

The CONTINENT

JULY 19, 1923



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By JOHN TIMOTHY STONE

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AN EDITORIAL

Hester and Ronald's Mystery Man
By MYRA A. WONN

Next Week—The Continent's Annual Educational Number—Helpful
Articles on School and College Problems

THE CONTINENT

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Nettie Fowler McCormick—1835-1923

THAT IT IS a ready and easy solace for grief to write the praises of those who have gone from us, is a thoughtless impression which the endeavor quickly disproves. It may be easy, under the indulgent impulses of charity, to set down flattering commonplaces respecting some of whom justice, if unrestrained, would speak severely. But of a great character—especially a character great for goodness—to which one would fain do the happier justice of an adequate appreciation, it is far from easy to frame the appraising words which love knows to be deserved. It is not merely that words at best serve poorly to picture the graces of a beautiful soul; there also rises to hinder speech that imperative reticence which true virtue by its characteristic unconsciousness of merit imposes most positively on those who best know and most admire it.

Who thus would dare to praise a saint to his face for saintliness? Or who would think by compliments to reward the ministries which, unimpelled by even the purpose to be good, flow spontaneously from the very greatness of a great heart? Over all sincere goodness there spreads the sheen of a modest simplicity which it is impious to tarnish with the breath of adulation. So it is that of the best men and women we know there is least to be said, either in their presence or in their absence, of qualities which set them apart from the average standards of humanity. To praise them as they merit would be fulsome, and in the end we find it needful to distinguish our most reverential tributes of esteem by an ascetic restraint, in sharp contrast with the facile flatteries of polite society. The loftiest praise becomes the scantest; the fewest words are weightiest with the import of love.

Nor is this restraint removed when their ears are no longer open to hear whose naive humility we have in their lifetime feared to offend by too free a revealment of our admiration. It is not ours indeed to affirm that even now they do not hear—and if they do, their modesty has not dropped from them in the great transition. But if of their sensibilities we need no longer take account, there remains the sacred memory into which the power of their example is now transformed, and upon that memory it no more befits honor and affection to intrude than upon the living personality while it was yet with us. What was incongruous with the simple self-forgetfulness in which a great friend dwelt among us here, is still incongruous with the recollections which love would retain of every trait that made the wonder of a beloved life.

This was the thought which, as all the great throng present must have felt, dominated the funeral services held in Fourth church, Chicago, around the bier of that great-souled Christian philanthropist, Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick, Senior. How abundant the eulogies that might have been spoken there within the wide limits of veritable truth! How much might have been told of clairvoyant sympathies which always understood so perfectly the conditions of other lives and knew so well what to do for their needs; of missionary vision to which the opportunities and necessities of lonely rural coves among the southern mountains and of great educational centers amid the teeming millions of the orient were equally vivid; of a gracious and queenly good will which extended without consciousness of class to every sort and condition of men; of a lifelong religious faith cast in no formulas and ruled by no rites but expressed in its wholeness by all her living; of herself, poised, serene, unshaken, and always more minded for the concerns and welfare of others than for her own.

But none of these things were spoken. Rather the two ministers conducting the solemnities of the hour—Dr. J. G. K. McClure, her pastor in middle life, and Dr. John Timothy Stone, her pastor in the later years—interpreted the significance of her life better than any human eulogy could have done as they repeated verse after verse from the words of Scripture which this frail-strong woman of God had illustrated by her deeds or confirmed by her faith. Think what it means of profound Christian living when at the end one may read at a coffin side the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and be sure of silent antiphonal assent from every one who hears: "That was like her." She gave and she had love—and it profited her everything. "Faith, hope, love"—she possessed them all, and in her also "the greatest of these was love." Praise from men may well be hushed where the comparison of the word of God testifies so eloquently and so sufficiently to the authentic fact of a God-governed life.

Mrs. McCormick lived through more than one period of stress and strain as respects both social and religious problems. And she was no stranger to any of the great questions that were debated in her time. Nor was she without her own opinions. But no matter or manner of controversy ever made her the foe of anybody. Her crystal soul comprehended in every instance the sincere conviction of both sides and gave to each the credit of truth-loving—which was her complete deliverance from antipathy and prejudice. It followed necessarily that none held prejudice against her. In a station of life open to many of the animosities generated by the conflicting interests of classes, she was victim of none of them; everybody believed in her. As an illustration of the solvent power of simple Christian character—the answer to human misunderstandings which shines in the white light of a true discipleship of Christ—her life, first and last, was in itself a luminous evangel.

In the sphere of the church Mrs. McCormick was equally immune from the divisive suspicions so commonly generated where theologians fall into controversial war. In her personal faith there were no novelties; the Christian fundamentals taught her in her girlhood and accepted in her first consecration to Christ sufficed for her sustenance to the end. But she entertained no dread of the progress of Christian thought; she never feared the inquiries of reverent students into the ways of God, nor imagined the truth imperiled when the message of religion was retold in new terms to apply to a changing age. One of the greatest enthusiasms of her life was the preparation of young men for the gospel ministry, and that enthusiasm took pride in many different types of men among those engaged in theological instruction and among the products of that education. For the common factor among all these types which commanded her confidence and contented her hope was the uniting loyalty of them all to Jesus the Christ—her Saviour and the one Master in whom she trusted for herself and for a troubled world. Could an equal sense of the supremacy and sufficiency of the life in Christ pervade the church at large, disunity and disloyalty among the followers of the Man of Nazareth would alike be forever unknown.

