

**The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe**

**By**

**Charles Edward Stowe**

LIFE OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Compiled From

Her Letters and Journals

BY HER SON

CHARLES EDWARD STOWE

It seems but fitting, that I should preface this story of my life, with a few words of introduction.

The desire to leave behind me some reflection of my life, has been cherished by me, for many years past; but failing strength and increasing infirmities have prevented its accomplishment.

At my suggestion and with what assistance I have been able to render my son Revd. Charles Edward Stow, has compiled from my letters and journals, this biography. It is this true story of my own words, and has therefore all the force of an autobiography.

It is perhaps much more accurate as to detail & impression than is possible with any autobiography, written later in life.

If these pages, shall lead those who read them to a firmer trust in God and a deeper sense of this fatherly goodness throughout the days of our Earthly pilgrimage I can stay with Valient for Faith in the Pilgrim's Progress.

I am going to my Father's & this with great difficulty. I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the troubles I have been at, to arrive where I am.

My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage & my courages & skills to him that can get it.

Hartford Sept. 30 1889

(Signed) Harriet Beecher Stowe]

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

I desire to express my thanks here to Harper & Brothers, of New York, for permission to use letters already published in the "Autobiography and Correspondence of Lyman Beecher." I have availed myself freely of this permission in chapters i. and iii. In chapter xx. I have given letters already published in the "Life of George Eliot," by Mr. Cross; but in every instance I have copied from the original MSS. and not from the published work. In conclusion, I desire to express my indebtedness to Mr. Kirk Munroe, who has been my co-laborer in the work of compilation.

CHARLES E. STOWE.

HARTFORD, September 30, 1889.

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## CHAPTER I.

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REMARKABLE COMPOSITION.--GOES TO HARTFORD.

Harriet Beecher (Stowe) was born June 14, 1811, in the characteristic New England town of Litchfield, Conn. Her father was the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, a distinguished Calvinistic divine, her mother Roxanna Foote, his first wife. The little new-comer was ushered into a household of happy, healthy children, and found five brothers and sisters awaiting her. The eldest was Catherine, born September 6, 1800. Following her were two sturdy boys, William and Edward; then came Mary, then George, and at last Harriet. Another little Harriet born three years before had died when only one month old, and the fourth daughter was named, in memory of this sister, Harriet Elizabeth Beecher. Just two years after Harriet was born, in the same month, another brother, Henry Ward, was welcomed to the family circle, and after him came Charles, the last of Roxanna Beecher's children.

The first memorable incident of Harriet's life was the death of her

mother, which occurred when she was four years old, and which ever afterwards remained with her as the tenderest, saddest, and most sacred memory of her childhood. Mrs. Stowe's recollections of her mother are found in a letter to her brother Charles, afterwards published in the "Autobiography and Correspondence of Lyman Beecher." She says:--

"I was between three and four years of age when our mother died, and my personal recollections of her are therefore but few. But the deep interest and veneration that she inspired in all who knew her were such that during all my childhood I was constantly hearing her spoken of, and from one friend or another some incident or anecdote of her life was constantly being impressed upon me.

"Mother was one of those strong, restful, yet widely sympathetic natures in whom all around seemed to find comfort and repose. The communion between her and my father was a peculiar one. It was an intimacy throughout the whole range of their being. There was no human mind in whose decisions he had greater confidence. Both intellectually and morally he regarded her as the better and stronger portion of himself, and I remember hearing him say that after her death his first sensation was a sort of terror, like that of a child suddenly shut out alone in the dark.

"In my own childhood only two incidents of my mother twinkle like rays through the darkness. One was of our all running and dancing out

before her from the nursery to the sitting-room one Sabbath morning, and her pleasant voice saying after us, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, children.'

"Another remembrance is this: mother was an enthusiastic horticulturist in all the small ways that limited means allowed. Her brother John in New York had just sent her a small parcel of fine tulip-bulbs. I remember rummaging these out of an obscure corner of the nursery one day when she was gone out, and being strongly seized with the idea that they were good to eat, using all the little English I then possessed to persuade my brothers that these were onions such as grown people ate and would be very nice for us. So we fell to and devoured the whole, and I recollect being somewhat disappointed in the odd sweetish taste, and thinking that onions were not so nice as I had supposed. Then mother's serene face appeared at the nursery door and we all ran towards her, telling with one voice of our discovery and achievement. We had found a bag of onions and had eaten them all up.

