

THE
M O T H

BY

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

SECOND EDITION.

DUBLIN:

J. AND M. PORTEOUS, PRINTERS,
19, MOORE-STREET.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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Come hither, Maria, and drive that foolish little insect from the candle. He has long been fluttering round it, and now ventures so near, that the flame will catch him. So, he is gliding away on his pretty gossamer wings, more afraid of the friendly hand that guards, than of the destructive fire that threatens his little life.

Now he skims along the ceiling, and might there enjoy security; but I much fear, the light of the candle still possesses the same attraction for him. I wish we could drive him out into the garden, where the stars are glittering beyond his reach, and the sweet cool breeze could not harm him. You do well to open the window, and we

will try to chace him out. Go, pretty creature, you do not know the dangers that await you here—go, to flutter in your own pure element and leave the glare that tempts you to your ruin.

'Tis all in vain, Maria, he will not depart. See how perseveringly he at intervals approaches the candle, now soaring above our reach, now skimming rapidly past us, now resting high on the wall, now buried in the folds of the curtain; but always passing near the light in his excursions. Well, we will hunt him no longer, but leave the window a little way open, and you may keep guard over the candle.

Already the poor insect has returned to his dangerous station, and approaches nearer at every turn. Well done, you saved him then; but he is little thankful for, or conscious of, your good offices.

Never mind, Maria: when we have a kind action to perform, though its object be but a Moth, let us not be discouraged. Gratitude is rarely found, even among men, and when disposed to complain on that point, let us consider how insensible, how unthankful are our own hearts, under the mercies which the Lord showers upon us daily; and viewing our characters as in a glass, seek by divine grace, to correct in ourselves, what we feel to be so unamiable in others—what in us is so guilty.

Why did you cry out? you have scorched your finger in brushing the Moth from the very edge of the flame, and he has flown off, evidently burnt though not disabled. I hope the lesson will be sufficient to make him keep his distance now. He suffers pain, but knows not what a valuable hint it is calculated to give him. Thus it often is

with us: we meet with events that we call unfortunate, and do not patiently examine the meaning of such messages. Nothing falls out by chance, and if in all our ways we acknowledged God, we should find Him directing our path continually: but instead of seeking instruction from the occurrence ordered by his providential care, we judge of every thing by our own perverse will, and call events favourable or otherwise, as they accord with our inclinations—too often directed towards what is forbidden, and ruinous. The Moth has returned! He is buzzing about the candle more determined than ever to reach the flame. You have struck him rather hard, but it is in vain. You see that he only mounted out of your way, and descends again. You cannot save him—he has plunged into the blaze. See in what agony he now spins upon the

table, his limbs burnt and shrivelled up. Put an end to his sufferings, Maria: kill him at once—it is the only mercy we can now shew to the wretched little victim of obstinate delusion. It is well, you have crushed him, and his span of existence is past: but he died in the act of teaching us wisdom, though void of it himself: and we must not lose the benefit of the parting instructions which he affords.

I see you look surprised, and do not understand me. The Moth certainly did not speak to us, nor was he at all conscious of being sent for our advantage; but the scene we have witnessed, is full of profitable warning. So much so, that I have often thought, the propensity of these little creatures to perish thus, is brought before our eyes that we may lay it to heart, and reflect on the end of a self-willed course, and pray to be delivered from every temptation.

We must consider the Moth as the type of a human being, and the candle as representing sin, which leads to death everlasting. The great enemy of mankind who first tempted Eve to transgress, constantly watches to involve us in guilt, the consequences of which he well knows, are as fatal to our souls, as the flame was to the body of that poor insect. He clothes sin in such colours as are most attractive to us, and persuades us that we may safely play on the very brink of destruction, while trusting to our own prudence and virtue that we shall not go beyond the bounds. The history of the world shews us how skilful the tempter is in adapting his baits to the various dispositions of those with whom he has to deal. Judas was covetous: he was intrusted with the bag that contained the slender store of our blessed Lord and His apostles. From

this bag, it would seem, Judas occasionally stole; (see John xii. 6.) and satan made use of his covetousness to engage him in the blackest crime that ever man committed—he sold for money his Divine Master, whose companion he was, whose teaching he daily heard, and who, in all the beauty of His glorious character, meek and lowly of heart, holy, harmless, undefiled, speaking as never man spake, going about doing good, and pouring down continual benefits on the evil and unthankful, became an object of bargain and sale with this wretched man, and was by him delivered up to a cruel death. What an awful instance have we here of satan's power and cunning! We are expressly told that the devil entered into Judas Iscariot for this purpose: he had caused the prospect of a little gain to shine before his imagination, as the candle did in

