

In Memoriam

Mrs. W. S. Ball

"I Know That My Redeemer Liveth."

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

It is now a year since our Mother left us, and believing that many friends would value a sketch of her life, and wishing that those of her grandchildren, who are too young to remember her, should have some knowledge of her beautiful life and character, this sketch is written by Her Daughters.

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January 7th, 1903.  
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"Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed: for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."



March 26th, 1826—January 7th, 1902.

In Memoriam.

M. M. B.

When tender green the meadows bear,

And fair white blooms the bough ;

Hope's song rings in the morning air :

" I know he's with me now. "

When garnered sheaves of summer time

Did years of peace endow ;

Through gathering shade sang faith sublime,

" He will not leave me now. "

And when the piercing winter weft

Had veiled the sun-lit height,

And icy blasts the valley swept,

And singing birds took flight ;

Still shone a star of quenchless light

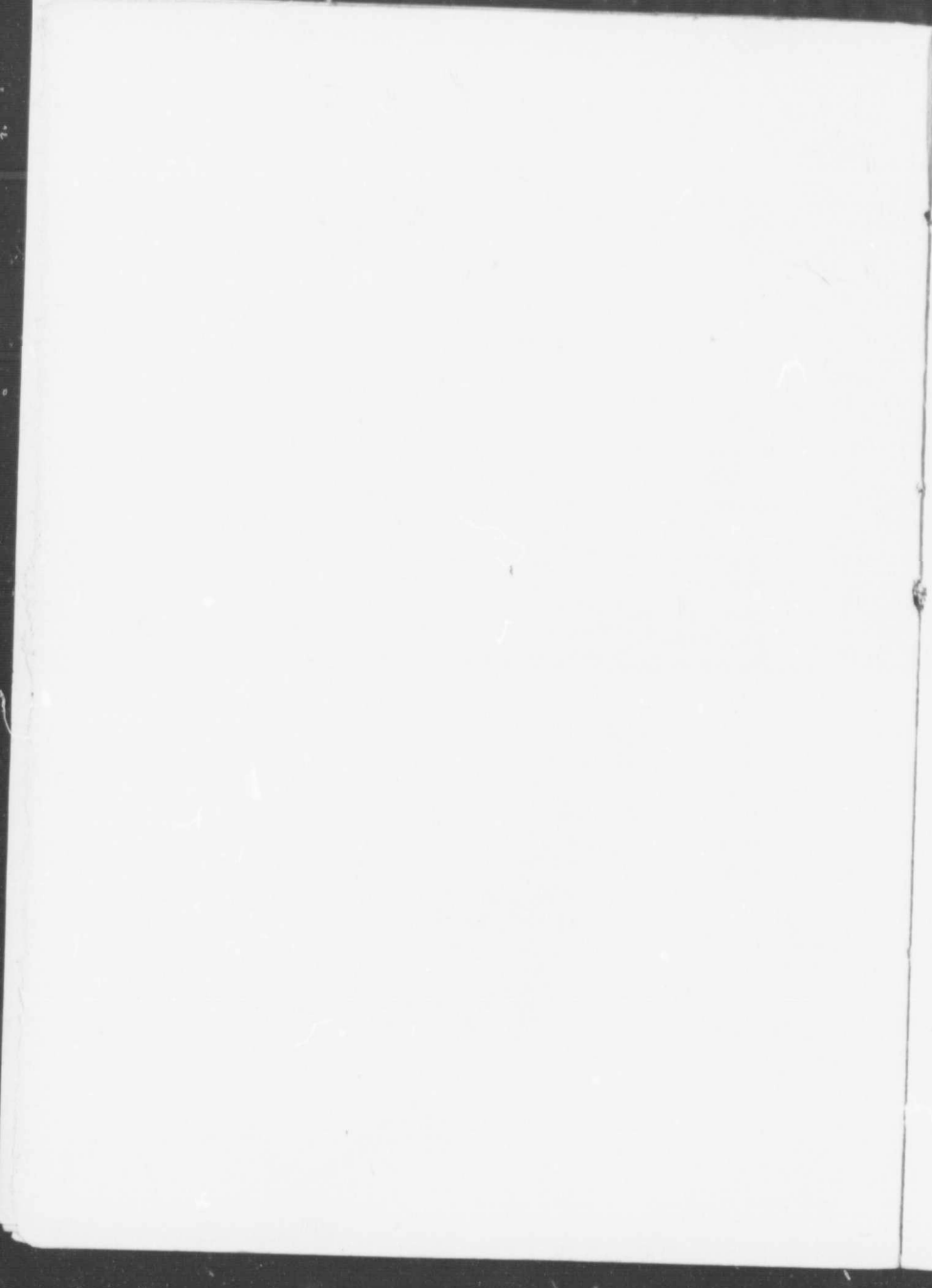
Above the mountain's brow,

The voice of love stole through the night,

" Lo, I am with thee now. "

R. S.

Guelph, Jan. 8th, 1902.