"Also I remember that there was not even a momentary expression of impatience, but that she sat down and said, 'My dear children, what you have done makes mamma very sorry. Those were not onions but roots of beautiful flowers, and if you had let them alone we should have next summer in the garden great beautiful red and yellow flowers such as you never saw.' I remember how drooping and dispirited we all grew at this picture, and how sadly we regarded the empty paper bag.

"Then I have a recollection of her reading aloud to the children Miss Edgeworth's 'Frank,' which had just come out, I believe, and was exciting a good deal of attention among the educational circles of Litchfield. After that came a time when every one said she was sick, and I used to be permitted to go once a day into her room, where she sat bolstered up in bed. I have a vision of a very fair face with a bright red spot on each cheek and her quiet smile. I remember dreaming one night that mamma had got well, and of waking with loud transports of joy that were hushed down by some one who came into the room. My dream was indeed a true one. She was forever well.

"Then came the funeral. Henry was too little to go. I can see his golden curls and little black frock as he frolicked in the sun like a kitten, full of ignorant joy.

"I recollect the mourning dresses, the tears of the older children, the walking to the burial-ground, and somebody's speaking at the grave. Then all was closed, and we little ones, to whom it was so confused, asked where she was gone and would she never come back.

"They told us at one time that she had been laid in the ground, and at another that she had gone to heaven. Thereupon Henry, putting the two things together, resolved to dig through the ground and go to heaven to find her; for being discovered under sister Catherine's window one morning digging with great zeal and earnestness, she called to him to know what he was doing. Lifting his curly head, he answered with great

simplicity, 'Why, I'm going to heaven to find mamma.'

"Although our mother's bodily presence thus disappeared from our circle, I think her memory and example had more influence in moulding her family, in deterring from evil and exciting to good, than the living presence of many mothers. It was a memory that met us everywhere, for every person in the town, from the highest to the lowest, seemed to have been so impressed by her character and life that they constantly reflected some portion of it back upon us.

"The passage in 'Uncle Tom' where Augustine St. Clare describes his mother's influence is a simple reproduction of my own mother's influence as it has always been felt in her family."

Of his deceased wife Dr. Beecher said: "Few women have attained to more remarkable piety. Her faith was strong and her prayer prevailing. It was her wish that all her sons should devote themselves to the ministry, and to it she consecrated them with fervent prayer. Her prayers have been heard. All her sons have been converted and are now, according to her wish, ministers of Christ."

Such was Roxanna Beecher, whose influence upon her four-year-old daughter was strong enough to mould the whole after-life of the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." After the mother's death the Litchfield home was such a sad, lonely place for the child that her aunt, Harriet Foote, took her away for a long visit at her grandmother's at Nut

Plains, near Guilford, Conn., the first journey from home the little one had ever made. Of this visit Mrs. Stowe herself says:--

"Among my earliest recollections are those of a visit to Nut Plains immediately after my mother's death. Aunt Harriet Foote, who was with mother during all her last sickness, took me home to stay with her. At the close of what seemed to me a long day's ride we arrived after dark at a lonely little white farmhouse, and were ushered into a large parlor where a cheerful wood fire was crackling; I was placed in the arms of an old lady, who held me close and wept silently, a thing at which I marveled, for my great loss was already faded from my childish mind.

"I remember being put to bed by my aunt in a large room, on one side of which stood the bed appropriated to her and me, and on the other that of my grandmother. My aunt Harriet was no common character. A more energetic human being never undertook the education of a child. Her ideas of education were those of a vigorous English woman of the old school. She believed in the Church, and had she been born under that regime would have believed in the king stoutly, although being of the generation following the Revolution she was a not less staunch supporter of the Declaration of Independence.

"According to her views little girls were to be taught to move very gently, to speak softly and prettily, to say 'yes ma'am,' and 'no ma'am,' never to tear their clothes, to sew, to knit at regular hours,

to go to church on Sunday and make all the responses, and to come home and be catechised.

"During these catechisings she used to place my little cousin Mary and myself bolt upright at her knee, while black Dinah and Harry, the bound boy, were ranged at a respectful distance behind us; for Aunt Harriet always impressed it upon her servants 'to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters,' a portion of the Church catechism that always pleased me, particularly when applied to them, as it insured their calling me 'Miss Harriet,' and treating me with a degree of consideration such as I never enjoyed in the more democratic circle at home. I became proficient in the Church catechism, and gave my aunt great satisfaction by the old-fashioned gravity and steadiness with which I learned to repeat it.

