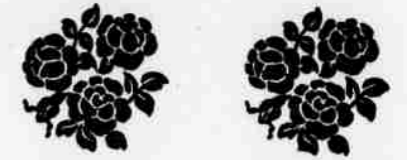


EDITORIAL



"THE SONG OF THE STONE WALL."

"I understand the triumph and the truth
Wrought into these walls of rugged stone,
They are a miracle of patient hands.
They are a victory of suffering, a paean of pain.
All pangs of death, all cries of birth,
Are in the mute moss-covered stones;
They are eloquent to my hands."

THUS SINGS HELEN KELLER in that rare poem which, under the title, "The Song of the Stone Wall," was published in the December Century. That one whose eyes cannot see a single thing that God has made, whose ears cannot distinguish a sound, and whose tongue is practically mute, should write such verse is so wonderful as to be both silencing and thrilling. It proves the regal pre-eminence and heaven-born might of a soul which has but one window opening to the great material world around. Curtained off from the sights and sounds which make up the life of most poor mortals, it sits at the casement of its one open window, looks out with eyes which see the invisible, hears with ears which hear the unheard and then under a divine impulse sends out through that one window a message which is from God Himself. Such is the soul of Helen Keller. Hence, we have "The Song of the Stone Wall." As we read it, we find ourselves bowing in reverence before God who makes Affliction a white-winged messenger of Truth and Love.

"They are eloquent to my hands." Helen Keller is the only one of God's poets who ever used such words. Those hands unlock her soul window. She says:

"From my seat among the stones I stretch my hands and touch
My friend, the elm, urn-like, lithesome, tall;
Far above the reach of my exploring fingers
Birds are singing and winging joyously
Through leafy billows of green.
The elm-tree's song is wondrous sweet;
The words are the ancientest language of trees;
They tell how earth and air and light
Are wrought anew to beauty and to fruitfulness.
I feel the glad stirrings under her rough bark;
Her living sap mounts up to bring forth leaves;
Her great limbs thrill beneath the wand of spring."

Reader, there is a stone wall in every life. Somewhere on the slope of the hill-side or in the stretch of the meadow it halts the footsteps. There is a song of the stone wall in every life. With many the song is only a mournful threnody in which the heart sobs out its grief or voices its sad and indignant protests against the unyielding barrier. The uneven surfaces, the dark crevices, the ugly stains, the jagged points of human experience furnish ready material for the flowing numbers. The notes mingle with those of a world that is travelling in the throes of sin. We grow sadder and harder, and the stone wall looms higher and uglier.

Would it not be well for us all, now that our ears have caught the first voices of the coming Christmas-tide, to bend our ears a little more eagerly to the voice of the Eternal One and strain our eyes to catch the hidden beauties of every stone, be it never so rough and stained, which may lie in our pathway? Would it not be well for us to walk with Helen Keller to the crest of the hill, wander along the old stone wall, inhale the scent of the apple-blossoms, enter the "dim sanctuary of the pines" where the "winds murmur their

mysteries through dusky aisles"—and see with her eyes and hear with her ears?

There was a stone wall in her life, mind you. Oh! how rough and appalling it would seem to us! There were rifts which were ugly, angles which tortured the soul, and jagged edges which cut the feet as the mute, eyeless, and earless girl groped among the shadows of a seeming curse. Yet she made the old stone wall on the crest of the New England hill a symbol of her own suffering and, by the grace of that God who supplies the soul with vision, hearing, and speech, she was enabled to see in the stone wall in her life's valley the glory which she saw in the stone wall on the hill-top. Hear her as, with radiant face and in victorious tones, she sings:

"With searching feet I walk beside the wall;
I plunge and stumble over the fallen stones;

The sunbeams flit and waver in the rifts,
Vanish and re-appear, linger and sleep,
Conquer with radiance the obdurate angles.
Filter between the naked rents and wind-bleached jags."

THE MOST NOTABLE BENEFACTION ON RECORD.

