

THE
LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
Robert Lewis Dabney.

BY
THOMAS CARY JOHNSON.



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NOTE.

Dr. Dabney published, in the *Central Presbyterian* of February 12, 1863, the following poem, written some time after the death of his little "Tom." As thoroughly characteristic, and excellent in style and taste, it deserves reproduction here:

TRIED, BUT COMFORTED.

Five summers bright our noble boy
Was lent us for our household joy;
Then came the fated, wintry hour
Of death, and blighted our sweet flower.

They told me, "Weep not, for thy gem
Is fixed in Christ's own diadem;
His speedy feet the race have run,
The foe have 'scaped, the goal have won."

I chode the murmurs of my breast
With this dear thought; and then addressed
My steps to wait upon the Lord
And with his saints to hear his Word.

Then, thus I heard their anthem flow:
"Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

But how, I said, can this sad heart,
In joyful praises bear its part?
It hath no joy; it naught can do
But mourn its loss and tell its woe.

And then I thought, What if thy lost
Is now among that heavenly host,
And with the angel choir doth sing,
"Glory to thee, Eternal King?"

But is not this a hope too sweet?
Faith is too weak the joy to meet;
Oh! might my bursting heart but see
If true the blissful thought can be!

Oh! that for once mine ear might hear
That tiny voice, so high, so clear,
Singing Emmanuel's name among
Those louder strains, that mightier throng.

Oh! that but once mine eyes could see
That smile which here was wont to be
The sunshine of my heart, made bright
With Jesus' love, with Heaven's light.

Then would my burdened heart, I know,
With none but tears of joy o'erflow—
But ah! when faith would strain her eyes
For that blest vision, there arise

The shadows of my deary home;
'Twill Heaven and my heart there come
That dying bed, that corpse, that bier;
And when I strive that song to hear,

Sad memory echoes but the wail
My love to soothe could naught avail;
I only hear his anguished cry,
I only see his glazing eye.

But yet be still, tumultuous heart,
And bravely bear thy destined part,
Yet will I say, stay there, my son;
And to my Lord, Thy will be done.

'Tis not for sight and sense to know
Those scenes of glory here below;
But be it ours to walk by faith,
And credit what our Saviour saith.

Let patience work till we be meet
To dwell in bliss at Jesus' feet;
Then death, once dreaded, friendly come,
And bear us to our lost one's home.

Then shall that glorious hour repay
The woes of all that dreary way,
And I shall hear forever more
My seraph boy his God adore.

Yea, he shall teach this voice to raise,
As angels taught him, Heaven's lays;
And I, who once his steps did lead,
Shall follow him to Christ, our Head.