"As my father was a Congregational minister, I believe Aunt Harriet, though the highest of High Church women, felt some scruples as to whether it was desirable that my religious education should be entirely out of the sphere of my birth. Therefore when this catechetical exercise was finished she would say, 'Now, niece, you have to learn another catechism, because your father is a Presbyterian minister,'--and then she would endeavor to make me commit to memory the Assembly catechism.

"At this lengthening of exercise I secretly murmured. I was rather pleased at the first question in the Church catechism, which is

certainly quite on the level of any child's understanding,--'What is your name?' It was such an easy good start, I could say it so loud and clear, and I was accustomed to compare it with the first question in the Primer, 'What is the chief end of man?' as vastly more difficult for me to answer. In fact, between my aunt's secret unbelief and my own childish impatience of too much catechism, the matter was indefinitely postponed after a few ineffectual attempts, and I was overjoyed to hear her announce privately to grandmother that she thought it would be time enough for Harriet to learn the Presbyterian catechism when she went home."

Mingled with this superabundance of catechism and plentiful needlework the child was treated to copious extracts from Lowth's Isaiah, Buchanan's Researches in Asia, Bishop Heber's Life, and Dr. Johnson's Works, which, after her Bible and Prayer Book, were her grandmother's favorite reading. Harriet does not seem to have fully appreciated these; but she did enjoy her grandmother's comments upon their biblical readings. Among the Evangelists especially was the old lady perfectly at home, and her idea of each of the apostles was so distinct and dramatic that she spoke of them as of familiar acquaintances. She would, for instance, always smile indulgently at Peter's remarks and say, "There he is again, now; that's just like Peter. He's always so ready to put in."

It must have been during this winter spent at Nut Plains, amid such surroundings, that Harriet began committing to memory that wonderful



assortment of hymns, poems, and scriptural passages from which in after years she quoted so readily and effectively, for her sister Catherine, in writing of her the following November, says:--

"Harriet is a very good girl. She has been to school all this summer, and has learned to read very fluently. She has committed to memory twenty-seven hymns and two long chapters in the Bible. She has a remarkably retentive memory and will make a very good scholar."

At this time the child was five years old, and a regular attendant at "Ma'am Kilbourne's" school on West Street, to which she walked every day hand in hand with her chubby, rosy-faced, bare-footed, four-year-old brother, Henry Ward. With the ability to read germinated the intense literary longing that was to be hers through life. In those days but few books were specially prepared for children, and at six years of age we find the little girl hungrily searching for mental food amid barrels of old sermons and pamphlets stored in a corner of the garret. Here it seemed to her were some thousands of the most unintelligible things. "An appeal on the unlawfulness of a man marrying his wife's sister" turned up in every barrel she investigated, by twos, or threes, or dozens, till her soul despaired of finding an end. At last her patient search was rewarded, for at the very bottom of a barrel of musty sermons she discovered an ancient volume of "The Arabian Nights." With this her fortune was made, for in these most fascinating of fairy tales the imaginative child discovered a well-spring of joy that was all her own. When things went astray

with her, when her brothers started off on long excursions, refusing to take her with them, or in any other childish sorrow, she had only to curl herself up in some snug corner and sail forth on her bit of enchanted carpet into fairyland to forget all her griefs.

In recalling her own child-life Mrs. Stowe, among other things, describes her father's library, and gives a vivid bit of her own experiences within its walls. She says: "High above all the noise of the house, this room had to me the air of a refuge and a sanctuary. Its walls were set round from floor to ceiling with the friendly, quiet faces of books, and there stood my father's great writing-chair, on one arm of which lay open always his Cruden's Concordance and his Bible. Here I loved to retreat and niche myself down in a quiet corner with my favorite books around me. I had a kind of sheltered feeling as I thus sat and watched my father writing, turning to his books, and speaking from time to time to himself in a loud, earnest whisper. I vaguely felt that he was about some holy and mysterious work quite beyond my little comprehension, and I was careful never to disturb him by question or remark.

"The books ranged around filled me too with a solemn awe. On the lower shelves were enormous folios, on whose backs I spelled in black letters, 'Lightfoot Opera,' a title whereat I wondered, considering the bulk of the volumes. Above these, grouped along in friendly, social rows, were books of all sorts, sizes, and bindings, the titles of which I had read so often that I knew them by heart. There were

Bell's Sermons, Bonnett's Inquiries, Bogue's Essays, Toplady on Predestination, Boston's Fourfold State, Law's Serious Call, and other works of that kind. These I looked over wistfully, day after day, without even a hope of getting something interesting out of them. The thought that father could read and understand things like these filled me with a vague awe, and I wondered if I would ever be old enough to know what it was all about.

