their Railroad construction, their Geographical plans, their Astronomical discoveries, and their Telegraphic wire, and their large lakes and rivers, and mighty oceans, bedecked with ships of the largest magnitude to those of the smallest dimensions, and their Star-spangled Banner floating in the breeze.

Oh, can we curse whom God has blessed? Happy is that nation whose God is the Lord. And who knows what miracle of wonder He may perform for us if we only make up our mind to serve the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, might, mind, and strength, and lay the platform of piety and intelligence for our children to walk upon. For we also are His people and the sheep of His pasture. He formed and fashioned us, and we are the workmanship of His hands. He knows our griefs and our sorrows, our fearful apprehensions of the future, and like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

Dear Fathers and Mothers,—It rests with you whether your sons and daughters shall become as polished corner-stones, after the similitude of a palace in the house of our God. And though you may not hope to see them reach the Presidential chair, from circumstances under which we are placed, yet who knows what great shaggy lion may rouse from his lair, and roar terribly, from among them! What man of

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gigantic intellect rise up, to confute and confound the mighty hosts of arguments that are leveled against us by the haughty oppressor! What David, ruddy, and withal a beautiful countenance, run from the sheepfold with a sling and pebble to strike Goliah in the forehead and kill him with his own sword! If we only lay the foundation of piety and intelligence for our children to walk upon, God has raised up one wonder in this nineteenth century, and who knows what wonder He may raise up in the twentieth!

Sin is such a hideous monster, that were I to live my life over again, I would shun it as the most deadly poison. For there is an inconceivable beauty in the fear and service of God, a beauty past expression.

THE FIRST STAGE OF LIFE.

BY MRS. MARIAH W. STEWART.

The writer of this article has become so very obscure in life, these late years, so much immersed in care and anxiety of mind. Away from home, in a land of strangers, away from those once loved, once honored, and once revered, and so far sunk in oblivion's dark shade, that she feels little or no disposition ever to aspire therefrom.

Yet amid discouragements from the earliest ages of antiquity, there has ever been some individual, however humble, to contribute a straw as it were, if nothing more to aid the press, the minist[r]y, the church, and there ever will be.

All are not born to govern, there must be subjects to rule, all are not the favorites of fortune, and the poor will never cease out of the land, and our conditions in life, our dispositions and our different pursuits, after happiness in this world, are as varied, as the flowers of the field, the birds of the air, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, yet all are searching for one great point, all end in one termination, all finally blend together, and take their course, and wend their way, until they pour themselves into an ocean. The ocean of eternity.

In order to become a writer the mind must be stored with useful knowledge it requires study, deep thought, nay, more, it requires profound meditation, and fervent prayer. And how is this frame of mind to be acquired, this intellectual food obtained, amid the perplexing care of what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and where withal shall I be clothed. But a whisper tells me, there must a sacrifice, be made unto God, on the altar of our time, if it is not performed until those dark, still hours, when deep sleep falleth upon man.

But my subject. The first recollection of little Letitia, (for by that name I shall call the heroine of my subject,) was, of her father taking her up in his arms, in consequence of some little excitement out of doors, and carrying her in the house, and placing her in the lap of her mother, she never saw him more, he was drowned, when and where, she knows not.

The first time Letitia remembers of having her face and hands washed, was by her aunt Sarah, but not without the threat of rubbing all the skin off from her arms, if she did not behave herself, and the first sweet potato she ever saw, her aunt gave her, it was red.

The first time Letitia ever noticed the blue sky, and the light of day, she was sent with another little girl to get a pail of water, she climbed upon a ledge of rocks, she fell, and one of the rocks fell upon one of her limbs, she was wounded, she saw the blood flow. How she got home, or when she recovered, she knows not, she only knows that it was.

The first flowers Letitia saw, was a field of clover, enclosed by a fence. It was in full bloom, and the colors being pink and green, appeared beautiful to her infant vision. What caused the beautiful light of day, she could not imagine, she had never heard of, or seen the sun, and if she had, she had not sense enough to know it. And the first time Letitia was ever out in the sable orb of night, that she recollects her attention attracted by the light of the lamps. All

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was dark above, she saw no moon nor stars, she knew not what they were, and passing by a shop she saw a monstrous large boot, she was filled with fear, she thought it was God's boot, and walked away very softly. This was the first idea Letitia ever had of God.

Thus Letitia passed away the guileless hours of infancy, like a butterfly in the sunbeams of a summer's day. Where she first saw the blue sky, the beautiful light of day, the field of tall clover elegantly arrayed in pink and green, or the hand that sustained her she knew not, she only knew that it was so.

