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Letter, Jane Grey Swisshelm to Willima B. Mitchell and unknown [January 25, 1883]

Jane Grey Swisshelm


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Recommended Citation

Swisshelm, Jane Grey, "Letter, Jane Grey Swisshelm to Willima B. Mitchell and unknown [January 25, 1883]" (1883). *Jane Grey Swisshelm Letters*. 29.

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Chicago 798 Jackson St.
Jan. 25, 89.

My Dear Nephew & Niece

Among the Jews
those who sympathized with sorrow
came & sat, in silence with the mourn-
ers & this sympathy of silence has always
seemed to me to be appropriate that I am
always careful about preparing the tem-
ple of a great grief with words of mine:
but I cannot go to sit with you - & after
much hesitation conclude to express my
sorrow for your sorrow in the only way
that is left to me. The news of your
lament came in a letter from Mary
to Jean which she forwarded & which came
while Jo was on a visit to Milwaukee
when Earnst then was & still is. Soon
after Mary's letter came a telegram from
Earnst saying they were not in the

hotel that was burned." By this I
knew there had been a great disaster, & a
few hours brought the details, details which
made your sorrow a great joy by comparison.
The good shepherd had taken your lamb in
his arms & borne him from yours so gently
by & lovingly - no tears, no horror in that
parting. You knew he was safe in our
Father's house, safe from danger, safe from
sorrow, safe from sin. In a few short
months he had filled his mission, complet-
ed his earthly life, & who shall say that
it was not as important as that of one
who dies full of age & honors?

I sometimes think that those souls which
come & go like butterflies do more to spirit-
ualize & uplift the world than those who
plod on through life even in the path of
duty. The death of a babe purifies the
atmosphere more than that of an adult.
They seem like Elijah in ascending to cast
their mantles of love & innocence back -

to earth & will for them on
whom they fall. In your case I think
you have special reason for thinking "The
Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." & "death all
things will." The only time I saw your
boy I was filled with apprehension for his
future. He was sick & I knew he must
be suffering, yet was so placid that I knew
he lacked combativeness - the instinct of resist-
ance so indispensable in a world so aggres-
sive as ours. He was born to suffer in
silence, & people of that type never lack sor-
row. Knowing as much of the world as I do,
if he had been my only child, my sorrow
for my own loss, would be so tempered by
joy for his escape that there would be a mar-
tyr's even balance. He has had a glad escape
from evils to come, evils, sorrows, wounds from
which you love could not have guarded
him. May our Father in heaven comfort you!
I trust your other darlings are well. Jo joins me
in love & sympathy your aunt.

Dame Guy Smith