

## CHAPTER V.

POVERTY AND SICKNESS, 1840-1850.

FAMINE IN CINCINNATI.--SUMMER AT THE EAST.--PLANS FOR LITERARY WORK.--

EXPERIENCE ON A RAILROAD.--DEATH OF HER BROTHER GEORGE.--SICKNESS AND

DESPAIR.--A JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF HEALTH.--GOES TO BRATTLEBORO'

WATERCURE.--TROUBLES AT LANE SEMINARY.---CHOLERA IN CINCINNATI.--DEATH

OF YOUNGEST CHILD.---DETERMINED TO LEAVE THE WEST.

On January 7, 1839, Professor Stowe wrote to his mother in Natick, Mass.: "You left here, I believe, in the right time, for as there has been no navigation on the Ohio River for a year, we are almost in a state of famine as to many of the necessities of life. For example, salt (coarse) has sold in Cincinnati this winter for three dollars a bushel; rice eighteen cents a pound; coffee fifty cents a pound; white sugar the same; brown sugar twenty cents; molasses a dollar a gallon; potatoes a dollar a bushel. We do without such things mostly; as there is yet plenty of bread and bacon (flour six and seven dollars a barrel, and good pork from six to eight cents a pound) we get along very comfortably.

"Our new house is pretty much as it was, but they say it will be

finished in July. I expect to visit you next summer, as I shall deliver the Phi Beta Kappa oration at Dartmouth College; but whether wife and children come with me or not is not yet decided."

Mrs. Stowe came on to the East with her husband and children during the following summer, and before her return made a trip through the White Mountains.

In May, 1840, her second son was born and named Frederick William, after the sturdy Prussian king, for whom her husband cherished an unbounded admiration.

Mrs. Stowe has said somewhere: "So we go, dear reader, so long as we have a body and a soul. For worlds must mingle,--the great and the little, the solemn and the trivial, wreathing in and out like the grotesque carvings on a gothic shrine; only did we know it rightly, nothing is trivial, since the human soul, with its awful shadow, makes all things sacred." So in writing a biography it is impossible for us to tell what did and what did not powerfully influence the character. It is safer simply to tell the unvarnished truth. The lily builds up its texture of delicate beauty from mould and decay. So how do we know from what humble material a soul grows in strength and beauty!

In December, 1840, writing to Miss May, Mrs. Stowe says:--

"For a year I have held the pen only to write an occasional business

letter such as could not be neglected. This was primarily owing to a severe neuralgic complaint that settled in my eyes, and for two months not only made it impossible for me to use them in writing, but to fix them with attention on anything. I could not even bear the least light of day in my room. Then my dear little Frederick was born, and for two months more I was confined to my bed. Besides all this, we have had an unusual amount of sickness in our family. . . .

"For all that my history of the past year records so many troubles, I cannot on the whole regard it as a very troublous one. I have had so many counterbalancing mercies that I must regard myself as a person greatly blessed. It is true that about six months out of the twelve I have been laid up with sickness, but then I have had every comfort and the kindest of nurses in my faithful Anna. My children have thriven, and on the whole 'come to more,' as the Yankees say, than the care of them. Thus you see my troubles have been but enough to keep me from loving earth too well."

In the spring of 1842 Mrs. Stowe again visited Hartford, taking her six-year-old daughter Hatty with her. In writing from there to her husband she confides some of her literary plans and aspirations to him, and he answers:--

"My dear, you must be a literary woman. It is so written in the book of fate. Make all your calculations accordingly. Get a good stock of health and brush up your mind. Drop the E. out of your name. It only

incumbers it and interferes with the flow and euphony. Write yourself fully and always Harriet Beecher Stowe, which is a name euphonious, flowing, and full of meaning. Then my word for it, your husband will lift up his head in the gate, and your children will rise up and call you blessed.