the sight of that Moth, and the miserable sinner suffered his thoughts to dwell upon it, until the temptation became too great to be resisted, and he was fully possessed by the evil spirit. We know the dreadful end of this traitor. When he saw that Jesus was condemned he was struck with horror at the enormity of his crime, and would even have returned the wages of iniquity, but it was too late: the blood-guiltiness that he had incurred clave to him; he was driven to despair, and hanged himself; and the Scripture in telling us he went to his own place, clearly intimates that his portion for ever is in outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Now, my dear child, though we cannot commit the same dreadful deed that Judas did, in selling our Lord in person, yet remember that we can betray His cause, dishon-

our His name, and destroy our own souls, by yielding to the temptations of the same enemy. Some people are soon made angry by trifles, and for such he contrives many little vexations, until the indulgence of their passionate temper, resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit, has destroyed all comfort, and left them a prey to sin and ruin. Some are inclined to be envious: to these, opportunities are given by shewing them people who excel them in beauty, riches, learning, or whatever else the world terms fortunate; and envy and emulation are ranked with wrath and strife, and other things that shut sinners out of heaven. For the vain and idle, these are amusements worse than unprofitable, and revellings where the very name of God is forgotten, or only used in blasphemy. Every Moth may find a flame round which to flut-

ter, till he falls a victim to the allure-
ment. The friendly hand that
would with-hold us, and the kind
voice that warns us of our danger,
often excite more resentment than
gratitude: experience itself, when
we have been partly drawn into the
snare, and suffered for it in our
souls, is soon forgotten, and does
not prevent our returning with fresh
ardour to the pursuit. It is the na-
ture of sin to intoxicate, and he who
begins by playing with temptation,
will soon be overthrown by it.

I have been told of a lady who
brought up a young Bear: it was
a harmless cub when she first
took it: she was assured by her
friends that in time it would become
dangerous, but she would not give
up her play-thing. After some
time, when the Bear had grown
large and strong, she was amusing
herself with it as usual, and the ani-
mal suddenly seized her between

his paws, and crushed her so, that she died in a few hours. This is much like the Moth and candle—like the sinner and his sin. The lady should have given up her savage favourite, when told he would become a very Bear: the Moth should have flown out at the window when we opened it for him; and we ought to fly from the presence of every thing that Scripture, reason or experience, tells us may end in endangering our souls. After the Moth had burnt himself, he certainly did not intend to encounter the same pain again; yet he returned to the candle: so it is with you, too often. You do wrong, and feel not only the bodily punishment, but the shame and deadness of spirit, and distress of mind that follow when the heart is not hardened in guilt: yet how heedless you are, often running into the way of the same temptation again, and laying

yourself open to worse consequences than before. It is a sad proof how evil we are by nature, that we always incline to what is likely to harm us, and shun what we know to be good. Are you not often more disposed for idle conversation and play, than to address the Lord in prayer? Is not a book of mere amusement taken up with livelier interest than the Bible? While making a merit of paying your little contribution to the charitable societies, do you not feel it a greater indulgence to expend money in pampering your appetite and pleasing your eye? just as the Moth preferred the bright glare and close heat of that dangerous candle to the pure fresh breeze that invited him to leave it. In all this we see the necessity of "praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." We not

only need a new heart to hate the evil and love the good, but continual supplies also of divine grace, to prevent our following the bent of a corrupt nature, which is ever joining with the enemy of our souls to draw us aside from the right way. We want faith: the world is ever proving itself an active enemy, and "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." If we deeply consider that the Son of God exposed Himself to be in all points tempted like as we are, "that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest," and that as "He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted," we should be more encouraged to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. A false reliance on our own strength, leads us nearer and nearer to destruction,

as the poor Moth wheeling round the candle approached it more closely at every turn: whereas, if all our dependance was on the Lord, in whom alone we have righteousness and strength, our house would be built on a rock that could not be moved, and satan might cause all his storms to beat on it in vain. We pray against being led into temptation. Let us shun that from which we seek to be delivered, and solace ourselves with this assurance, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

While sporting on the verge of sin,
 We slight the secret voice within,
 And brave the tempter's power;
 Rejoicing in the circle bright,
 Where pleasure sheds her glowing light
 That shines but to devour.

Great guardian of thy helpless band,
 Extend, O Lord, thy pitying hand
 To snatch us from the snare ;
 Reveal to our deluded eyes
 Where shrouded in its beauty, lies
 The spectre of despair.

Man sees a path with flowers bespread
 And inly longs to bend his tread
 O'er that delicious road ;
 Incredulous, a track so sweet,
 Can e'er conduct his willing feet
 To Death's profound abode.

O thou who bid'st the day-star shine,
 Illume us with its light divine,
 Let each deception cease ;
 Though thorny be the way, and steep,
 Teach us the narrow path to keep,
 That ends in lasting peace.

THE END.

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