

MARGARET JANE CROSSEN

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

MARGARET JANE HAYDEN was born in London, England, on the 12th day of May, 1832, the daughter of the Rev. William and Jane Kirsop Hayden. Her father was born on 2nd May, 1789, at Marten, Kent County, England, and her mother, Jane Kirsop, at Newcastle, Northumberland County, in 1793. In the year 1835, under the direction of the London Missionary Society, Rev. William Hayden came to Canada with his wife and seven children, and settled in Cobourg, becoming thereby the first Congregational minister of the small town. Shortly after, he started a church at Cold Springs, and, about 1845, he resigned his pastorate at Cobourg and moved to Cold Springs, where he established his family and built a house beside his church, typical, in many respects, of an old English home, with its trees, shrubs and flowers, peaceful and fragrant, a home in the truest sense of the word.

In the Family Record appears this entry in Mr. Hayden's handwriting:

Marriage.—James Crossen, Margaret Jane Hayden, on the 28th April, 1854, by Rev'd William Hayden, Congregational minister at Cold Springs, Township of Hamilton, District of Newcastle, Canada West."

The newly-married couple settled in Cobourg and enjoyed a life of unalloyed love and happiness for over forty-six years, until Mr. Crossen's death, in 1890. Mrs. Crossen survived her husband over ten years, and passed away peacefully and quietly in the early hours of the 18th of April, 1901, in the town to which she had been brought sixty-five years before as a little girl three years old.

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near ;
Oh ! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

This was her favorite hymn, and nothing delighted her more



Yes, these are sacred moments, and this is a sacred place, and well do sacred words become the place and time.

"Standing here in this verge of heaven, we have on one side of us the mystery of death, a dark, sad mystery; but on the other side is the mystery of life. But death is only a negative, a shadow; life is the positive and real thing, and though the shadow may be a dark mystery, feared of all, life, the reality, is a glorious mystery, from whose unfolding we may never hope too much.

"Many thoughts crowd into our minds, and many feelings stir our hearts to-day, and it is not easy to bring our thoughts and feelings into orderly expression. Some few things we may try to say, but much that we would say must be left unsaid. The time is short, and the feeling overbears the thought and word. The common, and at times the all-absorbing, feeling is sorrow. It is with us, in a sense, as it was with the friends and companions of the Great Apostle; as he was leaving them, 'they sorrowed most of all . . . that they should see his face no more.' This is our sorrow to-day, that we shall see that true and kind and noble face no more in this mortal life. Next to the feeling of sorrow is the feeling of sympathy. We weep with those that weep. We are not here as a matter of form and custom. Each one here feels that he has lost a true friend; some of the rich and of the poor say they have lost their best friend, and we know how to sympathize with those who sorrow most, with the tenderest and deepest sorrow of filial yearning

" 'For the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still.'

"As we look back from the close of this life to its beginning and review its several stages, we are moved to admiration and reverence. We admire and revere in her the dutiful daughter, the faithful wife, the loving mother, the true and steadfast friend, the watchful and sympathetic fellow-helper in the truth and in all Christian work, the thoughtful and unobtrusive distributor of God's mercy. Her goodness in this last respect can never be fully known, for she would not let her left hand know what her right hand was doing; but those who knew her best

could not help coming upon her again and again as she was doing good and communicating, and thus offering up the sacrifices with which God is well pleased. 'She hath done what she could.' All these things have been. We must mourn that she has ceased from her labors, but our mourning gives place again to thanksgiving, and we praise God for her beautiful and finished life. 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be His name.' Even in our grief and loss we realize how much better it is,—a thousandfold better—'to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.' p. 2

"We think, too, this day of what she was, as well as what she did, for sometimes we are more helped and uplifted by what God's people are than by what they do. She was a woman of rare simplicity and guilelessness of spirit, and yet if the gospel standard be a true one, she was a woman of rare wisdom, for 'the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.' She was a woman of such profound reverence of spirit and such stainless purity of thought that things profane and unclean could not live in her presence, but would turn from her, as creatures foul and venomous avoid the light of day. Even a thoughtless use of sacred words, or a reference to sacred things, would give her pain that she could not conceal, and no one that knew her would give her pain. This reverence of spirit was united with an artlessness of faith and an assurance of hope in God that brought something of the heavenly into the earthly life of our departed friend. One example and illustration of this I may be allowed to mention. In one of her bad turns she was so reduced and weak that it was feared she would pass away in her sleep. In perfect consciousness of this she yet went quietly asleep with the prayer of her childhood on her lips as her only prayer, 'If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take, and this I ask for Jesus' sake—Amen.' Even so she went asleep at the last, and so sleeps now,—'He giveth his beloved sleep.' Once more I would speak of the crowning grace of our friend in bliss,—her charity. Those who speak from a life-long know-

ledge of her walk and conversation say that they never heard her say an unkind word of anyone. If she must speak in condemnation of the wrong, she would still speak the truth in love. And if she could not close her eyes to the fault and limitations of others, she loved them still with true and tender love, and this love involved her trust in them and hope for them. How often has this love of hers repressed the worse and brought out and strengthened the better self! Such love in her true heart enables us to understand something of the love of God himself, for when we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and if we ever learn to love Him it is because He first loved us.