And now the scene changes, and Letitia remembers that herself, her mother, and her step-father were all on their way, she knows not where, she knows not when this gentleman became her step-father, she only knew that he was her step-father, and when she comes again to her recollection, she finds herself in a strange place, surrounded by the beautiful light of pay [sic], the blue sky above her head, clouded with white, and herself disarranging a beautiful little baby house, the shelves all decorated with broken earthen ware, her little playmate was absent, she returns, she reproves Letitia gently. She was white, the first white face, Letitia ever saw, that she knows off [sic].

And now Letitia returns home, but the word home, she had never heard of, and what does she see. Her mother sick, propped up in the bed, supported by pillows, her step-father administering to the wants of her mother. And what does her mother say. She tells Letitia she is sometimes good, and sometimes bad. The first, and last reproof that ever sounded in the ears of Letitia, from the lips of that gentle mother.

And now what does Letitia hear. Her mother desires to go to the city, to die, at a dear friend's house, for by the light of Letitia's vision she must have been in the country, but the word country, she had never heard, she knew not what it meant. A cart was procured, and the bed put in it, and Letitia, her mother, and her step-father, drove off she knew not where. It was the first ride Letitia ever had that she knew off [sic]. And now when Letitia again recollects, she finds herself out doors at play, in front of an old brown house, with a flight of old brown steps, a woman comes to the door, she says, Letitia, your mother is dying. In an instant Letitia was at the foot of her mother's bed. She jumps, she screams, she cries, Oh! mother, what shall I do, I shall have no one to take care of me. Her mother extends her hand, the last breath is departing, she dies, and poor little Letitia is left an orphan.

Oh! Death, thou grim and cruel monster, how terrific thou must be in thy appearance, to frighten the infant-imagination at thy approach.

THE FIRST STAGE OF LIFE.
No. 2

BY MRS. M. W. STEWART.

"I WILL take care of you," said a woman who was standing by the bedside, taking Letitia by the hand, "I will take care of you, if no one else will." And she tried to soothe her aching heart and her throbbing bosom, and the poor little orphan began to dry up her tears.

Aunt Sally, for that was the name of Letitia's new aunt, began to be very busy in making arrangements to lay her mother out, and among the articles collected for that purpose, the only thing that attracts her attention, is a pair of white cotton stockings, the first pair she ever saw in her life. And the next morning she steals into the room softly, uncovers her mother's face, takes the cents from her eyes, opens the lid, to try to bring her to life, sees they won't stay open, replaces the cents, kisses her clay-cold cheek, then leaves the room. It was the last time that she ever saw her mother, that she knows of.

And now the scene changes, and Letitia sees herself all dressed in black, the first black she ever saw in her life. And her step-father takes her by the hand, and they go, she knows not

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where, until they come to a house, the outside surrounded by a very large number of men, all dressed in black, and the inside crowded with women, all dressed in black, and by the light of her infant vision, it appears they had to sit in each other's laps. And then a tall man stood up, with a gown on: he must have been a minister, and he had something in his hand, it must have been a book, and then sweet sounds vibrated through Letitia's ears, the first she ever heard. They must have sung a hymn. And then the tall man said something, she knows not what it was; it must have been a prayer. And then they all walk, she knows not where, the blue sky over their heads, and the brown earth, under their feet, until they came to a large hilly space, the hills covered with a little short, green grass here, and the naked earth there. And they walk until they come to the side of a fence. They stop; but her mind is wandering; she sees not what they are doing, till her eye catches a glimpse of a long, narrow space of fresh earth. She knows not what it is; but it must have been her mother's grave. And she turns away with her [step-]father, unconscious of her loss. And they all turn away, and leave Letitia's mother there to sleep, until Gabriel shall step one foot upon the earth and the other upon the sea, and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer.

And oh, will Letitia recognise her mother, amid contending elements, when the sea is roaring, the earth quaking, the rocks rending, the graves opening, the dead arising, the the [sic] world on fire? Oh, will she have a part in the first resurrection, and is her name written in the Lamb's book of life?

And will Letitia and her mother be caught up with God's elect from the four winds of heaven, to meet that innumerable throng, out of every nation and kindred, and tongue and people, who have come up out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb?

O! thou chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely. Thou bright and morning star, Thou only knowest.

THE FIRST STAGE OF LIFE.
No. 3

BY MRS. M. W. STEWART.

"Thou shalt by no means afflict my fatherless child. If you afflict them, and they cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry."