"Our humble dwelling has to-day received a distinguished honor of which I must give you an account. It was a visit from his excellency the Baron de Roenne, ambassador of his majesty the King of Prussia to the United States. He was pleased to assure me of the great satisfaction my report on Prussian schools had afforded the king and members of his court, with much more to the same effect. Of course having a real live lord to exhibit, I was anxious for some one to exhibit him to; but neither Aunt Esther nor Anna dared venture near the study, though they both contrived to get a peep at his lordship from the little chamber window as he was leaving.

"And now, my dear wife, I want you to come home as quick as you can. The fact is I cannot live without you, and if we were not so prodigious poor I would come for you at once. There is no woman like you in this wide world. Who else has so much talent with so little self-conceit; so much reputation with so little affectation; so much literature with so little nonsense; so much enterprise with so little extravagance; so much tongue with so little scold; so much sweetness with so little softness; so much of so many things and so little of so many other things?"

In answer to this letter Mrs. Stowe writes from Hartford:--

"I have seen Johnson of the 'Evangelist.' He is very liberally disposed, and I may safely reckon on being paid for all I do there. Who is that Hale, Jr., that sent me the 'Boston Miscellany,' and will he keep his word with me? His offers are very liberal,--twenty dollars for three pages, not very close print. Is he to be depended on? If so, it is the best offer I have received yet. I shall get something from the Harpers some time this winter or spring. Robertson, the publisher here, says the book ('The Mayflower') will sell, and though the terms they offer me are very low, that I shall make something on it. For a second volume I shall be able to make better terms. On the whole, my dear, if I choose to be a literary lady, I have, I think, as good a chance of making profit by it as any one I know of. But with all this, I have my doubts whether I shall be able to do so.

"Our children are just coming to the age when everything depends on my efforts. They are delicate in health, and nervous and excitable, and need a mother's whole attention. Can I lawfully divide my attention by literary efforts?

"There is one thing I must suggest. If I am to write, I must have a room to myself, which shall be my room. I have in my own mind pitched on Mrs. Whipple's room. I can put the stove in it. I have bought a cheap carpet for it, and I have furniture enough at home to furnish it

comfortably, and I only beg in addition that you will let me change the glass door from the nursery into that room and keep my plants there, and then I shall be quite happy.

"All last winter I felt the need of some place where I could go and be quiet and satisfied. I could not there, for there was all the setting of tables, and clearing up of tables, and dressing and washing of children, and everything else going on, and the constant falling of soot and coal dust on everything in the room was a constant annoyance to me, and I never felt comfortable there though I tried hard. Then if I came into the parlor where you were I felt as if I were interrupting you, and you know you sometimes thought so too.

"Now this winter let the cooking-stove be put into that room, and let the pipe run up through the floor into the room above. We can eat by our cooking-stove, and the children can be washed and dressed and keep their playthings in the room above, and play there when we don't want them below. You can study by the parlor fire, and I and my plants, etc., will take the other room. I shall keep my work and all my things there and feel settled and quiet. I intend to have a regular part of each day devoted to the children, and then I shall take them in there."

In his reply to this letter Professor Stowe says:--

"The little magazine ('The Souvenir') goes ahead finely. Fisher sent

down to Fulton the other day and got sixty subscribers. He will make the June number as handsome as possible, as a specimen number for the students, several of whom will take agencies for it during the coming vacation. You have it in your power by means of this little magazine to form the mind of the West for the coming generation. It is just as I told you in my last letter. God has written it in his book that you must be a literary woman, and who are we that we should contend against God? You must therefore make all your calculations to spend the rest of your life with your pen.

"If you only could come home to-day how happy should I be. I am daily finding out more and more (what I knew very well before) that you are the most intelligent and agreeable woman in the whole circle of my acquaintance."

That Professor Stowe's devoted admiration for his wife was reciprocated, and that a most perfect sympathy of feeling existed between the husband and wife, is shown by a line in one of Mrs. Stowe's letters from Hartford in which she says: "I was telling Belle yesterday that I did not know till I came away how much I was dependent upon you for information. There are a thousand favorite subjects on which I could talk with you better than with any one else. If you were not already my dearly loved husband I should certainly fall in love with you."