Our presence here to-day, these beautiful flowers, and our imperfect words, are all intended to express something of our grief and reverence, and very imperfect expressions they would be, though much better than we can make them. But there is another tribute, a nobler tribute, a tribute that would bring her joy in the presence of the angels of God,—the tribute of obedience and imitation. 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,' so said one of old to a revered friend. Shall we pay this tribute to our friend in bliss? Nothing else will satisfy her, nothing less will satisfy our own hearts.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' They 'rest from their labors and their works do follow them.' But those labors never cease; they will be still taken up and carried on by other laborers, till the great coming of the Kingdom of God, when His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. How gladly would those who have so constantly and tenderly cherished this dear life through years of illness—how gladly would they have watched over her still, and kept her back awhile from bliss! God willed otherwise. She is called higher. She has gone to be with Christ, which is far better. But does she cease to live? Is she taken altogether from us? God forbid! Part of her life has passed into us. We look to see it flow on through other lives and deeds, and for the rest, 'beyond the veil! beyond the veil!'

"Whither she has gone we know, and the way we know, for she followed Christ. Taking that same way, we shall come up

with her again and all the blessed company, and we shall find her,

"That friend of ours who lives in God,
That God, who ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

Rev. James Allen, M.A., pastor of the Sherbourne Street Methodist Church, Toronto, and formerly pastor of the church in Cobourg, spoke as follows:

"In the course of my life as a Methodist minister, I have formed many close friendships, and have been associated with many good people in the work of the Church, but I never met a better woman than Mrs. Crossen. I never knew one who did more to brighten the lot and lighten the load of a Methodist minister. Her husband, the late James Crossen, was her equal in this respect. Their superiors I have never known. Methodist ministers move frequently, and a furnished parsonage always forms a part of their stipend. Its character and appointments depend upon the judgment and generosity of the people. A little want of thought, a little want of heart, may subject the minister and his family to much inconvenience and discomfort. To the house in which her minister lived Mrs. Crossen gave both heart and thought. After her own house and household her first thought was of the minister's family. I have said that she was one of the best women I have ever known. If her voice could be heard she would disclaim that character, for she was unconscious of her goodness. She was not a conventional Christian. She could neither speak nor pray in public, but her faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. God was to her a real person, a loving Father, whose will, whose law was more precious than gold. She could taste and see that the Lord was good. Heaven was to her a place, a home more real than her home in town. For years past she lived there as well as here. And she possessed the Spirit of Jesus Christ—the Spirit that envieth not, that thinketh no evil, that suffereth long and is kind."

Mr. Allen offered prayer and the benediction was pronounced by Rev. D. N. McCamus.

The casket was borne out by her son, W. J. Crossen ; her youngest brother, Hon. Fred. J. Hayden, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and her four sons-in-law, Rev. R. N. Burns, of Orillia, W. R. Riddell and C. C. James, of Toronto, and James R. Smith, of Montreal.

The hearse moved away from the family residence, and was followed by a large concourse of people, composed of many relations and friends from this town and other places, the employés of the Car Works and many other citizens of Cobourg.

Mrs. Crossen's departure will be universally lamented, and all would do well to imitate her kindness of heart and generosity of nature.—*Cobourg Sentinel-Star*.

At the close of the memorial sermon, given on Sunday, April 21st, Rev. D. N. McCamus, pastor of the Methodist Church; spoke as follows:

"In the death of Mrs. James Crossen the Methodist Church of Cobourg has lost one of its most faithful and influential members.

"The existence of an overruling and gracious Providence was to Sister Crossen a settled and comforting conviction. As a result, she had a happy and reverent contentment and great hopefulness of heart, qualities invaluable in Christian work, but especially beautiful in their triumph over severe and protracted affliction.

"Her Christian spirit was exhibited in her conversation, which was of a spiritual and charitable nature; in beneficence liberally and wisely bestowed; and in a generous support given to the various departments of religious work.

"Mrs. Crossen was a fine example of a wealthy and progressive Methodist who did not outlive her loyalty and fidelity to the doctrines and ordinances of the Church of her adoption.

"Next to her affectionate interest in her own home, Mrs. Crossen was thoughtful and solicitous for the moral and temporal conditions of her Church and the well-being of the minister and his family."

A-Crossen Family (07-07)

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