

Letter from a Mourner

Br. Austin:—Two years this day my mother left this for a more congenial clime in that spirit land, where I trust my dear father had preceded her 24 years and 5 days. It is 26 years last Sabbath morning since I was watching the last parting breath of that kind, affectionate father. It had been often said that our faith would not stand the test of the dying hour. A short time previous to his death, I said to him, “Father, does your faith in Universalism remain firm?” “Yes,” said he, “as firm as it ever was.” He was a perfect pattern of patience through a lingering illness of 18 months, and found our faith not only a good doctrine to live by, but his comfort and stay in the last hour. How doubly precious it is when called to part with our best earthly friends!

My dear mother continued to plod on life’s weary journey, until she arrived at the advanced age of 82 years. She loved our blessed faith as she did her life. I believe both my parents endeavored to square their lives by its teachings. It instructed them to extend the hand of charity to the afflicted, and as far as possible to alleviate the suffering. The sick seldom found a kinder friend than my dear mother, and it may with the strictest truth be said of my father that he was what Pope calls that “noblest work of God—an honest man.” He died in Rochester, N. Y., where repose his mortal remains, and where my mother resided many years.

A few years ago she accompanied her daughter to her western home. She died in Mount Vernon, Iowa. There was no preacher of her faith to administer the last sad rites. My feeble sister watched over her failing form many weary months with but very little assistance. But her Heavenly Father gave her strength to fulfill the last filial duties in a land of strangers. It would have been a great gratification to us, (her four daughters) could there have been a sermon preached by her former pastor, Br. G. W. M. [Rev. George Washington Montgomery] of Rochester, whom she loved as a son. But it could not be brought about, and for some cause there was no regular obituary notice written. To her it made no difference. She has gone where earthly things cannot affect her more. But to those left behind it would have been a consolation to have heard such words of comfort as might have been offered in a funeral discourse.

Please bear with me while I take this method of expressing my sincere thanks to Brs. G. W. M. [Rev. George Washington Montgomery] and G. H. R. [George Henry Roberts] of Rochester, for their many kind attentions to her during her sojourn in that city, thereby smoothing her declining years. I am well aware it was a great gratification to her. Thanks also to all friends who contributed to her happiness. She often spoke of her Rochester friends with much affection.

L[asira] I. Torrey

Grand Marsh, Wis., May 4, 1860

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 26 May 1860
(A Universalist weekly publication)