



**Stories & Poems - Elizabeth Stuart Phelps:
"Happiness must be cultivated. It is like character.
It is not a thing to be safely let alone for a moment,
or it will run to weeds."**

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps

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Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward was born in Andover, Massachusetts on August 31st 1844 and baptized as Mary Gray Phelps. Her mother was ill for most of her adult life and died of brain fever shortly after the birth of her third child on November 20, 1852. Eight year old Mary Gray asked to be renamed in honor of her mother. Elizabeth attended the very well to do Abbot Academy and Mrs. Edwards' School for Young Ladies where her gift for telling stories was first noticed. By thirteen she had been published in Youth's Companion and other had appeared in Sunday School publications. At age 19 she sent a Civil War story "A Sacrifice Consumed" to Harper's Magazine. The editor sent her a generous payment and asked her to write for them again. In 1864 Harpers published her first adult fiction. Elizabeth then began writing her first books for children; the "Tiny series" followed by the four-volume Gypsy Brenton series. The Atlantic Monthly published her story "The Tenth of January" in March 1868 about the death of scores of girls in the Pemberton Mill collapse and fire in Lawrence, Massachusetts on January 10, 1860. Also in 1868, came The Gates Ajar, in which the afterlife was a place with all the comforts of domestic life and reunited families – and their pets – for all eternity. She wrote realistic adventures based on a four-year old boy named Trotty, The Trotty Book (1870) and Trotty's Wedding Tour, and Story-book (1873). In her 40s, Elizabeth married a man 17 years her junior, another step in her unconventional stands. Years later she urged women to burn their corsets! Her later writing focused on feminine ideals and women's financial dependence on men in marriage. In 1876 she became the first woman to present a lecture series at Boston University entitled "Representative Modern Fiction." In 1877 she published a novel, The Story of Avis, that was ahead of its time. The work centers on many of the early feminist issues of her era. In it she portrayed a woman's struggle to balance her married life and domestic duties with her desire to become a painter. With her husband she co-authored two Biblical romances in 1890 and 1891. Her autobiography, Chapters from a Life was published in 1896 after being serialized in McClure's. Her novel, Trixy, published in 1904, was constructed around the topic of vivisection and the effect this kind of training had on doctors. The book became a standard polemic against experimentation on animals. During her lifetime she was the author of 57 volumes of fiction, poetry and essays. In many she challenged society's view of women and placed them as women succeeding in careers as physicians, ministers, and artists. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward died January 28, 1911, in Newton Center, Massachusetts.

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