Of Mrs. McCormick's relation to *The Continent*, it is appropriate here to speak but a word, but that word may not be casual. Whatever this journal has done for the church is an added credit on her life record. Dr. Gray often related that when he was at his wits' end to save

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HALF CENTURY OF SERVICE BY OYSTER BAY ORGANIST

NEW YORK CITY—The fiftieth anniversary of its organist, Commodore William L. Swan, was celebrated by Oyster Bay church July 8. In his address, the organist stated that during his period of service he had had over 250 people in his choir. Mr. Swan serves from love of the work, and in conjunction with his sister, Mrs. T. S. Young of New York, gave the present organ to the church. Dr. Henry R. Fancher, pastor, preached the anniversary sermon.

The Victorious Life Conference is in session at Stony Brook Assembly this week, from July 14 to 22. The Bible school workers' conference will open July 25, under leadership of the Brooklyn Sunday School Union in conjunction with Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties Sunday school associations.

Friends of Dr. John H. Kerr, pastor of Arlington Avenue church, Brooklyn, are congratulating him upon not losing his life when he fought with a burglar whom he found in his house late in the afternoon of July 9. After a terrific struggle the man overcame the frail pastor and departed, leaving Dr. Kerr badly injured and unconscious. Immediately on regaining full consciousness, Dr. Kerr sent out through his wife a message of forgiveness for the burglar who had so injured him. The manse was ransacked from top to bottom and jewelry and clothing to the amount of \$1,500 was taken.

Children's Aid Asks for Funds

The Children's Aid Society, the first organization in this country to establish summer fresh air homes for poor city children just half a century ago, is making an appeal for funds to carry on its work this summer. Ten dollars will give a crippled or sick child two weeks in one of the society's homes.

Ainslie Street church in Brooklyn has invited to its pastorate Rev. William Asher of Winona Lake, Ind. Mr. Asher and his wife were for many years on the staff of the late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman and made two evangelistic tours of the world with him. More recently they have been on the staff of Billy Sunday. Mr. Asher is expected to take up his new work about the first of September.

BRIEF ITEMS—A "business women's friendly

meeting" every Wednesday noon has been opened in Chelsea church in West 23d street. Lunch is served for 25 cents, followed by a brief talk and music. The work is under auspices of the "friendly league for Christian service."—Dr. J. B. Clark, over forty years secretary of the Congregational Home Missionary Society, died in Brooklyn July 10, aged 86.—Dr. William Adams Brown of Union Seminary has completed a course of lectures at the theological schools of Strasbourg and Paris, in which he discussed present-day religion in the United States. The lectures were arranged by the Federal Council's commission on relations with France and Belgium.—Flushing church has voted to add a kitchen extension to its building, to be finished in early fall.—The handsome new building of Flatbush church will be dedicated Oct. 14. The religious education building is to have a special dedicatory service of its own the following Sunday.

Mrs. W. H. Bissland Is Dead

Mrs. William H. Bissland of St. Louis, for five years president of the Women's Board of Foreign Missions of the Southwest, died at St. Louis July 9. Funeral services were held in



Mrs. W. H. Bissland

West church, St. Louis, July 12. The members of the southwest district committee of the Foreign Board attended in a body, and the district offices were closed during the funeral. During Mrs. Bissland's administration of the Southwest Board gifts from the district to foreign missions were almost trebled. When the board was succeeded by the district committee of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, about three years ago, Mrs. Bissland was elected chairman of the district committee. "The Southwest Board," one of the six women's boards of the church, was organized in 1877 as an auxiliary to both the Home and the Foreign Boards of the Assembly, but in 1892 it began devoting itself exclusively to foreign work. At this time it had twenty-three societies. In 1920, while Mrs. Bissland was president, the twenty-three had increased to 1,414. Some of the contributing members of societies affiliated with the Southwest Board have been Christian Indian women of the southwestern states.

Mrs. McGilvary of Siam Dies

Mrs. Sophia McGilvary, missionary in Siam for over fifty-three years, and widow of Rev. Daniel McGilvary, died at her post in Chiang-mai July 4 aged 83. Mrs. McGilvary and her husband in 1867 founded Chiangmai station in northern Siam, and at the time were known as the most remote and isolated missionaries in the world.

Mrs. McGilvary was born at Bangkok in 1839, her parents being Dr. and Mrs. Daniel B. Bradley, missionaries to Siam under the American Board, who had remained there after that board gave up its mission. In 1860 she married Rev. Daniel McGilvary, who had come to Siam under the Presbyterian Foreign Board. She organized the first Christian school among the Lao and the first convert among the Lao received his first word of the gospel from her. She also found time to translate the first gospel into the Lao language.

When Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary were home in 1905, her health was so poor the physicians reported she could live only a short time. Dr. McGilvary was also far from well, and the board urged them to accept retirement. But they begged to be allowed to die on the field, and they were returned. Dr. McGilvary died in 1911, aged 83.

—The call announced in Calendar and Record of July 12 to Rev. Fred Wonder should have been to the church at Hillsdale, Mich., not Stockbridge. Rev. J. A. Adair is the pastor at Stockbridge.

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