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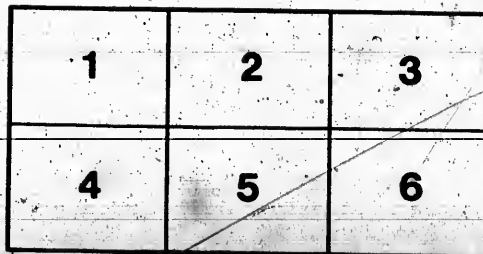
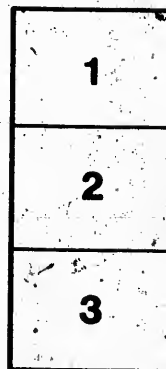
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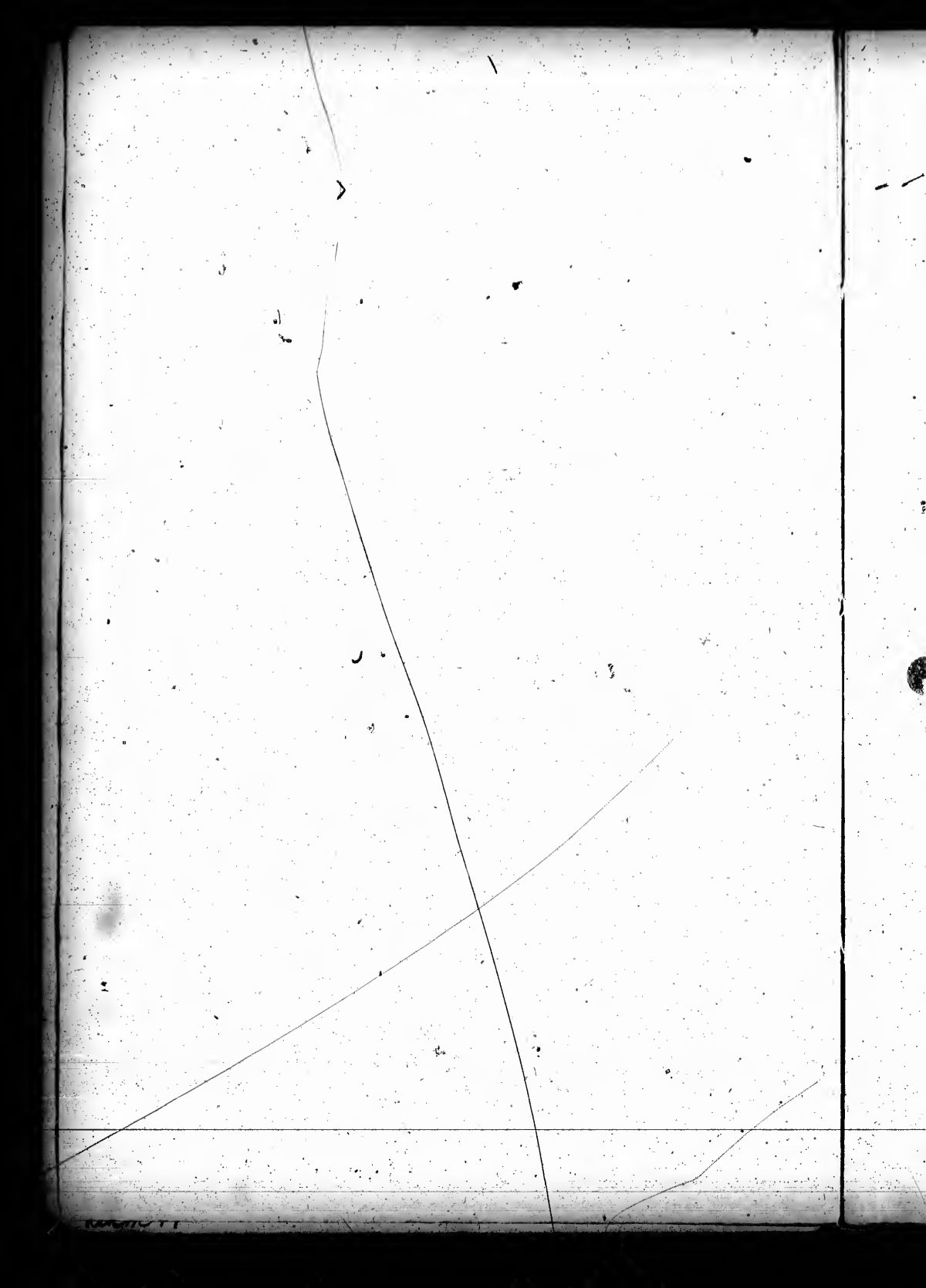
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Julia French Dadson.