This command was among one of the first given to Moses, by God, on the mount. No doubt but what God saw, at that early period of time, and through all coming ages, the forlorn and helpless condition of the widow and the orphan, and, therefore, has ever made those the objects of his peculiar care who put their trust in him.

But to my subject. Letitia turned away from her mother's grave, with her [step-]father and others, but she knew not where they went; but the next day her aunt Sally took her somewhere, she knew not where; but the blue sky was over her head, and the brown earth was under her feet, and it appeared as if there was an old barn there, but no other buildings around. And Aunt Sally told Letitia that the tall man spoken of previously, was her cousin, and that he wanted to carry her off, and that she wanted to hide her, so that he could not get her. Letitia knew no better. She went into the barn, and her aunt covered het [sic] up in the hay, in the box under the manger, and then left her, and the poor child went to sleep. It is not known how long she slept, but when she awoke her aunt was standing beside her, and told her she was rejoiced to see her open her eyes, for she thought she was dead. Search was made for Letitia, but she could nowhere be found, and the gentleman was obliged to go and leave her, who was afterwards ascertained to be a distinguished man of God. Aunt Sally became housekeeper for Letitia's step-father. And nothing much transpired till about one year after, when word was brought to Letitia that her [step-]father was dead, for she was not at home at the time.

Thus Letitia was cast upon the cold charities of the world, with no one to care for her

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but her adopted aunt, and she was incapable of training her up as she ought to have beeu [sic]. However, she put her out in a family where they had one son, and he frightened her almost to death by telling her about the devil. Letitia had never heard anything of the kind before, and she made those who had the charge of her afterwards an unaccountable sight of trouble in consequence. As it has been asserted that infants, birds and flowers retain the native innocence they possessed before man's fall, so Letitia was as artless and innocent as her sinful nature would allow her to be. She did not as yet know right from wrong. She was scarce six years old, but it appears that her intellect began to unfold and ripen, and she could recollect of picking up pears and apples under the trees, with Mr. Harvey Stanton, for he was the one that delighted to frighten her so.

But her Aunt Sally did not permit her to stay there long, for she took her away, and the child became almost a wandering gypsy, for her aunt had no settled home, and she taught Letitita all kinds of naughtiness, and became very unkind and cruel to her, and went away and left her in the street, without home and without friends. But Letitia did not cry unto God in her distress; she did not know he was; she had never been taught anything about him. But God knew who Letitia was, and directed her infant steps to an old man called Uncle Pete, and he told her to call on a certain lady and gentleman, and tell them that her aunt had gone off and left her in the street, and that she had no father or mother. She did so, and the lady and gentleman took the little stranger under their charge; and when her Aunt Sally came after her, they would not let her go. And now Letitia entered upon a new career. She was taught about God, to read, to pray, and was catechised; but she was almost a ruined child, she was so bad, and she told the other children in the family what Mr. Harvey had told her about the devil, and it was as much as the family could do to undo the evil that had been done, and pacify their minds.

Letitia spent her summers in working about the house, weeding the flower beds, and in going over the hedge, when her work was done, to pick strawberries, blackberries and whortleberries, and in the short summer evenings used to sing and dance, and play till bed-time. And once Letitia robbed a bird's nest, but she was told it was so wrong, she never did so again. And in the fall she used to ramble in the woods during leisure hours, to pick up chestnuts and walnuts, and in winter her time was employed in knitting, spinning, and sliding on the ice—so much of a boy girl was she, that she used to try to make sleds to slide on—and trying to see how nice she could put up the kitchen when the family were out visiting.

Letitia never liked to work very hard, and when she had to work harder than she felt disposed, she would cry, and make such a fuss, that they would send her to bed, or somewhere else, to get rid of her noise. Letitia was very fond of making boquets [sic] of the humble, modest blue violets in spring.

And now I must bring my story to a close, and the sequel is, that we must never despise the day of small things. And to show that the poorest little ragged boy may become an ambassador for Christ, and the pensive little maiden a mother in Israel. The first religious desire of Letitia was to be a good girl; and from being one of the most abject and despised, she became one of the most caressed and admired among her associates. And the last time I heard from her she was like a tree planted in the house of my God, towering like some of the tall cedars of Lebanon, considering all things as loss compared to the excellency of Jesus Christ—soaring aloft, as it were, on eagles' wings, amid the stars, to a city out of sight, whose builder and whose maker is God, leaving the world, with its pomps and vanities, beneath. Thus showing that the Lord He is God, for He setteth up one and putteth down another, and taketh the beggar from the dunghill, and setteth him among the princes.

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