An Account of the Closing Scenes 
in the 
Life of Peggy Dow

by Lorenzo Dow

A few weeks after my return from Virginia, I left Peggy with my father, and we parted. I sailed for England on May 20th and arrived there about the 20th of June, 1818.

Whilst traveling in that country, many persons in different parts -- who were strangers to me -- remarked that they thought from their feelings that my Peggy would soon be gone off from the stage of action. I would see her no more, unless I returned to America. Their feelings were so consonant to my own anticipations, that it caused my return a year sooner than was contemplated when we parted. And so I arrived back in America in June, 1819, after an absence of about thirteen months.

Peggy had attended a writing school during my absence, in February. Getting wet and chilled, she took cold. She then developed a cough and a tightness across the chest, and from thence a decline ensued. At the first, however, the events were not viewed as serious as the sequel afterward proved them to be.

After my return from Europe, she requested me not to leave her till she had got better or worse. This request she had never made at any time, under any circumstances whatever, in former years. She traveled with me some distance to various meetings. When we were at Providence, in Rhode Island, I found her in a room weeping and I enquired the cause. She, after some hesitation, replied, "The consumption is a flattering disease -- but I shall return back to Hebron. Tell Father Dow that I have come back to die with him."

We returned in September. She remarked that she felt more comfort in Divine enjoyment than she expressed to others, and that her "death might be sanctified to some." We never parted but twice after my return from Europe -- once for a night, and once on business to Boston of about five days.

She continued growing more and more feeble until, in December, she asked if I thought her dissolution was near. My reply, which was an opinion, was that she would continue to spring -- if not longer. She replied that she thought so, too. The night following, however, she woke me up and enquired the day of the month. Being informed, she said she though she was bounded in all by the month of January.
She counted every day until the year expired, and then almost every hour until the morning of the fifth. At that time she asked me if I had been to bespeak a coffin for her; I answered in the negative. In the evening she asked me if I had been to call on the neighbors; again I answered, "No." Then brother and sister Page, with whom we had spent many happy hours in days that were gone by, came in and spent the night. This seemed refreshing to her. About two o'clock at night she requested me to call up the family. This being done, she began to fail very fast.

I asked if she felt any pain, and she answered in the negative. Being supported in my arms, she said that but one thing attracted her here below and pointed her finger towards me. I replied, "Lord, Thou gavest her to me. I have held her only as a lent favor for fifteen years. Now I resign her back to Thee, until we meet again beyond the swelling flood." She replied with a hearty, "Amen," and soon expired, as the going out of the snuff of a candle -- without a struggle, contraction or groan.

In the course of conversation the last night, she stated her views and attachments to the things of time and eternity. She replied that she felt no condemnation, and that but one thing attracted her here below that was hard to give up. She felt willing to resign herself into the hands of the Great and Wise Disposer, for the things of eternity were far more desirable than the things of time. Her better prospects were beyond this life, and there appeared to be a calm and sweet submission.

By my request, she was dressed and laid out in her best plain, neat meeting dress -- with woolen blankets instead of shrouded sheets. Her grave was about three feet below the common depth. Her funeral was attended by a large concourse of people. The sermon was delivered by Daniel Burrows, a particular friend who had visited her frequently in her last sickness.

Many had said that Lorenzo Dow was eccentric, and that it was now exemplified. But such still admitted that the dress became impressive on the occasion, and also the color of the coffin. It was a solemn, serious and impressive time. Woolen does not rot like other things. And the sacred dust I wished to repose, undisturbed in ages to come by future moving of the earth for the dead, until "the trump of God shall sound."

What God said to Ezekiel, "Behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke," was exemplified January 6, 1820, as with a sword through my soul. Those words were as a dispensation of preparation years before the time. This is a subject that may be felt, but cannot be described. Those who have drank the cup know the language -- to others it is but a dream.
She possessed exquisite feelings of sensibility, but there was affection and condescension -- hence her comments in the sequel to her Journey of Life on agreeable consequences for peace in a married state. For where there is a want of love and affection and attachment, there is a cause of misery and mischief and unhappiness of many families. Love and affection cannot be bought; they are above rubies -- yea, beyond all price -- when applied to the married state.

The following was put upon her tomb stone in the Methodist Burying Ground in Hebron, Connecticut, ten years after:

PEGGY DOW
shared the vicissitudes of Lorenzo
fifteen years
and died January 6th, 1820
aged 39

Seventeen years before this, I lost my mother; two years and eight months after the decease of Peggy, my father died. Six of us children are still living; and out of twenty-eight grand-children, sixteen are still on mortal shore.

It is now March, 1833, which brings me to the age of 55 years and 5 months -- 40 years and four months of religious pilgrimage, and 37 years wandering through the world in the public field of battle. My Peggy is gone to meet our infant in yonder world, where I trust to meet them both bye and bye -- which is a sweet and pleasing thought to me. L.D.

Notes
1. This account by Lorenzo has been edited in the same manner as was Peggy's Journey of Life. While modern sentence structure has been used, the words (with some minor adjustments for clarification) are those of Lorenzo.
2. According to Sellers' biography of Lorenzo, there was "a persistent but unfounded rumor that Peggy was buried in a sitting or upright position to be at better readiness at the sounding of the archangel's trumpet." At any rate, there was enough public comment about the burial that Lorenzo felt compelled to present a brief defense in the next paragraph. The color of the coffin was probably white.
3. Ezekiel 24:16
4. These comments are part of an extended digression in Peggy's Supplementary Reflections and not included in the narrative presented in THE CHRONICLE.
5. Lorenzo died February 2, 1834, at the age of 56 in Georgetown, District of Columbia. Originally buried in Holmead's cemetery, his remains were moved to the more prestigious Oak Hill Cemetery (at the expense of William Wilson Corcoran, founder of the Corcoran Art Gallery) when the former burial grounds were abandoned.