Early Life.

Marianne Mackenzie Brown was born in Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, on the 26th day of March, in the year 1826. In that city, which she always thought the most beautiful in the world, her early girlhood was passed, and she loved to tell her children of the houses and people she remembered in the old days. The family comprised two sons and four daughters, each of whom possessed, in no ordinary degree, high intellectual gifts, remarkable energy of character and warm-hearted affection for each other and for all their relatives and friends.

In Edinburgh she had the best educational advantages and after the family removed to New York, her education was carried on by her elder sisters, who, for many years conducted a young ladies' private school. In 1839, her father, Peter Brown, left Scotland, and accompanied by his eldest son George, went to New York, where he became the editor of "The Scottish Presbyterian." The family followed a year later but after a few years moved to Toronto, with the exception of the eldest daughter, Jane, who married Mr. George Mackenzie, and Marianne, who remained with her sister for some years.

While in New York, they became acquainted with the family of the Rev. Mr. Ferrier, also from Scotland,

and the acquaintance then formed ripened into a friendship which continued unbroken until all of the one family and the greater number of the other were gathered together in the Heavenly Home. Miss Ferrier still survives, probably the only one who remembers Marianne in her girlhood days, and to her we are indebted for a large part of this sketch. She describes her as :—" a beautiful girl, with fair auburn hair, hanging in curls, bright blue eyes, fine regular features and most attractive in appearance and manners." None who knew her in later years can doubt that she was a most loveable and engaging child. Carefully instructed by her christian parents and elder sisters in the way of salvation, her early training was well fitted to prepare her for the long and useful life that was before her. She often said that she never remembered a time when she did not love her Savior, but she was fourteen when she felt conscious of her personal interest in the great salvation. Engaged in her own room one day in prayer and pleading earnestly for pardon and peace through the finished work of Jesus, she got such a view of his love and of her own union to him through faith, that her heart was filled with joy and peace in believing and she knew that she was "accepted in the beloved." After a little while, she rose from her knees and going to the window, stood watching the passers by, wondering if they knew the way of salvation and longing to tell others what a Savior she had found. We have heard her say that never from that day did her faith waver nor did she doubt that she was indeed saved.

This longing to tell others of Jesus, became the ruling passion of her life and there are hundreds, perhaps thousands whom she was the instrument in bringing to Jesus.

At the age of eighteen she went to Toronto and until her marriage, five years later, conducted, with her sisters, a young ladies' private school. At once, too, she became a teacher in Knox Church Sabbath School, Mrs. McMullen of Woodstock being one of her first pupils.

Married Life.

In 1849 she married William Servos Ball, a graduate of Queen's University and of Knox Theological College, who was called to Knox Church, Woodstock, as its first pastor, before he graduated. When duly ordained he went to Woodstock, and was married a few months later.

In all their long married life, she proved herself to be indeed a helpmeet to her husband, assisting him in every way and from the first, teaching a bible class, holding meetings for the women, visiting the congregation, especially in times of sickness, and giving herself unsparingly to Christian work. Her health being absolutely perfect, she was able to do all this even when a large family taxed her in no ordinary measure, and that too

without neglecting any home duties. Letters written when her children were young, tell us how dearly she prized them and what an interest she took in all their amusements. A beautiful needle-woman, she did all the sewing and mending necessary, and articles still in the possession of members of the family show how exquisitely it was done. A rarely good housekeeper, she always contrived to have an air of refinement and comfort about the house and table, even when a large family and small income coupled with a generous hospitality necessitated the most careful management. She often said that what made it possible for her to accomplish so much was having such faithful and capable maids, who served her with a devotion rare indeed.

Reared as Mrs. Ball was in a family where all the leading questions of the day were read and discussed with great interest, it is little wonder that she held strong political views. To the end of her life, she followed with the keenest interest everything pertaining to politics, and while it is true that a woman's political views are of little importance in this country, yet even in that field she had an influence, for she so impressed her seven sons with her view of politics that the Reform party has at least that many more loyal adherents as a result.