In this same letter she writes of herself:--

"One thing more in regard to myself. The absence and wandering of mind and forgetfulness that so often vexes you is a physical infirmity with me. It is the failing of a mind not calculated to endure a great pressure of care, and so much do I feel the pressure I am under, so much is my mind often darkened and troubled by care, that life seriously considered holds out few allurements,--only my children.

"In returning to my family, from whom I have been so long separated, I am impressed with a new and solemn feeling of responsibility. It appears to me that I am not probably destined for long life; at all events, the feeling is strongly impressed upon my mind that a work is put into my hands which I must be earnest to finish shortly. It is nothing great or brilliant in the world's eye; it lies in one small family circle, of which I am called to be the central point."

On her way home from this Eastern visit Mrs. Stowe traveled for the first time by rail, and of this novel experience she writes to Miss Georgiana May:--

BATAVIA, August 29, 1842.

"Here I am at Brother William's, and our passage along this railroad reminds me of the verse of the psalm:--

"Tho' lions roar and tempests blow,



And rocks and dangers fill the way."

Such confusion of tongues, such shouting and swearing, such want of all sort of system and decency in arrangements, I never desire to see again. I was literally almost trodden down and torn to pieces in the Rochester depot when I went to help my poor, near-sighted spouse in sorting out the baggage. You see there was an accident which happened to the cars leaving Rochester that morning, which kept us two hours and a half at the passing place this side of Auburn, waiting for them to come up and go by us. The consequence was that we got into this Rochester depot aforesaid after dark, and the steamboat, the canal-boat, and the Western train of cars had all been kept waiting three hours beyond their usual time, and they all broke loose upon us the moment we put our heads out of the cars, and such a jerking, and elbowing, and scuffling, and swearing, and protesting, and scolding you never heard, while the great locomotive sailed up and down in the midst thereof, spitting fire and smoke like some great fiend monster diverting himself with our commotions. I do think these steam concerns border a little too much on the supernatural to be agreeable, especially when you are shut up in a great dark depot after sundown. Well, after all, we had to ride till twelve o'clock at night to get to Batavia, and I've been sick abed, so to speak, ever since."

The winter of 1842 was one of peculiar trial to the family at Walnut Hills; as Mrs. Stowe writes, "It was a season of sickness and gloom." Typhoid fever raged among the students of the seminary, and the house

of the president was converted into a hospital, while the members of his family were obliged to devote themselves to nursing the sick and dying.

July 6, 1843, a few weeks before the birth of her third daughter, Georgiana May, a most terrible and overwhelming sorrow came on Mrs. Stowe, in common with all the family, in the sudden death of her brother, the Rev. George Beecher.

He was a young man of unusual talent and ability, and much loved by his church and congregation. The circumstances of his death are related in a letter written by Mrs. Stowe, and are as follows:

"Noticing the birds destroying his fruit and injuring his plants, he went for a double-barreled gun, which he scarcely ever had used, out of regard to the timidity and anxiety of his wife in reference to it. Shortly after he left the house, one of the elders of his church in passing saw him discharge one barrel at the birds. Soon after he heard the fatal report and saw the smoke, but the trees shut out the rest from sight. . . . In about half an hour after, the family assembled at breakfast, and the servant was sent out to call him. . . . In a few minutes she returned, exclaiming, 'Oh, Mr. Beecher is dead! Mr. Beecher is dead!' . . . In a short time a visitor in the family, assisted by a passing laborer, raised him up and bore him to the house. His face was pale and but slightly marred, his eyes were closed, and over his countenance rested the sweet expression of peaceful slumber. . . . Then followed the hurried preparations for the

funeral and journey, until three o'clock, when, all arrangements being made, he was borne from his newly finished house, through his blooming garden, to the new church, planned and just completed under his directing eye. . . . The sermon and the prayers were finished, the choir he himself had trained sung their parting hymn, and at about five the funeral train started for a journey of over seventy miles. That night will stand alone in the memories of those who witnessed its scenes!

