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WAS IT PROVIDENCE?

BY MISS SEDGWICK.

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TAKE for example, a young girl, bred delicately in town, shut up in her nursery in her childhood,—in a boarding-house through her youth, never accustomed to either air or exercise, two things that the law of God makes essential to health. She marries; her strength is not adequate to the demands upon it. Her beauty fades away. She languishes through her hard offices of giving birth to children, suckling and watching over them, and dies early. 'What a strange Providence, that a mother should be taken in the midst of life, from her children!' Was it Providence?—No—Providence had assigned her three-score years and ten; a term long enough to rear her children, and see her children's children, but she did not obey the laws on which life depends, and of course, she lost it. A father, too, was cut off in the midst of his

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days. He is a useful and distinguished citizen, and eminent in his profession. A general buzz rises on every side, of 'What a striking Providence!' This man has been in the habit of studying half the night, of passing his days in his office and the courts, of eating luxurious dinners, and drinking various wines. He has every day violated the laws on which health depends. Did Providence cut him off? The evil never ends here. The diseases of the father are often transmitted; and a feeble mother rarely leaves behind her vigorous children.

It has been customary in some of our cities, for young ladies to walk in thin shoes, and delicate stockings in mid-winter. A healthy, blooming young girl, thus dressed in violation of Heaven's laws, pays the penalty; a checked circulation, cold, fever, and death. 'What a sad Providence!' exclaimed her friends. Was it Providence or her own folly?

A beautiful young bride goes night after night, to parties made in honor of her marriage. She has a slightly sore throat perhaps, and the weather is inclement; but she must wear her neck and arms bare; for who ever saw a bride in a close evening dress? She is consequently seized with an inflammation of the lungs, and the grave receives her before her bridal days are over.

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‘What a Providence!’ exclaims the world. ‘Cut off in the midst of happiness and hope!’
Alas! did she not cut the thread of her life herself?

A girl in the country, exposed to our changeful climate, gets a new bonnet, instead of getting a flannel garment. A rheumatism is the consequence. Should the girl sit down tranquilly with the idea that Providence has sent the rheumatism upon her, or should she charge it on her vanity, and avoid the folly in future? Look, my young friends, at the mass of diseases that are incurred by intemperance in eating or in drinking, or in study, or in business; also being caused often by neglect of exercise, cleanliness, pure air; by indiscreet dressing, tight lacing, etc., and all is quietly imputed to Providence. Is there not impiety as well as ignorance in this? Were the physical laws strictly observed from generation to generation, there would be an end to the frightful diseases that cut life short, and of the long list of maladies that make life a torment or a trial. It is the opinion of those who best understand the physical system, that this wonderful machine, the body, this ‘goodly temper,’ would gradually decay, and men would die, as if falling asleep.