"But there was one of my father's books that proved a mine of wealth to me. It was a happy hour when he brought home and set up in his bookcase Cotton Mather's 'Magnalia,' in a new edition of two volumes. What wonderful stories those! Stories too about my own country. Stories that made me feel the very ground I trod on to be consecrated by some special dealing of God's Providence."

In continuing these reminiscences Mrs. Stowe describes as follows her sensations upon first hearing the Declaration of Independence: "I had never heard it before, and even now had but a vague idea of what was meant by some parts of it. Still I gathered enough from the recital of the abuses and injuries that had driven my nation to this course to feel myself swelling with indignation, and ready with all my little mind and strength to applaud the concluding passage, which Colonel Talmadge rendered with resounding majesty. I was as ready as any of them to pledge my life, fortune, and sacred honor for such a cause. The heroic element was strong in me, having come down by ordinary generation from a long line of Puritan ancestry, and just now it made

me long to do something, I knew not what: to fight for my country, or to make some declaration on my own account."

When Harriet was nearly six years old her father married as his second wife Miss Harriet Porter of Portland, Maine, and Mrs. Stowe thus describes her new mother: "I slept in the nursery with my two younger brothers. We knew that father was gone away somewhere on a journey and was expected home, therefore the sound of a bustle in the house the more easily awoke us. As father came into our room our new mother followed him. She was very fair, with bright blue eyes, and soft auburn hair bound round with a black velvet bandeau, and to us she seemed very beautiful.

"Never did stepmother make a prettier or sweeter impression. The morning following her arrival we looked at her with awe. She seemed to us so fair, so delicate, so elegant, that we were almost afraid to go near her. We must have appeared to her as rough, red-faced, country children, honest, obedient, and bashful. She was peculiarly dainty and neat in all her ways and arrangements, and I used to feel breezy, rough, and rude in her presence.

"In her religion she was distinguished for a most unfaltering Christ-worship. She was of a type noble but severe, naturally hard, correct, exact and exacting, with intense natural and moral ideality. Had it not been that Doctor Payson had set up and kept before her a tender, human, loving Christ, she would have been only a conscientious bigot.

This image, however, gave softness and warmth to her religious life, and I have since noticed how her Christ-enthusiasm has sprung up in the hearts of all her children."

In writing to her old home of her first impressions of her new one, Mrs. Beecher says: "It is a very lovely family, and with heartfelt gratitude I observed how cheerful and healthy they were. The sentiment is greatly increased, since I perceive them to be of agreeable habits and some of them of uncommon intellect."

This new mother proved to be indeed all that the name implies to her husband's children, and never did they have occasion to call her aught other than blessed.

Another year finds a new baby brother, Frederick by name, added to the family. At this time too we catch a characteristic glimpse of Harriet in one of her sister Catherine's letters. She says: "Last week we interred Tom junior with funeral honors by the side of old Tom of happy memory. Our Harriet is chief mourner always at their funerals. She asked for what she called an epithet for the gravestone of Tom junior, which I gave as follows:--

"Here lies our Kit,  
Who had a fit,  
And acted queer,  
Shot with a gun,

Her race is run,  
And she lies here."

In June, 1820, little Frederick died from scarlet fever, and Harriet was seized with a violent attack of the same dread disease; but, after a severe struggle, recovered.

Following her happy, hearty child-life, we find her tramping through the woods or going on fishing excursions with her brothers, sitting thoughtfully in her father's study, listening eagerly to the animated theological discussions of the day, visiting her grandmother at Nut Plains, and figuring as one of the brightest scholars in the Litchfield Academy, taught by Mr. John Brace and Miss Pierce. When she was eleven years old her brother Edward wrote of her: "Harriet reads everything she can lay hands on, and sews and knits diligently."

At this time she was no longer the youngest girl of the family, for another sister (Isabella) had been born in 1822. This event served greatly to mature her, as she was intrusted with much of the care of the baby out of school hours. It was not, however, allowed to interfere in any way with her studies, and, under the skillful direction of her beloved teachers, she seemed to absorb knowledge with every sense. She herself writes: "Much of the training and inspiration of my early days consisted not in the things that I was supposed to be studying, but in hearing, while seated unnoticed at my desk, the conversation of Mr. Brace with the older classes. There, from hour to

hour, I listened with eager ears to historical criticisms and discussions, or to recitations in such works as Paley's Moral Philosophy, Blair's Rhetoric, Addison on Taste, all full of most awakening suggestions to my thoughts.