Eight years after her marriage a heavy trial, which came upon her family with startling suddenness, shadowed her life for many years. This was the death, in a railway accident, of her sister Catherine, whose beautiful Christian

character and life of devoted service for the Lord made her greatly beloved as a daughter, a sister, a teacher and friend. Miss Ferrier, who knew them both says :—" In mental endowments, in Christian graces, and in winsomeness of character, your mother and this dearly loved sister were much alike. Privileged to know and love them both from my childhood, I can scarcely place too high an estimate upon their lovely characters, their useful and devoted lives, and their influence for good upon all who came in contact with them. Perhaps the highest praise I can possibly give them is to say, that in all the years I knew them, I was never in their company without hearing something of Christ, nor can I now recall a single word or act of theirs which could bring reproach upon their Master's Cause. "

In 1858 Mr. Ball resigned his charge at Woodstock, and worked for four years in the interests of the Bible Society work, for which he was eminently fitted and in which he was abundantly successful. During these years Mrs. Ball remained in Woodstock with her children and although, no longer "minister's wife", she in no way ceased her labors in behalf of the church. Dr. McMullen, who was chosen as minister of Knox Church, which position he still occupies, pays this tribute to her memory :

"Her position in the congregation, as the former minister's wife was, as might be anticipated, one of exceptional influence. Her large fund of information, her marked intellectual powers, her sound judgment, force of character, noble Christian spirit and kindly manner, won influence for her without those over whom it was exerted being conscious of any effort on her part. It was the influence of unaffected nobility and goodness. * * * *

Never directly or indirectly did I receive or hear from her an unappreciative remark, or unfavorable allusion. Whatever there might be to invite comment, her high sense of christian duty, and her sacred regard for the minister's office and the cause of the Gospel, restrained and governed her so, that no member of my congregation was more exemplary than she was in regularity of attendance on the Sabbath services, or in devout attention to the Gospel message. The spirit and manner in which she comported herself at that critical turning point in the history of her connection with Knox Church, Woodstock, constitutes to my mind a revelation of her fine judgment and high Christian worth. * * * Her interest in the Cause of Christ and the work of the church elicited or led to the expression of her views and feelings in a way that made her to me a most valued friend and helper.

She greatly enjoyed conversation on spiritual matters and her manner at such times could not fail to impress one with a sense of her unaffected genuineness of Christian spirit and character. Her time and her help for the good of the congregation were as cheerfully given as if no change in the pastorate had taken place, and her interest in Knox Church, Woodstock, survived to the last. It was the church of her first love and of her lifelong regard.

* * * Mrs. Ball possessed in high degree the best qualities of the distinguished family of which she was a member. Her gifts and endowments, naturally of a high order, were sanctified by divine grace and controlled and guided by the spirit and motives of the true christian. Absolutely free from everything savoring of affectation or effusiveness of manner, she possessed the amiability and dignity of genuineness, and the refinement of the cultured and true Christian lady. She was kind and true and faithful to me as her pastor and the friendship then formed continued through the forty following years."

An Active Life.

In 1862, a call to Knox Church, Guelph, was accepted by Mr. Ball, and in February of that year he moved there with his family. In a very short time Mrs. Ball had won the love and esteem of the whole congregation and for twenty-two years exercised a great influence among the members. Perhaps the work which told most for good was the Young Women's Bible Class. Her classes often numbered one hundred or more and were frequently attended by girls from other churches, who were attracted by her rare gifts as a teacher. Mother's meetings were conducted for many years, and the help she gave to the sick, the poor and the sorrowing cannot be tabulated. Her deepest interest was aroused by the organization of the W. F. M. S. and from the first she strove to interest other women in Missionary Work. Miss Rodger, then home from India, was asked to address them and the interest of the ministers enlisted, but it was not till after her removal from Guelph that an auxiliary was formed by the women of the three Presbyterian congregations. Mrs. McCrae of Guelph says :—

“Many will remember a visit from Mrs. Ball and her gifted friend, Mrs. Gordon of Harrington, to the newly formed union auxiliary. To the end of her life the cause of Missions lay very near her heart and by her earnest words she revived the courage of many a drooping auxiliary or inspiring others to form a new one.

As President of an Auxiliary and of the London Presbyterial for some years, she had large opportunities for service. At the annual meetings of the Society, she was seldom absent and the grace of prayer was often exercised there. Slightly impatient of what she deemed 'red tape' her anxiety went out to the objects of the work and direct spiritual methods. It was a cherished desire of hers, that the Lord's Supper should be observed at the annual meeting, but she sweetly acquiesced in the adverse decision of the Board."

In 1894, Mr. and Mrs. Ball moved to Toronto and the years spent there were among the happiest of their lives. Surrounded by congenial friends, they were able to gratify their natural tastes in a way not possible heretofore. Of remarkably active habits they both delighted in city life. While in Toronto, Mr. Ball had charge of the Eglinton Church, where he preached every Sabbath. Mrs. Ball visited regularly at the Home for Aged Women, where her visits were looked forward to by the inmates as a bright spot in the week.

As Vice-President of the W. F. M. S., the weekly meetings of the Board were a keen delight to her and she felt toward each of the members as to a dearly loved sister. In 1896, at the age of seventy, she paid her first visit to Scotland and some idea can be formed of the way she entered into the interests of others from her actions on board ship. Never ill, she became the life of the party. A young Swiss Gentleman, who was one of the passengers on the boat and who devoted himself to her comfort, writing to her after her return from the old land, speaks

of her as—"the old, dear lady, who was everyone's friend, the one who played checkers with the old gentlemen, coming out victor and who played the piano for the young people to dance to."