"At ten in the evening heavy clouds gathered lowering behind, and finally rose so as nearly to cover the hemisphere, sending forth mutterings of thunder and constant flashes of lightning.

"The excessive heat of the weather, the darkness of the night, the solitary road, the flaring of the lamps and lanterns, the flashes of the lightning, the roll of approaching thunder, the fear of being overtaken in an unfrequented place and the lights extinguished by the rain, the sad events of the day, the cries of the infant boy sick with the heat and bewailing the father who ever before had soothed his griefs, all combined to awaken the deepest emotions of the sorrowful, the awful, and the sublime. . . .

"And so it is at last; there must come a time when all that the most heart-broken, idolizing love can give us is a coffin and a grave! All that could be done for our brother, with all his means and all the affection of his people and friends, was just this, no more! After

all, the deepest and most powerful argument for the religion of Christ is its power in times like this. Take from us Christ and what He taught, and what have we here? What confusion, what agony, what dismay, what wreck and waste! But give Him to us, even the most stricken heart can rise under the blow; yea, even triumph!

"'Thy brother shall rise again,' said Jesus; and to us who weep He speaks: 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye also may be glad with exceeding joy!'"

The advent of Mrs. Stowe's third daughter was followed by a protracted illness and a struggle with great poverty, of which Mrs. Stowe writes in October, 1843:--

"Our straits for money this year are unparalleled even in our annals. Even our bright and cheery neighbor Allen begins to look blue, and says \$600 is the very most we can hope to collect of our salary, once \$1,200. We have a flock of entirely destitute young men in the seminary, as poor in money as they are rich in mental and spiritual resources. They promise to be as fine a band as those we have just sent off. We have two from Iowa and Wisconsin who were actually crowded from secular pursuits into the ministry by the wants of the people about them. Revivals began, and the people came to them saying, 'We have no minister, and you must preach to us, for you know more than we do.'"

In the spring of 1844 Professor Stowe visited the East to arouse an interest in the struggling seminary and raise funds for its maintenance. While he was there he received the following letter from Mrs. Stowe:--

"I am already half sick with confinement to the house and overwork. If I should sew every day for a month to come I should not be able to accomplish a half of what is to be done, and should be only more unfit for my other duties."

This struggle against ill-health and poverty was continued through that year and well into the next, when, during her husband's absence to attend a ministerial convention at Detroit, Mrs. Stowe writes to him:--

June 16, 1845.

"MY DEAR HUSBAND,--It is a dark, sloppy, rainy, muddy, disagreeable day, and I have been working hard (for me) all day in the kitchen, washing dishes, looking into closets, and seeing a great deal of that dark side of domestic life which a housekeeper may who will investigate too curiously into minutiae in warm, damp weather, especially after a girl who keeps all clean on the outside of cup and platter, and is very apt to make good the rest of the text in the inside of things.

I am sick of the smell of sour milk, and sour meat, and sour everything, and then the clothes will not dry, and no wet thing does, and everything smells mouldy; and altogether I feel as if I never wanted to eat again.

Your letter, which was neither sour nor mouldy, formed a very agreeable contrast to all these things; the more so for being unexpected. I am much obliged to you for it. As to my health, it gives me very little solicitude, although I am bad enough and daily growing worse. I feel no life, no energy, no appetite, or rather a growing distaste for food; in fact, I am becoming quite ethereal. Upon reflection I perceive that it pleases my Father to keep me in the fire, for my whole situation is excessively harassing and painful. I suffer with sensible distress in the brain, as I have done more or less since my sickness last winter, a distress which some days takes from me all power of planning or executing anything; and you know that, except this poor head, my unfortunate household has no mainspring, for nobody feels any kind of responsibility to do a thing in time, place, or manner, except as I oversee it.

Georgiana is so excessively weak, nervous, cross, and fretful, night and day, that she takes all Anna's strength and time with her; and then the children are, like other little sons and daughters of Adam, full of all kinds of absurdity and folly.

