

In Loving Remembrance

Mary Wright Brainerd

1867-1921

WORDS SPOKEN AT THE FUNERAL, NOV. 1, 1921

BY PROFESSOR CHARLES B. WRIGHT

To speak, however haltingly, a word of affectionate remembrance here; to voice, in however imperfect a way, a community's sense of loss, is a privilege that one well may prize. It is to speak not only for oneself, but for the college and the church as well, and for all the varied agencies of our social and religious life whose interests were near the heart of her who is passing from our sight, and to whose upbuilding she gave, till the end, so large a measure of devoted service.

It is twenty-four years—and how brief the span of them seems in retrospect—since Mrs. Brainerd came to us, essentially a stranger, to assume the duties of a peculiarly difficult position. How well those duties have been performed; with what ever-increasing strength and skill she has borne the burdens of manifold responsibility; how surely and steadily she has grown into the affection of this community, the group that is gathered here to-day is itself a sufficient witness.

I count myself favored that from the first it was my privilege to enjoy her friendship, and to mark, as so many of you have marked, the beautiful unfolding of her life. For I know of no greater pleasure than to see a ripening nature grow mellow with the years; to watch the experience of a friend—the experience that is arduous even more than that which is gladsome—transmuting itself into power, and that transmutation we have seen in the life of Mrs. Brainerd. I shall think of her oftenest as I knew her in the home, where for me and for so many there have ever been, through all the years, a gracious welcome and an unstinted giving of her best.

And now when she was nearing the maturity of her powers; when the need in the home seemed greatest of her counsel and her care; when she filled a larger and larger place in the lessening circle of the old-time friends, all that she was has become a memory. It seems an incalculable loss. One wishes that it were in his power to express to those to whom she has been dearest how tenderly we hold them in

our thought. But sorrow is inarticulate, and perhaps it is better so; they know, without the telling, how heart-felt is our sympathy, how deep and true our love.

Nor is it at all a joyless hour, for memories are a potent thing, and the memory of the just is blessed. May the blessed memory that is theirs be strength and solace in the days that lie before, leading them ever, with gentle compulsion, to loftier levels of living; into the ampler ether, the diviner air, of the large places of the spirit. And so she will be with them still, in somewhat of the old-time graciousness, for “to live in hearts we leave behind is not to die”.

“I heard a voice from heaven saying, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”



Wright, Charles B. 1921. "Professor Charles B. Wright Nov. 1 1921 [Funeral statement]." *Walter Deane correspondence*

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