

A Little Kingdom I Possess

Louisa Alcott, 1846.

Alonzo Howard, 1873.

A little kingdom I possess,  
Where thoughts and feelings dwell,  
And very hard I find the task  
Of governing it well;  
For passion tempts and troubles me,  
A wayward will misleads,  
And selfishness its shadow casts,  
On all my will and deeds.

How can I learn to rule myself,  
To be the child I should,  
Honest and brave, nor ever tire  
Of trying to be good?  
How can I keep a sunny soul  
To shine along life's way?  
How can I tune my little heart,  
To sweetly sing all day?

Dear Father, help me with the love  
That castest out my fear!  
Teach me to lean on Thee and feel  
That thou art very near.  
That no temptation is unseen,  
No childish grief too small,  
Since Thou, with patience infinite,  
Dost soothe and comfort all.

I do not ask for any crown  
But that which all may win;  
Nor try to conquer any world  
Except the one within.  
Be Thou my guide until I find,  
Led by a tender hand,  
Thy happy kingdom in myself  
And dare to take command.