When the brain gives out, as mine often does, and one cannot think or remember anything, then what is to be done? All common fatigue, sickness, and exhaustion is nothing to this distress. Yet do I rejoice in my God and know in whom I believe, and only pray that the fire may consume the dross; as to the gold, that is imperishable. No real evil can happen to me, so I fear nothing for the future, and only suffer in the present tense.

God, the mighty God, is mine, of that I am sure, and I know He knows that though flesh and heart fail, I am all the while desiring and trying for his will alone. As to a journey, I need not ask a physician to see that it is needful to me as far as health is concerned, that is to say, all human appearances are that way, but I feel no particular choice about it. If God wills I go. He can easily find means. Money, I suppose, is as plenty with Him now as it always has been, and if He sees it is really best He will doubtless help me."

That the necessary funds were provided is evident from the fact that the journey was undertaken and the invalid spent the summer of 1845 in Hartford, in Natick, and in Boston. She was not, however, permanently benefited by the change, and in the following spring it was deemed necessary to take more radical measures to arrest the progress of her increasing debility. After many consultations and much correspondence it was finally decided that she should go to Dr. Wesselhoeft's watercure establishment at Brattleboro', Vt.

At this time, under date of March, 1846, she writes:

"For all I have had trouble I can think of nothing but the greatness and richness of God's mercy to me in giving me such friends, and in always caring for us in every strait. There has been no day this winter when I have not had abundant reason to see this. Some friend has always stepped in to cheer and help, so that I have wanted for nothing. My husband has developed wonderfully as house-father and nurse. You would laugh to see him in his spectacles gravely marching the little troop in their nightgowns up to bed, tagging after them, as he says, like an old hen after a flock of ducks. The money for my journey has been sent in from an unknown hand in a wonderful manner. All this shows the care of our Father, and encourages me to rejoice and to hope in Him."

A few days after her departure Professor Stowe wrote to his wife:--

"I was greatly comforted by your brief letter from Pittsburgh. When I returned from the steamer the morning you left I found in the post-office a letter from Mrs. G. W. Bull of New York, inclosing \$50 on account of the sickness in my family. There was another inclosing \$50 more from a Mrs. Devereaux of Raleigh, N. C., besides some smaller sums from others. My heart went out to God in aspiration and gratitude. None of the donors, so far as I know, have I ever seen or heard of before.



"Henry and I have been living in a Robinson Crusoe and man Friday sort of style, greatly to our satisfaction, ever since you went away."

Mrs. Stowe was accompanied to Brattleboro' by her sisters, Catherine and Mary, who were also suffering from troubles that they felt might be relieved by hydropathic treatment.

From May, 1846, until March, 1847, she remained at Brattleboro' without seeing her husband or children. During these weary months her happiest days were those upon which she received letters from home.

The following extracts, taken from letters written by her during this period, are of value, as revealing what it is possible to know of her habits of thought and mode of life at this time.

BRATTLEBORO', September, 1846.

MY DEAR HUSBAND,--I have been thinking of all your trials, and I really pity you in having such a wife. I feel as if I had been only a hindrance to you instead of a help, and most earnestly and daily do I pray to God to restore my health that I may do something for you and my family. I think if I were only at home I could at least sweep and dust, and wash potatoes, and cook a little, and talk some to my children, and should be doing something for my family. But the hope of getting better buoys me up. I go through these tedious and wearisome baths and bear that terrible douche thinking of my children. They

never will know how I love them. . . .

There is great truth and good sense in your analysis of the cause of our past failures. We have now come to a sort of crisis. If you and I do as we should for five years to come the character of our three oldest children will be established. This is why I am willing to spend so much time and make such efforts to have health. Oh, that God would give me these five years in full possession of mind and body, that I may train my children as they should be trained. I am fully aware of the importance of system and order in a family. I know that nothing can be done without it; it is the keystone, the sine quâ non, and in regard to my children I place it next to piety. At the same time it is true that both Anna [Footnote: The governess, Miss Anna Smith.] and I labor under serious natural disadvantages on this subject. It is not all that is necessary to feel the importance of order and system, but it requires a particular kind of talent to carry it through a family. Very much the same kind of talent, as Uncle Samuel said, which is necessary to make a good prime minister. . . .

