

From her childhood spent in the country, Mary Applegarth was blessed by a love and appreciation for nature and the outdoors. She used to enjoy long walks in Gwynns Falls Park and around Loch Raven, and in later life took great pleasure in riding with her friends over the local countryside and for greater distances.

During her later years, Mary Applegarth often said that there remained only one thing she could do for the Meeting she loved, and that was to pray for it. She was constant in bringing the Meeting into the Light, in holding its welfare up to God in loving petition. Her concern strengthened her prayer, and her prayer strengthened her concern; and, springing from both, there arose in her a rare sensitiveness to the needs of the Meeting and of its members.

Grandma believed deeply that the Meeting had a work to do and a message to speak forth. In later years she could not bear the messages brought by the Friends who ministered, yet she felt deeply the need in the Meeting for the spoken word. She was earnestly concerned that her Lord be lifted up, and that He be made the ground and inspiration of all that was said, so that none who came seeking the Bread of Life would be sent empty away. She seemed to feel that the New Testament commandment to "preach the Gospel" was especially laid upon our Meeting and its members, and in her quiet way, as a true elder, she made sure that this obligation was held before our attention.

It was her affectionate concern for the welfare of each one which endeared her to all. She was always the one who observed the presence of visitors in the Meeting and hastened to make them welcome with gentle, friendly words. Thus her outgoing concern drew strangers to the Meeting, even as it warmed and upheld the members.

Of her service, Anna B. Thomas wrote to her in June of 1943, "I thought of thee and of all thy quiet work among our members which seems to me the most truly pastoral work that our Meeting does."

It was Mary Applegarth's custom to frequently invite Friends and members of the Meeting to her home. Here there was always, in addition to gracious hospitality and happy fellowship, her gentle insistence that her guests think together of the Meeting, and of the task which was laid upon each of us in regard to the Meeting as a means of giving forth the Christian message. Her searching questions and her counsel, coming as they did out of her consecrated life, have had an influence upon many in this Meeting which will continue through the years, and the seed she sowed in quiet talk over the dining table continues to bear fruit in surprising places.

Years of inward prayer had lent to this Friend a quality of luminous serenity. To be with her, or even to sit near her in Meeting, was to be drawn oneself into a deeper sense of worship, which was not immediately dissipated when the Meeting was ended.

Surely, "many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." And "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto perfect day."

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*Ruth H. Parker,
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