"Mr. Brace exceeded all teachers I ever knew in the faculty of teaching composition. The constant excitement in which he kept the minds of his pupils, the wide and varied regions of thought into which he led them, formed a preparation for composition, the main requisite for which is to have something which one feels interested to say."

In her tenth year Harriet began what to her was the fascinating work of writing compositions, and so rapidly did she progress that at the school exhibition held when she was twelve years old, hers was one of the two or three essays selected to be read aloud before the august assembly of visitors attracted by the occasion.

Of this event Mrs. Stowe writes: "I remember well the scene at that exhibition, to me so eventful. The hall was crowded with all the literati of Litchfield. Before them all our compositions were read aloud. When mine was read I noticed that father, who was sitting on high by Mr. Brace, brightened and looked interested, and at the close I heard him ask, 'Who wrote that composition?' 'Your daughter, sir,' was the answer. It was the proudest moment of my life. There was no mistaking father's face when he was pleased, and to have interested him was past all juvenile triumphs."

That composition has been carefully preserved, and on the old yellow sheets the cramped childish hand-writing is still distinctly legible. As the first literary production of one who afterwards attained such distinction as a writer, it is deemed of sufficient value and interest to be embodied in this biography exactly as it was written and read sixty-five years ago. The subject was certainly a grave one to be handled by a child of twelve.

#### CAN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL BE PROVED BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE?

It has justly been concluded by the philosophers of every age that "The proper study of mankind is man," and his nature and composition, both physical and mental, have been subjects of the most critical examination. In the course of these researches many have been at a loss to account for the change which takes place in the body at the time of death. By some it has been attributed to the flight of its tenant, and by others to its final annihilation.

The questions, "What becomes of the soul at the time of death?" and, if it be not annihilated, "What is its destiny after death?" are those which, from the interest that we all feel in them, will probably engross universal attention.

In pursuing these inquiries it will be necessary to divest ourselves



of all that knowledge which we have obtained from the light which revelation has shed over them, and place ourselves in the same position as the philosophers of past ages when considering the same subject.

The first argument which has been advanced to prove the immortality of the soul is drawn from the nature of the mind itself. It has (say the supporters of this theory) no composition of parts, and therefore, as there are no particles, is not susceptible of divisibility and cannot be acted upon by decay, and therefore if it will not decay it will exist forever.

Now because the mind is not susceptible of decay effected in the ordinary way by a gradual separation of particles, affords no proof that that same omnipotent power which created it cannot by another simple exertion of power again reduce it to nothing. The only reason for belief which this argument affords is that the soul cannot be acted upon by decay. But it does not prove that it cannot destroy its existence. Therefore, for the validity of this argument, it must either be proved that the "Creator" has not the power to destroy it, or that he has not the will; but as neither of these can be established, our immortality is left dependent on the pleasure of the Creator. But it is said that it is evident that the Creator designed the soul for immortality, or he would never have created it so essentially different from the body, for had they both been designed for the same end they would both have been created alike, as there

would have been no object in forming them otherwise. This only proves that the soul and body had not the same destinations. Now of what these destinations are we know nothing, and after much useless reasoning we return where we began, our argument depending upon the good pleasure of the Creator.

And here it is said that a being of such infinite wisdom and benevolence as that of which the Creator is possessed would not have formed man with such vast capacities and boundless desires, and would have given him no opportunity for exercising them.

In order to establish the validity of this argument it is necessary to prove by the light of Nature that the Creator is benevolent, which, being impracticable, is of itself sufficient to render the argument invalid.

But the argument proceeds upon the supposition that to destroy the soul would be unwise. Now this is arraigning the "All-wise" before the tribunal of his subjects to answer for the mistakes in his government. Can we look into the council of the "Unsearchable" and see what means are made to answer their ends? We do not know but the destruction of the soul may, in the government of God, be made to answer such a purpose that its existence would be contrary to the dictates of wisdom.

