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ELLEN DANA CONWAY.

*Born in Cincinnati, June 11, 1833. Died in New York,
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Although her illness lasted nineteen months, it was painful only at intervals, and consistent with happiness in her family and friends. In December, however, the distress increased, and she wrote to an old friend: 'Life would be charming, but for these pains. After all, sixty-four is a good old age—and life's duties done. I now desire to go to sleep, and wake up no more.'

A little Christmas-tree for our grandchild had been prepared, and on Christmas Eve the invalid requested that baby should at once receive her toys. 'I prefer that it should be to-day.' Little Mildred, fifteen months old, was soon in full glee amid her gifts, and her grandmother smiling upon her,—receiving her kisses. This was the last afternoon of happiness. On Christmas morning, about dawn, she persuaded me that the death we had combated hour by hour for nineteen months must now be received as a friend. 'You would not prolong my life if you realized how I need release. I cannot wait longer. You will now have to take care of yourself.' At noon she sank into slumber, and did not wake again. No struggle, no slightest quiver, indicated the transition from sleep to death. The lines of pain were smoothed away. The face resumed its youth, under the halo of

gray hair, and lilies of the valley were laid upon her breast.

The long prostration was not without much sunshine. Her practical wisdom was always able to turn misfortune to some account. Some weeks before her death she said to me, 'In this trouble I have found something good.' This indeed I had often perceived. Through all her active years she had been living for others, and when at last her hands were folded, it was with an almost infantine surprise that she saw others living for her. Every day was fragrant with tokens of the affection she had inspired in all hearts that knew her. Hundreds of letters came to express gratitude for benefits she had forgotten, and happiness found by her help. On her characteristic humility was now forced some recognition of the fruits her life had borne.

Her beautiful life, her truth, her unwearied charities, proceeded from her own heart. They were not inspired by any thought of reward on earth or in heaven. During all her illness she never intimated to me, or, so far as I am aware, to any one, an inclination to speculate about the future. About two months before her death I told her a happy dream I had, and asked her if she believed in immortality. She answered, 'I know nothing about it. During my illness I also have had dreams and visions, but they have not suggested immortality. The chief thing is duty.' Her sense of duty, her unselfish nature, and instinct of helpfulness, developed from childhood in perfect freedom of heart and mind, found ample fields for congenial work, and had long become to her a religion too absorbing and satisfying to admit of much interest in problems beyond her powers. At the same time she was careful for the feelings of those

to whom such matters were of vital importance. Of the article of death she was absolutely without fear or dread. She had desired to live that she might accomplish something, but when it was medically decided that her strength could never be recovered, she would at any time have welcomed death but for the sake of those who clung to her. 'Would it not be better that I should go in peace?' But her peace of mind remained to the end. The feebler voice still spoke with interest of her friends and any events that concerned them, and her pencil was busy with cheerful notes to them,—some so recent that cheerful replies arrived after her death.

In November she felt that her life would close with the year, and as if preparing her usual Christmas donations gathered together her jewels, heirlooms, and other little treasures, which were distributed as souvenirs among her relatives and friends. This she did almost merrily. Though it was necessary to conceal our anguish, she could not fail to know what the approaching change must mean for her devoted children and her husband. For me she had ordained the work of writing out my 'Reminiscences,' and on this task I entered during her life, submitting to her in July several chapters, preceded by this dedication :

'In response to your desire, my wife, I undertake to record the more salient recollections of my life. It is a life you have made happy, and never unhappy save by the failure of your health. Its experiences during forty years have been yours also, and on the counsel and judgment which have never been wanting at my side I can happily still rely in living over again in our joint memory the events deemed worthy of record.

'Let me obey my own heart, and secure the favor of

many hearts that have known your friendship and witnessed your life, in America and Europe, by writing your name on a work as yet unwritten, to which—because it is an enterprise near your heart—I now dedicate myself.

On Christmas Day, in a city gay with birthday celebrations of one said to have healed the sick and raised the dead, I sat beside my dead wife, and recalled the words ascribed to Martha, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' But I said, 'If thou hadst been Lord, this woman had not died.'

Love enough was here; science was here; but love and knowledge have not yet mastered those blind, unguided forces by which hearts are broken hourly, and which have struck down this great-hearted woman in the midst of her happiness and usefulness. That she found 'something good' in her trouble was because she was able to put something good into it; and I, bereft and broken, must try to do the same. But I shall not ascribe any providential purpose to the diseases and griefs that desolate mankind, and *of themselves* work no moral benefit at all, but tend to sap the mind, lower courage, and embitter the heart.

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