**Written by her Husband
for the Boys.**

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Private.

A Letter to the Boys.

MONTREAL, *October, 1898.*

MY DEAR BOYS.

I know how quickly memory plays us false, I think it well therefore to put down in writing a brief sketch of the life and character of your mother, so that the impression which she has already made upon you, may be intensified by the occasional perusal of what I now write.

JULIA ELIZABETH FRENCH was born in Lytchet, Dorset Co., England, December 31st, 1847. Her parents came to Canada with their family when she was but a child. I am not able to tell much about her father or mother, save that the former was a devout christian, who exercised his gifts in preaching the Gospel as he found opportunity, and that the latter was an English lady of gentle breeding and education, the daughter of Mrs. Besant, whose striking portrait hangs in your room. Your mother's parents and grand-mother were buried in the old Paris cemetery. As you visit the place you will find the mounds over their graves marked by a marble slab. Your mother came of good English stock, and through her you have had the advantage of being well-born.

Mr. and Mrs. French died shortly after coming to Canada, one year only elapsing between each death, and there were left Sarah, the oldest girl, 12 years of age

upon whom devolved the care of the family ; James who early in life took up his residence in the United States, and died there ; Rebecca, whom you know well and love, as Aunt Rebecca ; Julia, your mother, and William, who is now (1898) County Attorney in Oklahoma and editor of a newspaper in Chandler.

During her infancy and girlhood, Julia was very delicate, a "wee puny lass," I have often heard her described, a dreamy body, also, whose many sicknesses prevented the romping life which was the happy lot of her playmates. She was accustomed to mention throughout her life and always with deep gratitude, the kindness and love given her by old Mrs. Gilbert, of Beachville, with whom she used to live.

After leaving Beachville, she resided with Mr. and Mrs. John Arnold, of Paris, with whom the family made their home. Because of her ill-health she could not avail herself of early educational advantages, but perhaps this lack was fully compensated by the taste for reading which was then developed. This appetite soon became a passion, and she eagerly devoured all literature that came within her reach. The Arnold home placed no restrictions upon this passion, and she had opportunity through the kindness of her guardian, Mr. Thos. Bosworth, and many Paris friends, of obtaining access to such an assortment of good books as enriched all her after life. I have often been struck with her felicity of expression, both in writing and in public speech, and her familiarity with works now gone into disuse. To her reading habits in early life she owed much that gave value to her public work, and the sweet charm of her fireside conversation. As she came to womanhood she gained strength, and a certain degree of health, so that her neglected schooling was resumed. She passed through the ordinary drill of the Paris schools, taking her certificate after completing

the High School. She spent two years at Woodstock College also. Her experience thus far well-fitted her for the sphere of life to which God was calling her. An orphan from an early age, she had developed a spirit of self-reliance and independence. Her acquaintance with books and her after-studies were a foundation for the helpful companionship she gave to her husband.

On August 1st, 1877, Julia French was married to your father, who was then pastor of the Denfield church, and for 21 years was his wife and chum, and constant companion and counsellor, and dearest friend.

There are many things about your mother that time would efface from your memory, unless some means are taken to preserve them; I write these things for your eyes only, and because I do not wish even small matters in connection with the beloved woman to be forgotten.

I want you to remember her physically. She was a beautiful woman. The large photographs taken in 1895, give her face correctly, the one profile and the other full face. You older boys recall the original, of course, and it will ever remain with you, but, Jack and Will must needs correct fading impressions by reference to the picture and this writing. She was a beautiful woman, and absolutely without bodily blemish, save the lack of robustness which characterized her from girlhood. Of course I speak as her lover and husband; yet, you older boys, will know that I speak justly. You recall her eyes, dark grey with bluish tinge, very large, very expressive, so full of love as we looked into them while paying her the daily homage which we all delighted to give her, and so shot with fire, when any cause called for just indignation. How bright they were! and how constantly they were bright! The beaming welcome they always gave to the home circle! Their glowing fondness for all about

the fireside! Their merry twinkle always accompanying the evening fun during the sacred family hour before going to bed! You will never forget her glorious eyes I am sure.