The great desire of the soul for immortality, its secret, innate

horror of annihilation, has been brought to prove its immortality. But do we always find this horror or this desire? Is it not much more evident that the great majority of mankind have no such dread at all? True that there is a strong feeling of horror excited by the idea of perishing from the earth and being forgotten, of losing all those honors and all that fame awaited them. Many feel this secret horror when they look down upon the vale of futurity and reflect that though now the idols of the world, soon all which will be left them will be the common portion of mankind--oblivion! But this dread does not arise from any idea of their destiny beyond the tomb, and even were this true, it would afford no proof that the mind would exist forever, merely from its strong desires. For it might with as much correctness be argued that the body will exist forever because we have a great dread of dying, and upon this principle nothing which we strongly desire would ever be withheld from us, and no evil that we greatly dread will ever come upon us, a principle evidently false.

Again, it has been said that the constant progression of the powers of the mind affords another proof of its immortality. Concerning this, Addison remarks, "Were a human soul ever thus at a stand in her acquirements, were her faculties to be full blown and incapable of further enlargement, I could imagine that she might fall away insensibly and drop at once into a state of annihilation. But can we believe a thinking being that is in a perpetual progress of improvement, and traveling on from perfection to perfection after having just looked abroad into the works of her Creator and made a few

discoveries of his infinite wisdom and goodness, must perish at her first setting out and in the very beginning of her inquiries?"

In answer to this it may be said that the soul is not always progressing in her powers. Is it not rather a subject of general remark that those brilliant talents which in youth expand, in manhood become stationary, and in old age gradually sink to decay? Till when the ancient man descends to the tomb scarce a wreck of that once powerful mind remains.

Who, but upon reading the history of England, does not look with awe upon the effects produced by the talents of her Elizabeth? Who but admires that undaunted firmness in time of peace and that profound depth of policy which she displayed in the cabinet? Yet behold the tragical end of this learned, this politic princess! Behold the triumphs of age and sickness over her once powerful talents, and say not that the faculties of man are always progressing in their powers.

From the activity of the mind at the hour of death has also been deduced its immortality. But it is not true that the mind is always active at the time of death. We find recorded in history numberless instances of those talents, which were once adequate to the government of a nation, being so weakened and palsied by the touch of sickness as scarcely to tell to beholders what they once were. The talents of the statesman, the wisdom of the sage, the courage and might of the warrior, are instantly destroyed by it, and all that remains of them

is the waste of idiocy or the madness of insanity.

Some minds there are who at the time of death retain their faculties though much impaired, and if the argument be valid these are the only cases where immortality is conferred. Again, it is urged that the inequality of rewards and punishments in this world demand another in which virtue may be rewarded and vice punished. This argument, in the first place, takes for its foundation that by the light of nature the distinction between virtue and vice can be discovered. By some this is absolutely disbelieved, and by all considered as extremely doubtful. And, secondly, it puts the Creator under an obligation to reward and punish the actions of his creatures. No such obligation exists, and therefore the argument cannot be valid. And this supposes the Creator to be a being of justice, which cannot by the light of nature be proved, and as the whole argument rests upon this foundation it certainly cannot be correct.

This argument also directly impeaches the wisdom of the Creator, for the sense of it is this,--that, forasmuch as he was not able to manage his government in this world, he must have another in which to rectify the mistakes and oversights of this, and what an idea would this give us of our All-wise Creator?

It is also said that all nations have some conceptions of a future state, that the ancient Greeks and Romans believed in it, that no nation has been found but have possessed some idea of a future state

of existence. But their belief arose more from the fact that they wished it to be so than from any real ground of belief; for arguments appear much more plausible when the mind wishes to be convinced. But it is said that every nation, however circumstanced, possess some idea of a future state. For this we may account by the fact that it was handed down by tradition from the time of the flood. From all these arguments, which, however plausible at first sight, are found to be futile, may be argued the necessity of a revelation. Without it, the destiny of the noblest of the works of God would have been left in obscurity. Never till the blessed light of the Gospel dawned on the borders of the pit, and the heralds of the Cross proclaimed "Peace on earth and good will to men," was it that bewildered and misled man was enabled to trace his celestial origin and glorious destiny.

The sun of the Gospel has dispelled the darkness that has rested on objects beyond the tomb. In the Gospel man learned that when the dust returned to dust the spirit fled to the God who gave it. He there found that though man has lost the image of his divine Creator, he is still destined, after this earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolved, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Soon after the writing of this remarkable composition, Harriet's child-life in Litchfield came to an end, for that same year she went to Hartford to pursue her studies in a school which had been recently established by her sister Catherine in that city.