I think you might make an excellent sermon to Christians on the care of health, in consideration of the various infirmities and impediments to the developing the results of religion, that result from bodily ill health, and I wish you would make one that your own mind may be more vividly impressed with it. The world is too much in a hurry. Ministers think there is no way to serve Christ but to overdraw on their physical capital for four or five years for Christ and then have

nothing to give, but become a mere burden on his hands for the next five. . . .

November 18.

"The daily course I go through presupposes a degree of vigor beyond anything I ever had before. For this week, I have gone before breakfast to the wave-bath and let all the waves and billows roll over me till every limb ached with cold and my hands would scarcely have feeling enough to dress me. After that I have walked till I was warm, and come home to breakfast with such an appetite! Brown bread and milk are luxuries indeed, and the only fear is that I may eat too much. At eleven comes my douche, to which I have walked in a driving rain for the last two days, and after it walked in the rain again till I was warm. (The umbrella you gave me at Natick answers finely, as well as if it were a silk one.) After dinner I roll ninepins or walk till four, then sitz-bath, and another walk till six.

"I am anxious for your health; do be persuaded to try a long walk before breakfast. You don't know how much good it will do you. Don't sit in your hot study without any ventilation, a stove burning up all the vitality of the air and weakening your nerves, and above all, do amuse yourself. Go to Dr. Mussey's and spend an evening, and to father's and Professor Allen's. When you feel worried go off somewhere and forget and throw it off. I should really rejoice to hear that you and father and mother, with Professor and Mrs. Allen, Mrs. K., and a

few others of the same calibre would agree to meet together for dancing cotillons. It would do you all good, and if you took Mr. K.'s wife and poor Miss Much-Afraid, her daughter, into the alliance it would do them good. Bless me! what a profane set everybody would think you were, and yet you are the people of all the world most solemnly in need of it. I wish you could be with me in Brattleboro' and coast down hill on a sled, go sliding and snowballing by moonlight! I would snowball every bit of the hypo out of you! Now, my dear, if you are going to get sick, I am going to come home. There is no use in my trying to get well if you, in the mean time, are going to run yourself down."

January, 1847.

MY DEAR SOUL,--I received your most melancholy effusion, and I am sorry to find it's just so. I entirely agree and sympathize. Why didn't you engage the two tombstones--one for you and one for me?

I shall have to copy for your edification a "poem on tombstones" which Kate put at Christmas into the stocking of one of our most hypochondriac gentlemen, who had pished and pshawed at his wife and us for trying to get up a little fun. This poem was fronted with the above vignette and embellished with sundry similar ones, and tied with a long black ribbon. There were only two cantos in very concise style, so I shall send you them entire.

CANTO I.

In the kingdom of Mortin

I had the good fortin'

To find these verses

On tombs and on hearses,

Which I, being jinglish

Have done into English.

CANTO II.

The man what's so colickish

When his friends are all frolickish

As to turn up his noses

And turn on his toses

Shall have only verses

On tombstones and hearses.

But, seriously, my dear husband, you must try and be patient, for this cannot last forever. Be patient and bear it like the toothache, or a driving rain, or anything else that you cannot escape. To see things as through a glass darkly is your infirmity, you know; but the Lord will yet deliver you from this trial. I know how to pity you, for the last three weeks I have suffered from an overwhelming mental depression, a perfect heartsickness. All I wanted was to get home and die. Die I was very sure I should at any rate, but I suppose I was

never less prepared to do so."

The long exile was ended in the spring of 1847, and in May Mrs. Stowe returned to her Cincinnati home, where she was welcomed with sincere demonstrations of joy by her husband and children.

