

Sarah (Brigit) Elliott

(- 22 Sep 1831)

Elliott. Yesterday morning, Sarah, wife of Jonathan Elliott, aged 43. The friends and acquaintances of the deceased, are respectfully invited to attend her funeral, which will take place tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock, a.m. from her late residence on Capitol Hill.

The National Intelligencer,

On the Death of Mrs. Sarah Elliot

She is gone! The chilling horrors of the grave have received her remains. She that but yesterday filled the hearts of a fond family with delight and the tenderest affection -- is no more.

Addison, on his death bed, sent for his son, for the purpose of letting him see with what calmness and serenity a Christian could die. The sublime tranquility of her spirit looked calmly, with Christian fortitude on the menacing aspect of Death, which now "lies on her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower of all the field."

So soon, so sudden, and so awful! Affections, deeply rooted, planted under the most enchanting smiles of Hope, that dwelt with rapture on her existence, are now troubled, convulsed, torn from their seat, by this unforeseen -- this frightful blow. -- But, "Thy will be done!"

What, let us ask, is this cold, damp. Chilling frost of death -- this blighter of all the tender endearments of human life? It is the Law of the Almighty, and of our nature -- it is the principle of the universe, and it asserts its empire with unrelenting sway --

"Ah! How dark

Thy long-extended realms and rueful wastes;

Where naught but silence reigns, and night -- dark night

Darks as was chaos, ere the infant sun

Had tried his beam athwart the gloom profound."

It is as natural to die as to live; to die, then, is in the order of providence. That reflection brings with it a consolation. Philosophy teaches not to repine at what is inevitable. Religion admonishes us not to arraign the dispensations of Providence. Grief is, indeed, but a selfish indulgence. She that is taken away reposes beyond this world's limit, on the bosom of her Maker. Her husband, her children, her relatives, stricken and wounded at the separation, weep and bemoan. Yet why should their tears flow? Let us regard her moral and useful existence, brief as it was, as the bright vision of an angel, permitted, for an hour, to visit them, to hallow, to consecrate their thoughts, by her pious instruction, and her bright example, and to leave her sex, and to society, the model of a virtuous and accomplished woman".

To breathe domestic comforts in an element of fine ideas and virtuous sensations, is the very summit of rational human enjoyments. It is the lot of but few to attain that height of felicity., But he who does, when deprived of it, feels with bitter anguish the sand and sorrowful reverse.

It takes a long time, early and assiduous parental attention, to form an accomplished woman -- the most careful tuition, and, above all, good company. But, when once formed, and the delightful task completed, how admirable! Intelligence of mind, intellectual enjoyments, easy dignity, amiability, and a thousand nameless female graces, which render life agreeable, and the domestic hearth an earthly paradise--throwing a fascination around the whole circle of the enjoyments of life. It is a boon of heaven which few possess. The fond husband who enjoys such a treasure may be truly accounted happy, rich in so rare a felicity of bliss. But he who loses it, and loses it in an instant, has it snatched from him, by the hand of Death, in an unlooked for moment, and sees--

"The Fates deform his lovely Spring:
"His roses faded, and his lilies foil'd, and
"The worm riot of her damask cheek"

may well be desolate, forlorn, and miserable. It is, we believe, true moral courage and religious faith alone that can sustain the shock -- teach a husband to view his wife's death-bed of sickness, where all his hopes were garnered up, with resignation and composure and witness the approach of that awful dissolution which closes the scene on earth, and opens the prospect of eternity--

"Still shall thy grave with rising flowers be dres't;
"And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:
"There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow--
"There the first roses of the year shall blow;
"While angels, with their silver wings, o'er shade
"The ground now sacred by thy relics made."

Note. Mrs. E. was endowed with an excellent education, intended by her parents for her own intellectual enjoyments; but, on their demise, she devoted her talents, for a time, to the instruction of young ladies; eighty pupils, of the most respectable families, formed her school. Albert Gallatin, Langdon Cheves, Henry Clay, and other distinguished gentlemen, were among those who entrusted their daughters to her tuition. But the invasion of the British, who established their headquarters in an adjoining building on Capitol Hill, was the cause of the abandonment of this undertaking. But, always indefatigable in intellectual discipline, she gave her husband valuable assistance in the columns of the Washington Gazette, from 1815 to 1826. The successive translations from the Paris papers, which appeared in that paper, were always from her pen. The sketches of the trial of Sir Robert Wilson, the sittings of the Institute of France, the invasion of Spain by the French in 1823, and a variety of matter useful to the American reader, were among her translations. These articles were copied into many papers of the day. Latterly she had just completed the examination of the proof sheets of the French part of a work, now in the press, on Diplomacy. All these labors she performed as a matter of intellectual recreation, rather than literary toil.