And as she laughed—she was always laughing, you remember—the rows of pearly teeth would gleam from rosy lips. You must not forget her remarkable teeth. You never saw any so fine, or any that kept their beauty so long. Large they were, and of that faint suspicion of blue that is so rare and so attractive. Through her life her teeth were admired greatly because of their unique excellence. Neither must you forget the rosy cheeks of your mother, which she preserved with her bright eyes, and pure teeth, for fifty years. They put her sweet womanhood in continual bloom, and preserved her girlish appearance when she had passed the meridian of life. And surely her unsurpassed hands will not pass from your memory. They were made in the choicest mould. The long tapering fingers were so soft and so transparent. How often she laughed because she could not get a thimble small enough! And her rings would not stay on! She had to tie them together and so attempt to keep them from slipping off. How we used to make merry with her and accuse her of vanity because she presumed to possess such hands! But we loved their soft touch, and we all liked to fondle them, and their ministry was ever sweet. You must not forget her beauty, boys. It was beauty too that did not fade. Look at her picture. An exact likeness at forty-seven years of age. She had not a gray hair, nor a wrinkle, but at that age she was as fresh and winsome as the day she became my bride. And so she remained for fifty years, and then the mark of death came upon her and the beautiful tabernacle soon came down. So, I have given you an outline upon which your memory may work and fill in the complete picture.

Now a few words in regard to other and still more esteemed characteristics. The beloved woman was finely endowed mentally. She adjusted herself to the demands of every position with easy grace and facility. You all remember the charm of her conversation! Let me give you the familiar setting to aid your memory. Let the scene be 1134 Dorchester street, Montreal, or 501 Grace street, Woodstock. It is a winter evening say, and storm without. The sitting room has its usual glowing fire in the grate. The two armchairs are in place. The Beloved sits in one. A footstool is at her feet, and she wears a loose evening robe, and then how we loved to gather around while she talked! Had she been attending some convention; then the whole matter would be rehearsed. Impersonation was natural to her, and the personnel as well as the speech would be rendered, sometimes with genuine drollery, sometimes with seriousness, always with unflagging animation. Had she been visiting relations or friends; then everything of interest would be recounted. Familiar personages would be introduced, and the dialogue gone over in sprightly fashion. We often said her reports were sufficient. No use the rest of us either attending conventions or making visits. When she had visitors she had no difficulty in entertaining them. Everybody was made at home in her company, and her bright conversation set everybody at ease. She was always playful and merry, you remember. Sometimes, and this is the only exception, when that terrible paralysis recurred, which nearly took her life in the year '79, the smile died away from her lips; but only for a little while. I must not omit a word or two about her voice. How she used to sing! Song after song, for hours at a time, especially when summering at her dearly loved home in Muskoka. You must never forget her boat songs. I want you to hear her voice coming over

the lake as I always do. She could be heard a mile easily. Clear as a bell was her voice, and of marvellous compass, a voice such as one seldom hears, and once heard is never forgotten. Its speaking power was very remarkable. It could be low and gentle, yet always distinct, and in the largest auditorium not a syllable would be lost. I have heard her speak before large audiences in an easy conversational tone and there would be no effort at hearing. It was a voice of rich quality, low in range, sympathetic and far reaching almost beyond credence. An example: A few days before her death she was chatting pleasantly with a visitor. I was in the basement preparing something for her, and her observations could be heard quite distinctly though she lay three stories from where I stood. She used it with great effect in her prayer-meeting addresses, and in her public prayers. It was always under perfect control, yet it voiced the passion of her heart and so often carried benediction to those who listened. But I have left her merry ways to sing the praises of her voice. Well, she was never dull, never; even to the last the constant smile was with her. Throughout she was the merry-hearted companion, the girl of the family, who loved her boys and her happy home, and was the life and soul of every joy which sprang so freely from her presence. And then her wit: you recall its sparkles, her ready repartee, her playful sallies, her funny couplets, her odd conceits, her lively and incessant character painting and all the whimsies of her sprightly talk.

Your mother has left you a rich legacy, in the abundant store of manuscript and letters, which, no doubt, you often peruse. She was a capital correspondent. She wielded a facile and graceful pen. There is no attempt at fine writing, but there is intense personality throughout. You hear her voice and see her animated

expression whenever you read her pages. She had a host of correspondents, and this they all testify of her. She was much sought after as a letter friend. You should read over especially her Muskoka letters. Such a host of them she left! And they will come to you again and again as the breath of the pine trees over the rippling waters of Lake Joseph. Treasure those letters especially which take nature into confidence, and chat of trees, and flowers, and birds, and waters; and those too which take you boys into her motherly heart and deluge you with loving counsels.