Her sixth child, Samuel Charles, was born in January of 1848, and about this time her husband's health became so seriously impaired that it was thought desirable for him in turn to spend a season at the Brattleboro' water-cure. He went in June, 1848, and was compelled by the very precarious state of his health to remain until September, 1849. During this period of more than a year Mrs. Stowe remained in Cincinnati caring for her six children, eking out her slender income by taking boarders and writing when she found time, confronting a terrible epidemic of cholera that carried off one of her little flock, and in every way showing herself to be a brave woman, possessed of a spirit that could rise superior to all adversity. Concerning this time she writes in January, 1849, to her dearest friend:--

MY BELOVED GEORGY,--For six months after my return from Brattleboro' my eyes were so affected that I wrote scarce any, and my health was in so strange a state that I felt no disposition to write. After the birth of little Charley my health improved, but my husband was sick and I have been so loaded and burdened with cares as to drain me dry of all capacity of thought, feeling, memory, or emotion.

"Well, Georgy, I am thirty-seven years old! I am glad of it. I like to grow old and have six children and cares endless. I wish you could see me with my flock all around me. They sum up my cares, and were they gone I should ask myself, What now remains to be done? They are my work, over which I fear and tremble."

In the early summer of 1849 cholera broke out in Cincinnati, and soon became epidemic. Professor Stowe, absent in Brattleboro', and filled with anxiety for the safety of his family, was most anxious, in spite of his feeble health, to return and share the danger with them, but this his wife would not consent to, as is shown by her letters to him, written at this time. In one of them, dated June 29, 1849, she says:--

MY DEAR HUSBAND,--This week has been unusually fatal. The disease in the city has been malignant and virulent. Hearse drivers have scarce been allowed to unharness their horses, while furniture carts and common vehicles are often employed for the removal of the dead. The sable trains which pass our windows, the frequent indications of crowding haste, and the absence of reverent decency have, in many cases, been most painful. Of course all these things, whether we will or no, bring very doleful images to the mind.

On Tuesday one hundred and sixteen deaths from cholera were reported, and that night the air was of that peculiarly oppressive, deathly kind that seems to lie like lead on the brain and soul.

As regards your coming home, I am decidedly opposed to it. First, because the chance of your being taken ill is just as great as the chance of your being able to render us any help. To exchange the salubrious air of Brattleboro' for the pestilent atmosphere of this place with your system rendered sensitive by water-cure treatment would be extremely dangerous. It is a source of constant gratitude to me that neither you nor father are exposed to the dangers here.

Second, none of us are sick, and it is very uncertain whether we shall be.

Third, if we were sick there are so many of us that it is not at all likely we shall all be taken at once.

July 1. Yesterday Mr. Stagg went to the city and found all gloomy and discouraged, while a universal panic seemed to be drawing nearer than ever before. Large piles of coal were burning on the cross walks and in the public squares, while those who had talked confidently of the cholera being confined to the lower classes and those who were imprudent began to feel as did the magicians of old, "This is the finger of God."

Yesterday, upon the recommendation of all the clergymen of the city, the mayor issued a proclamation for a day of general fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to be observed on Tuesday next.



July 3. We are all in good health and try to maintain a calm and cheerful frame of mind. The doctors are nearly used up. Dr. Bowen and Dr. Peck are sick in bed. Dr. Potter and Dr. Pulte ought, I suppose, to be there also. The younger physicians have no rest night or day. Mr. Fisher is laid up from his incessant visitations with the sick and dying. Our own Dr. Brown is likewise prostrated, but we are all resolute to stand by each other, and there are so many of us that it is not likely we can all be taken sick together.

July 4. All well. The meeting yesterday was very solemn and interesting. There is more or less sickness about us, but no very dangerous cases. One hundred and twenty burials from cholera alone yesterday, yet to-day we see parties bent on pleasure or senseless carousing, while to-morrow and next day will witness a fresh harvest of death from them. How we can become accustomed to anything! Awhile ago ten a day dying of cholera struck terror to all hearts; but now the tide has surged up gradually until the deaths average over a hundred daily, and everybody is getting accustomed to it. Gentlemen make themselves agreeable to ladies by reciting the number of deaths in this house or that. This together with talk of funerals, cholera medicines, cholera dietetics, and chloride of lime form the ordinary staple of conversation. Serious persons of course throw in moral reflections to their taste.

