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REMARKS
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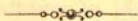
MISS MARTHA J. W. CARKIN,

ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1881.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BROOKFIELD:
C. H. Whittemore, Printer.
1881.

REMARKS.



“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”

What was written so long ago by the pen of Inspiration, is most impressively repeated to us to-day by the voice of Providence. How differently would we have thought! How contrary to this, his way, would have been ours! Why has this large company of sincere mourners been gathered here to-day for so sad a purpose? Again is our short-sighted wisdom baffled by this apparently unwise and unkind stroke of the Almighty, which has taken from a home, one so dear and so depended upon, and from a community, one so useful and so beloved.

But where wisdom is baffled, faith need not falter. When we cannot see, we may safely trust. When we cannot comprehend, we may both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” The Allwise God has made no mistake. The All-loving Father has not forgot-

ten to be gracious. "His compassions fail not." "Like as a father pitieth his children," so He pitieth still.

Let us, then, in our sorrow try to think of this bereavement that has fallen upon us as *a thought of God*. There is surely a world of comfort in so regarding it. How cheerless and dreary to think of it otherwise! It has not happened by chance. Nothing so happens in this our world. All its happenings are thoughts of God, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

As, with saddened thoughts, I returned yesterday morning from the home, now made so desolate by the death of her who had been its cheer and light, a tiny bird, one of our hardy winter sojourners, fell from an overhanging tree to the ground, overcome with cold and hunger. Life was already extinct, as, with the hope of reviving him, I picked him up. An instinctive feeling of sorrow for his hard fate crossed my mind. It was singular that he chanced to fall just then. *Chanced!* No! A thought of God. With a new force and a deeper significance came the tender words of the Master, "one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father:"—and again, "not one of them is forgotten before God." Does He who marked the sparrow's fall have no regard for his

children? "Are not ye of more value than many sparrows?" Doth it not concern him when one of his saints falleth? Ah! "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

There is rich and tender consolation in thus remembering that all our sorrows are God's thoughts. For He thinketh thoughts of love and mercy towards us. So the Psalmist realized when he exclaimed, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" It is not necessary that we comprehend the deep, hidden meaning of his thoughts. We cannot. It far exceeds our capacity, like "the love of God that passeth knowledge." "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts, than your thoughts." "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil." If "He knoweth," that is enough for us.

And while there is thus such comfort in regarding our friend's death as one of the loving thoughts of God, there is likewise a pleasure in recalling her life among us as equally the expression of one of his thoughts of love. Was it not His thought that endowed her with those graces of character and spirit that won the loving esteem of so large a circle of friends? That cheerful, happy dis-

position,—in the sunshine of which we have all been gladdened and cheered,—did not He implant it and give her the grace to cultivate it? And so also of that quick sympathy, those warm affections and generous impulses, which, guided by rare tact and sound judgment, made her so universally recognized as at once the companion and counsellor of our young people.

Mention must also be made of the fidelity, the enthusiasm, the ability with which she so long filled her position in the community, realizing its responsibility and opportunity, and earnestly endeavoring to make our Town Library the blessing it is capable of being made to the community. It is but just, though not necessary, to say, that its usefulness has been largely increased by her wise superintendence. She has done no small work in elevating and directing the taste of many of our youth. No other woman had so large acquaintance in all the families of the town, none was held in more universal esteem.

Nor can we forget her interest in and zeal for the welfare of Christ's kingdom among us; the important place she filled in this Church and society, now thrice, within a few brief months so sorely and unexpectedly smitten by the hand of death! How sadly we shall miss her! For we have yet to realize how largely we depended upon her

aid and what free use we made of her services, given so ungrudgingly and cheerfully. How her enthusiasm helped over difficulties, and how her sunny disposition and that spirit of Christian Charity which "is not easily provoked, beareth all things, hopeth all things" made all delight to work with her!

In the Sabbath School, she was a most efficient and faithful laborer. Always zealous for its prosperity and ready with helpful suggestions. Her devotion to her class, her affectionate solicitude for each member of it, need not be dwelt upon. You, who were her pupils, too sacredly cherish the memory of her faithful, affectionate earnestness, to need to have it emphasized. It was almost with dying breath, that as her thoughts turned lovingly to her class, she exclaimed, "It seems as though I shall never forget them." And in the home and family circle—the home of her infancy and childhood, which she did not leave in her maturer years—how important the place she had grown to occupy, as the trusted dependence and solace of her aged parents!

Surely, in all this her life of service, it is not hard to read the thoughts of a loving Providence, who raised her up for this mission, and blessed her in it, during these years. We all rejoice that her lot was cast among us!

But does the remembrance of all this, make it the harder for us to reconcile the wisdom and the love which has, so unexpectedly, brought to a close so useful a life? It does, indeed. But it is not necessary to reconcile. Faith, resting upon the assurances of its God, needs no reconciliation of his ways. Sufficient for it, is the Master's word, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." In the light of that glad "hereafter," when "we shall know even as we are known" will faith which fails not in the deepest gloom, find its completest vindication and most glorious reward! And while we would not impatiently seek to anticipate the revelations that await us, we may even here, catch some glimpses of possibilities of both wisdom and love, in this way God has taken with us.

May it not be, that in another world some divinely appointed mission waited for her to enter upon it? Perhaps, God seeing her ripe for higher service, called her from unneeded discipline and trial to enter at once that "sunlit Land that recks not of tempest nor of fight."

"Weep not for her that she has reached before us,

The safe, warm shelter of her long loved home."

Or may it not be one of God's designs to make some of us stop and think if we cannot fill larger places? Does

not the large place, made vacant by her death, plead eloquently for some one to fill it?

Perhaps, by thus snatching her away from her usefulness, at a time when we feel we could least afford to spare her, He means forcibly to call our attention to the beauty and worth of a useful life, and thus crown it with honor! Especially would it seem His gracious design to impress indelibly upon the hearts of her host of younger friends, who so keenly feel to-day the sense of personal bereavement, those lessons of Christian consecration and service, which, by precept and example she ever sought to teach. Her earnest prayer that God would make her life of highest usefulness, may thus be most fully answered. We believe she wears not now a "starless crown." May we not also believe that it is to be made more resplendent by the addition thereto of other stars, as through the living influence of her prayers and life, other names are written in the Book of life.

Surely, these are all lessons God would lay upon our hearts to-day, these are all thoughts of his mercy towards us. Let us deeply treasure them. Most impressively are we reminded of unseen and eternal realities. How near they are to us! How is it with our day's work? Are we doing it with our might? May God sanctify to us all,

the solemn thoughts his Providence awakens. May He who has "bruised and torn, also heal and bind up." It is but "a little while," my afflicted friends. The sundered ties are soon to be reunited, never again to be broken, and God himself shall wipe away your tears.

"Brief life is here our portion,
Brief sorrow, short-lived care ;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life is There."