You may not know, because you were not mature enough to observe, that your mother possessed excellent judgment. She was my best counsellor in all the problems of church and denomination which pressed for decision. And not a few such problems came to me during my various pastorates and my incumbency of the editorial chair. She had quick intuition which sent her easily upon the right path, and which made counsel with her always welcome and delightful. Her character reading also was remarkable, at times little short of inspiration. I learned to trust her estimate of men and women, and to prefer her judgment above my own. You may judge then her helpfulness to me in the prosecution of my work. My sermons and addresses all passed under her review, and her criticisms were just and always helpful. She was able to appreciate the position of platform and audience alike, and was exceedingly sensitive to the demands of either sphere. Hence the value of her suggestions. You will read some of her literary work and art criticisms, and some of her written and printed speeches, and you will always bear in mind that your mother was a woman of high mental culture, who easily took her position on the platform, as in the drawing room, in literary and art circles, as in the home.

But there was a side to her character, of greater excellence than anything yet enumerated. Your mother was a true-hearted christian woman, one who feared God and was a lover of Jesus Christ. You will find among her letters her joy-song, written to me at the time when her eyes opened upon the glad new life which came through faith in Jesus Christ. She had from childhood been concerned in regard to spiritual things. God was very real to her; the bible was very true; heaven and hell were far removed from mere theory, and her soul was troubled. But God sent her light, and she had in rapturous fashion the joy of salvation. Father Henderson, of the Paris church, baptized her. Her experience of God's grace gladdened all her after life. She never had a doubt; her faith never wavered; and so often in our quiet conversations she told me of the joy of that experience which was always present with her. Her heart continually sang praises to God because she had not missed the great salvation. Loving God so truly as she did, her love for husband and family was pure and joyous as it was intense. You boys perhaps did not sufficiently comprehend it. The wealth of her affection, your maturity only could properly discern; but to me it glowed a sacred passion, whose depth and beauty must ever affect my life.

The beloved woman was without guile. She could not deceive, she could not be false. Truth, I think, was the most striking quality of her life. She was the soul of honor, and at all costs, was true. Being truthful herself and guileless, she was addicted to great plainness of speech—not tactful some would say. Well, she spoke her mind upon all occasions, and was not careful to shield unrighteousness, and in the end her plain, simple words won approbation, even where they at first were scarcely welcomed. She never sought anybody's favor, and she never allowed anybody's patronage. Whenever

I want an example of unwavering faith and unaffected truth, my mind reverts to her and stays there. I want you to think of your mother as to this her chief and perhaps most lovely characteristic. She loved God and served him with simplicity of heart and with childlike confidence. As I write of this quality, two oft repeated scenes in her life stand out plainly before me. I see her kneeling with her boys, in the one instance, and pouring out her heart's thought to God; her low voiced utterance, her wealth of love; her passion of entreaty—you will never forget, I am sure. And the other: her prayer meeting address; whether to God or to the assembled people. Perhaps you do not recall it as I do, but nothing ever moved me as her words upon these occasions. She never spoke until her heart was filled with some great longing, and then the deep far-reaching passion-burdened voice would tell its story of God, and Christ; of pardon and of life. She was God's own child, splendidly equipped for service.

I should like you to know something of the appreciation in which she was held by those outside her home and immediate surroundings. I am not referring now to mere personal friendship—of that, the hundreds of letters received during her sickness bear abundant testimony—but of the larger appreciation due to her worth and service. She was always intensely interested in the missionary work of the churches, and found opportunity in the midst of her busy life to do not a little to advance this cause. The mission bands, now so successfully in business throughout our denomination, were organized by her, and for years she superintended this work in the position of Secretary. She was a member of the Ontario Women's Board during her residence in the West, and gave herself very heartily to its service both by pen and voice. Upon her removal to the Province of Quebec, she was unani-

mously chosen President of the Women's Missionary Society. She was glad the service had fallen to her because she was devoted to the cause of missions, and she immediately laid her plans for a forward movement. She thought much, prayed much, and wrote much about it, but in the midst of it all the Master told her, "It is enough," and she laid down her pen and her beautiful voice became hushed forever. As she lay upon her bed, each mail brought her letters penned by loving hands. They came from all over the continent, and they all gave her such good cheer, and nearly all had some allusion to helpful service rendered in some, to her, forgotten way. The Annual Convention meeting in the city of Hamilton sent a resolution of sympathy. The Women's Convention, West, meeting in Toronto, and the Convention, East, of which she was President, also sent resolutions expressing profound solicitation. The Boards of the various organizations in which she had membership did the same thing; these resolutions you may read at your leisure; and she was gladdened by the assurance that from pulpits all over the land she was made a special subject of prayer. Besides all this, every day brought its fresh flowers to her bedside, and love tokens innumerable. Her own people of Olivet church gave her full-hearted and most tender ministry. Indeed, boys, I know of no instance in which kindness and love and heartfelt appreciation were so abundantly and genuinely shown. I tell you all this that you may never forget the worth and service of the beautiful woman, the pure and true woman, and the woman God so greatly honored, whom it was your privilege to call mother.