July 10. Yesterday little Charley was taken ill, not seriously, and at any other season I should not be alarmed. Now, however, a

slight illness seems like a death sentence, and I will not dissemble that I feel from the outset very little hope. I still think it best that you should not return. By so doing you might lose all you have gained. You might expose yourself to a fatal incursion of disease. It is decidedly not your duty to do so.

July 12. Yesterday I carried Charley to Dr. Pulte, who spoke in such a manner as discouraged and frightened me. He mentioned dropsy on the brain as a possible result. I came home with a heavy heart, sorrowing, desolate, and wishing my husband and father were here.

About one o'clock this morning Miss Stewart suddenly opened my door crying, "Mrs. Stowe, Henry is vomiting." I was on my feet in an instant, and lifted up my heart for help. He was, however, in a few minutes relieved. Then I turned my attention to Charley, who was also suffering, put him into a wet sheet, and kept him there until he was in a profuse perspiration. He is evidently getting better, and is auspiciously cross. Never was crossness in a baby more admired. Anna and I have said to each other exultingly a score of times, "How cross the little fellow is! How he does scold!"

July 15. Since I last wrote our house has been a perfect hospital. Charley apparently recovering, but still weak and feeble, unable to walk or play, and so miserably fretful and unhappy. Sunday Anna and I were fairly stricken down, as many others are, with no particular illness, but with such miserable prostration. I lay on the

bed all day reading my hymn-book and thinking over passages of Scripture.

July 17. To-day we have been attending poor old Aunt Frankie's [Footnote: An old colored woman.] funeral. She died yesterday morning, taken sick the day before while washing. Good, honest, trustful old soul! She was truly one who hungered and thirsted for righteousness.

Yesterday morning our poor little dog, Daisy, who had been ailing the day before, was suddenly seized with frightful spasms and died in half an hour. Poor little affectionate thing! If I were half as good for my nature as she for hers I should be much better than I am. While we were all mourning over her the news came that Aunt Frankie was breathing her last. Hatty, Eliza, Anna, and I made her shroud yesterday, and this morning I made her cap. We have just come from her grave.

July 23. At last, my dear, the hand of the Lord hath touched us. We have been watching all day by the dying bed of little Charley, who is gradually sinking. After a partial recovery from the attack I described in my last letter he continued for some days very feeble, but still we hoped for recovery. About four days ago he was taken with decided cholera, and now there is no hope of his surviving this night.

Every kindness is shown us by the neighbors. Do not return. All will be over before you could possibly get here, and the epidemic is now

said by the physicians to prove fatal to every new case. Bear up. Let us not faint when we are rebuked of Him. I dare not trust myself to say more but shall write again soon.

July 26. MY DEAR HUSBAND,--At last it is over and our dear little one is gone from us. He is now among the blessed. My Charley--my beautiful, loving, gladsome baby, so loving, so sweet, so full of life and hope and strength--now lies shrouded, pale and cold, in the room below. Never was he anything to me but a comfort. He has been my pride and joy. Many a heartache has he cured for me. Many an anxious night have I held him to my bosom and felt the sorrow and loneliness pass out of me with the touch of his little warm hands. Yet I have just seen him in his death agony, looked on his imploring face when I could not help nor soothe nor do one thing, not one, to mitigate his cruel suffering, do nothing but pray in my anguish that he might die soon. I write as though there were no sorrow like my sorrow, yet there has been in this city, as in the land of Egypt, scarce a house without its dead. This heart-break, this anguish, has been everywhere, and when it will end God alone knows. With this severest blow of all, the long years of trial and suffering in the West practically end; for in September, 1849, Professor Stowe returned from Brattleboro', and at the same time received a call to the Collins Professorship at Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Maine, that he decided to accept.