The five months spent with dear friends in Scotland and England, were a time of rare pleasure to her. She attended all the meetings of the Free Church Assembly and was greatly pleased with the deeply spiritual tone which pervaded them. In June she went to Glasgow as a delegate to the Pan Presbyterian Council, from the W. F. M. S. of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. A trip to the English lakes with a cousin and the days of the Keswick convention, were incidents of much enjoyment, as were also visits to grand nieces in England. The crowning pleasure was a trip to the Highlands, for she had feared that she would have to say that England was more beautiful than Scotland, but the beauty and the grandeur of the Highlands, surpassed anything she had seen except her beloved Edinburgh.

One incident of her stay in the Highlands is thoroughly characteristic of her. In her walks she often visited the cottages she passed and had a chat with the women. One woman enlisted her sympathies especially, she had such a hard unhappy face. By degrees Mrs. Ball drew out her story and learned that she had long ago quarreled with her family and had had no joy in her religion in consequence. Mrs. Ball talked and prayed with her and on her last visit, had the delight of learning

that her words had borne fruit and that the woman had at last made up her mind to be reconciled to her family and had already found peace with God.

One pleasing incident was meeting four old school-mates, all of whom, including herself were over seventy. Having lunched together, they talked of the old days and recalled scenes of early girlhood.

On her return trip, her broadness of mind shewed itself in the friendship she formed with a Roman Catholic Priest, each of whom endeavored to persuade the other of errors in each other's religion. This controversy was a source of considerable interest to many of the passengers, and they asked that Mrs. Ball and her friend be photographed together, which was accordingly done.

Her Last Days.

The spring following this visit, brought to her the greatest loss of her life, that of her husband, though she always rejoiced for him that he was taken first. On the morning of June 19th, 1897, just as they were beginning family worship, he was suddenly stricken with apoplexy and in one instant was translated from active service on earth to higher service above. The realization of the beauty and honor of such a death, following a life which had not contained one day of illness, calmed Mrs. Ball and kept her from being prostrated. The strength and clearness of her faith shewed itself at this time as perhaps never before and brought her triumphantly through that awful time. Together they had spent forty-nine years of

happy married life, full of care and work, and the rending of such a tie would have broken down a weaker character. A few months later she decided to give up housekeeping and spend the rest of her life with her children, each one of whom considered it the greatest privilege to have her in their homes. Her summers were usually spent in Guelph, and it was some compensation to her, in leaving her work and friends in Toronto, that she was near the Hospital and able to spend a great deal of her time among the patients there. Her winters were spent in Parkhill, Woodstock and Toronto and in each place she became an active worker in the church and W. F. M. S. Perhaps no gift she ever received, and she had received many, gave her more pleasure than a Bible presented to her by the members of the W. F. M. S. at the close of her last visit to Parkhill, as a token of their love and appreciation of her work among them. She was present at the annual meeting of the W. F. M. S. in May of 1901, and took part in the memorial service to the Queen. Coming to Guelph in July, it was seen that her health was beginning to fail and all through the summer, her strength decreased. She was, in August, able to pay her annual visit to her dear friends in Caledonia, the Misses. Ferrier, a visit she always looked forward to. In October she went to Woodstock and was far from well, though still bright and interested in every one. Returning to Guelph in November, it was seen that her days would be but few. Day by day her health declined, though her mind still continued bright and clear, and those last weeks

were times of great privilege to those who were with her. Seasons of terrible suffering were borne with characteristic sweetness and her face never lost its look of beautiful peace. No word of complaint ever passed her lips, but the pain was spoken of as the loving hand of God upon her. She came down stairs for the last time on Christmas Day but was too weak to sit up. On New Year's Day, all of her children who were in Canada, three sons and two daughters, spent the day with her, and it was learnt afterwards, that she had made all arrangements for her funeral as calmly as if arranging for a drive. After that day she ceased to take much interest in outward things, her mind being fixed on the glories awaiting her. On the evening of January 6th, she gave a clear, loving message for her absent sons and shortly after relapsed into unconsciousness. No pain marred the last few days, and on January 7th, at 9.30 p. m., like a little child, she fell asleep. Her beautiful death was a fitting ending to a beautiful life, full of work and helpfulness and loving zeal for the Master; one could only think of the words—"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." To few has it been given to gather round them such a wealth of love as surrounded her. Everyone who ever came in contact with her, loved her, and we know that she has many stars in her crown. She was carried to her grave by four sons and two sons-in-law and laid to rest in the Necropolis at Toronto, beside her husband, mother, father, sister and brothers.

*"Rejoice ye and be glad with her, all ye that love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her."*