Now, having told you somewhat of her work, I must say a word or two in regard to her play. As she was whole hearted in the one, so she gave herself to the other with delightful abandon. What fine comradeship she

displayed, whether at work or play, and how we all caught the spirit of her exhilaration, you will not fail to recall. The fireside scene I have already referred to, in which her position was always Mistress of Ceremonies, when the romps and the wrestling would occur. Her hearty enjoyment of the family fun of boisterous youngsters I know will be a sweet memory to you. I want you always to hear her merry peal of laughter through it all. But it was in Muskoka that her fun-loving nature found its appropriate field. She had a passion for the wilderness and water, and the solitude of her northern home gave her the freedom for that abandonment to nature which her whole being craved. You recall her many expeditions for the curious growths of the dark forest, the trailers and creepers which hid themselves in the shades, and the bark which lent itself to her deft fingers to be fashioned in curious workmanship. You recall her bird-lore and her bug-lore, and all the studies and pastimes which her happy Muskoka home always afforded her. And then her joy upon the waters. How at home she was when the white-caps were rolling and the wind was at its height! She would order her boat, take her place in the stern cushions always provided for her, and when the sail was hoisted and the wind was strong, who so happy as she! How her glad songs would echo among the rocks! Or perhaps she would prefer the smooth-gliding canoe, urged on with paddle or sail. You recall her keen delight in this sport. I need not tell you of her swimming. How she enjoyed the mad water frolics! At times she would set out for a neighboring island and swim for a mile perhaps, before she reached the other shore. Her face would tan, of course, and she had to be deprived of a great many comforts of course; yet, her vacation was always pure delight to her, and she was the companion of her boys in all the fun and work of it.

As I speak of her Muskoka life, I wish to impress upon you that your mother never knew fear. Her courage was magnificent always. She would go alone with her little children to Muskoka, pitch her camp in the woods, her nearest neighbour being, say, half a mile or a mile away, and she would never dream of being afraid. She loved the storm and the angry waters, as you well know. This quality characterized her in all her relationships of life, so that as well as being gentle and womanly, she was ever bold, outspoken and fearless. How wonderfully her courage sustained her during the awful sickness which came to her and took her life, you boys, I am sure, can never forget.

I come now to write of your mother's last days, and if I go into details you will know it is because none of you were with her at the time, and I would not have you miss the lesson of that heroic conflict with suffering and death. For some years she had noticed a small lump or growth, but as it did not give her any inconvenience, no attention was paid to it. Upon removal to Montreal, however, in '96, she consulted a specialist who pronounced it a tumor, but discouraged operation. From that consultation the growth rapidly increased. She was able, however, to go to her summer home as usual, where she stayed July, August and September. While there we noticed that she was downcast at times, and she told her maid, who for nine years had waited on her, and who watched her lovingly and faithfully till the end, that she was sure she was visiting her loved "Arbutus" for the last time. On leaving by steamboat she, in girlish fashion, bade good-bye to house, trees, and all her familiar places of resort, saying, she would never see them again. During autumn and the early part of winter, she, although bright and cheery as usual, showed unmistakable signs of serious illness. In February she went to the Electrical

Sanitarium, Ottawa, where she remained a month for treatment. To no purpose, however. I brought her from Ottawa upon a Pullman lounge. She was suffering terribly, but said she enjoyed the trip very much. The snow fall was unusually heavy that year, and she had great delight in viewing its glories from the car window. Upon reaching home she submitted to another treatment, and for a month, in the midst of suffering most acute, persistently went through its long agony. After several times falling into paroxysms of pain, she sent for a surgeon, who watching her for a month, suggested an operation as the only hope, and a hope very slight at that. The ambulance was ordered. Before it arrived, we had a quiet hour together. She prepared herself for death in calmest manner; "I hope I may live," she said, "Life is very sweet when there are husband and boys and work to live for, but if God wills otherwise, I am all ready." And the men came into her room and placed her on a stretcher; she was carried down-stairs having a smile on her face and the door closed upon her cheery "Good-bye everybody." We rode together in the ambulance to the hospital; she was bright and chatty all the way there, and she made merry over the curious conveyance in which she found herself—"We have ridden together in many conveyances," she said, "the carriage, the car, the steamboat, the sail boat, canoe, but never a vehicle such as this." The men carried her to her room, and laid her upon the bed. She smiled upon them sweetly and thanked them for their thoughtful gentleness. She then bade me good-night, kissing me and saying we should meet again, at all events, "in the morning." In the morning I was suddenly summoned to the hospital—"Dying," the surgeon said, "and you may well pray that the end come now, rather than that she should suffer the two months of agony which otherwise are before

