

CLIMBING UP THE STAIRS.

**I**N the softly falling twilight  
Of a weary, weary day,  
With a quiet step I entered  
Where the children were at play.  
I was brooding o'er some trouble  
That had met me unawares,  
When a little voice came ringing:  
"Me is creeping up the stairs!"

Ah! it touched the tender heart-string  
With a breath and force divine,  
And such melodies awakened  
As mere words can ne'er define;  
And I turned to see our darling,  
All forgetful of my cares,  
When I saw the little creature  
Slowly creeping up the stairs.

Step by step she bravely clambered,  
On her little hands and knees,  
Keeping up a constant chattering,  
Like the magpies in the trees;  
Till at last she reached the topmost,  
When o'er all her world's affair  
She, delighted, stood a victor  
After creeping up the stairs.

Fainting heart! behold an image  
Of man's brief and struggling life,  
Whose best prizes he must capture  
With an earnest, noble strife.  
Onward, upward, reaching ever;  
Bending to the weight of cares;  
Hoping, fearing, still expecting,  
We go creeping up the stairs.