

66
"Whether the thoughts & feelings of my lady Lincolns will
give as much pleasure to those who get them, as to me who
bestow is a consideration" - Quise, My Dear Maria, that
sympathy was there between your physical & mental ex-
pressions when you wrote the letter, from which the above
is quoted? - Or I should rather have termed it an
instinct than a copy-book, which produced such a
spontaneous overflowing of vivid and agreeable thoughts.
We have bible authority too, for believing the highest
aspirations of mind ^{may} take place when the body is inert
as the prophet, vision visited him when he lay in a
trance with his eyes open" - now this might be a dan-
gerous argument to those who are inclined to indulge laziness
- but to you who always feel that you should be doing
something, a word of encouragement may be given to change
your occupations as the spirit moves.

I am a little in doubt My Dear Maria, whether you have
found out the weak point in my character, or are only giv-
ing me, when you fancy me so little vulnerable to praise.
Believe me dear, not a word of commendation that drops from
your pen or lips but finds its way to my heart. all I can
honestly claim is unquestioned, and the rest is to be sowed
a cultivated & cultivated for a new growth of approbation.
as you ever that you love in proportion to the worth of
your friends. I once knew a whimsical old lady, who
declared she never liked a person who was not beau-
tiful, but she had such an accommodating taste that
she believed saw the human face divine in which she
could not see some beauty. now you are quite as ingenious

in pointing out the good points in characters, to satisfy your
benevolent likings. For instance, you give me credit for a
very judicious letter you wrote to Sally Cohen, because I men-
tioned to you how much they stood in need of comfort. I held
up a mirror and you praise me for the beauties you
saw reflected in it - but I like the kind of self-examina-
tion which led to this conclusion, and often find pleasure & profit
in tracing back an idea to its source. It is there we see the
mechanism of our own minds, from the minutest thought
to the highest aspiration, our souls are capable of attaining -
even to the bright hopes which carry us beyond our present
state & being. I do not know my dear sister, whether we are
ever justified, in thinking "it would have been better for us, that
we had not been born" - for we were created by a merciful
and benevolent being, and the gift of life is certainly
a blessing, since it is unimpaired by the exercise of facul-
ties so wonderful & productive of happiness, and yet so
limited as to leave us dependent on God for the perfecting
of all our works, and as far as we can comprehend his
goodness, we must believe the desire to do his will to the
best of our knowledge & abilities, are acceptable. We are
told all may approach God, who have "clean hands and
a pure heart" - and tho' men differ so materially in various
points of religious belief, and keep up such a perpetual
warfare, in flesh & in spirit, we see daily the manifestation
of divine love, and care extended equally over all
the creation. Men in every clime, & nation, acknowledge
God the creator, and the sincerity of heart in which they
strive to honor him, is more in his sight - than the forms
by which their devotion is visible. Yet my sister, I do not hold
lightly the laws & ceremonies of external religion - and feel
bound by the moral dispensation as the guide of my life,
while I respect the opinions of other creeds, and believe the
gates of heaven equally open to all. And are good -

and our beloved Ben with tender messages. I have got to
the end of my paper, without saying half I intended. but
John, has heard the clock strike and he comes in with head hint
just with the costers & other preparations for dinner, and as
Sunday is the privileged day for his class to claim long after
noon. I must give him the table. Adieu My dear Sister
Mary God Bless you with all that can contribute to your
happiness. and keeps you secure in the possession of all his

25



Mrs Benjamin Grath
Leffington Key

truly has already bestowed on you, is most fervently
the wish of your Attached Rh -

May 5th -

The Cobens desire you will accept their love, they are
very sad, have never been out of their house, and seemed
unable to be comforted, now girls they have other causes for grief
besides the loss of their beloved mother