her." I saw her struggling in her awakening from the ether. I watched her till she came to consciousness. She waved me away, saying I must not talk to her or do anything to divert her attention from her contest with death. And so for a day or two she lay; but at length she revived—and then her radiant joy at the prospect of getting better! Poor child, nobody had the heart to tell her that recovery was impossible. She lay at the hospital for a month and then she was brought home. How glad we were to welcome her! And oh how happy she was! But she gained no strength, and the pain increased, and her appetite failed; and we all saw the end approaching. She did not suspect the issue, however, but day after day during any intervals of partial ease, she made her plans for her household and her church and denominational work. She was going on a sea voyage for her holiday, so she said, and she ordered an invalid's chair, upon which we would place her day by day, and wheel her through the rooms and out on the balcony, practising, as she said, for the steamer's deck. She was the cheeriest one in the room, full of chat and pretty ways, even during the darkest nights of her worst suffering. When I could assure nothing that she could eat I knew the end was not far off; and I then told her my fears, indeed the certainty of her death. She was amazed at first, but soon bade me tell her all about it. "Well," she said, after my sad story was told, "I faced death before and I can do so again." "Come and pray with me." I took her hand and knelt by her side and prayed. "Now kiss me," and when I embraced her she requested to be turned upon her side, and she went to sleep, and slept as she had not for many days and nights. I indeed thanked God for her sweet peace and calm faith. When she awakened she bade me take down her last messages to her friends, and she dictated many letters

to her children and loved ones, speaking until her voice thickened. A few days after, she gave directions as to the disposition of her personal property, and then again as to her funeral. Every item was arranged by herself—how she was to be robed—how her hair was to be dressed—who should perform these offices, etc., etc. And a few days before the end she said to me, "When you see the end coming take my hands in yours and do not leave me till it is all over." On Saturday, June 18th, 1898, I stood by her bedside early, before dawn. She beckoned me to bend over her, and putting her arms around my neck she said: "I'm dying now, papa, am I not?" "Yes, girl," I said, "You are dying." "I wish it would hurry, don't you?" and she passed into unconsciousness. Only once more could any utterance be detected—"Don't fret" was hardly distinguished, and she lay until 10 p.m. breathing with labor. Then a change was noticed. I took her hands as we had agreed and prayed to the Father and my prayer ended, "Lord Jesus receive her spirit, Amen." With the "Amen" her breathing ceased, and the soul of the Beloved went home to God. Ah, the brave struggle she made! She absolutely refused any sedative throughout the long agony. "No," she said, "I wish to die with a clear brain." You did not see her die, boys. You, Tom, were in England—you, Aleck, poor fellow, were at Thurso recovering from an operation for appendicitis—you, Jack, were watching heavy-hearted in the drawing room, and Will, you were in bed, so I have written all this that you, dear old fellows, may always bear in mind that you are sons of a heroine who was never afraid of anything in life, and for whom even death had no terrors.

On Sunday night we took the poor body to the Olivet Church where all the Baptist congregations of the city assembled, and a beautiful and simple service was

held. The company went with us to the station, and we took our beloved dead with us to Woodstock. Mr. and Mrs. Karn opened their lovely home to us and there the old Woodstock church assembled. There was an impressive service, and we bore her to the burying. We laid her at rest in a beautiful spot in the Baptist cemetery and covered her grave with flowers; and so we left her, and the father and the boys were desolate. Boys, you will always reverence the memory of the gentle lady—so good, so beautiful, so true and so brave.

The Boys.

Born.

ALEXANDER TURNBULL, May 16th, 1878.
 THOMAS MCCOSH, - - - October 23rd, 1879.
 JOHN MARQUIS, - - - November 6th, 1882.
 HENRY FRENCH, - - - July 22nd, 1884.
 WILLIAM FYFE, - - - December 26th, 1886.

Died.

HENRY FRENCH, - - - October 29th, 1887.