READ THE FOLLOWING and see if you cannot find in it much to make you glad! Not a cent of the \$30,000,000 comes to Methodism, yet because it goes to worthy objects Methodism is glad. It is the most notable benefaction ever recorded, and it should be published far and wide:

"The death of John Stewart Kennedy, on October 31st, in New York City, and the announcement that in his will he gave \$30,000,000 to various worthy benevolences, brings into sharp contrast the recent passing away of a multi-millionaire railroad king, whose wealth, amounting to over a hundred million dollars, was left in bulk to his widow. Mr. Kennedy's money is clean money—every dollar of it—and the care exercised in dividing it among the different causes adds worth to the bequests. The Presbyterian Church, of which the benefactor was a member, will feel the impetus of his gifts for years to come. The following are the causes and the amounts:

"Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, \$2,250,000; Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, \$2,250,000; Presbyterian Church Extension Fund, \$2,250,000; Presbyterian Hospital, New York, \$2,250,000; Robert College, Constantinople, \$1,500,000; Presbyterian Board of Aid for Colleges, \$750,000; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, \$2,250,000; New York Public Library, \$2,250,000; Columbia University, \$2,250,000; United Charities, New York, \$1,500,000; American Bible Society, \$750,000; Charity Organization Society, New York, \$750,000; Yale College, \$100,000; Amherst College, \$100,000; Williams College, \$100,000; Dartmouth College, \$100,000; Bowdoin College, \$100,000; Hamilton College, \$100,000; University of Glasgow, Scotland ('Where from my infancy I resided until I came to this country'), \$100,000; Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, \$100,000; Hampton Normal School and Agricultural Institute, \$100,000; Lafayette College, Easton, Pa., \$50,000; Oberlin College, Oberlin, O., \$50,000; Wellesley College, \$50,000; Barnard College, \$50,000; Teachers' College (Columbia University), \$50,000; Elmira College for Women, Elmira, N. Y., \$50,000; Northfield Seminary, Northfield, Mass., \$50,000; Mount Hermon Boys' School, Gill, Mass., \$50,000; Anatolic College, Marsovan, Turkey, \$50,000; Syrian Protestant College, Beirut, Syria, \$25,000; American School at Smyrna, Turkey, now un-

der the care of the Rev. Alexander Mac-Leachlan, \$20,000; Lake Forest University, Lake Forest, Ill., \$25,000; Center College, Danville, Ky., \$25,000; Berea College, Kentucky, \$50,000; Presbyterian Board of Relief for Disabled Ministers, \$30,000."

SEVERAL ENCOURAGING FACTS.

ON COMPILING for the 1910 Southern Handbook, which will be issued from the press at Nashville early in January, the statistics of Southern Methodism we have noticed several encouraging facts.

(1) There is a large increase in the number of men received on trial. In some Conferences, the size of the class admitted is simply wonderful. The tide, we believe, has turned. The cry of a shortage in the Methodist ministry is becoming fainter. The Lord of the Harvest is sending forth laborers unto His harvest.

(2) The year 1909 will show a large gain in membership over last year. Very few Conferences report a decrease. A majority of the Conferences report an increase running up into the thousands.

(3) The figures show a steady increase in the size of pastors' salaries. The Handbook will contain a Table which will show, among other things, the large increase in pastors' salaries in the last decade.

(4) An unusual spirit of liberality in gifts to Home Missions is apparent.

(5) The Woman's Societies have simply "done themselves proud" during 1909. The sum total paid by the Woman's Home Mission Societies will be a joyful surprise to the Church.

NOTICE.

ONLY MR. W. C. NEWTON, Raleigh, N. C., and the pastors in the North Carolina Conference, are the authorized agents of the Raleigh Christian Advocate. Our subscribers should keep this in mind. They will be informed when we employ other agents.

A writer in a recent issue of the Nashville American suggests, in substance, that it would be well for a committee of intelligent gentlemen to appear before the General Conference at Asheville to enlighten our law-makers on the educational question, especially with reference to the "absurd" policy of Southern Methodism in confining Vanderbilt University and our other institutions within the "narrow limits" of church ownership and control. This would be positively amusing did it not touch one of the most serious questions to be adjudicated by the General Conference. We make the prediction, that, should such a Committee of Enlightenment appear before our General Conference, it would depart an "Enlightened" Committee in a sad and peculiar sense.

The Charlotte Evening Chronicle, with its usual wisdom, avers that the proprieties demand that church controversies be confined to the church papers. True, if the controversies be necessary. We have noticed a disposition on the part of some church people to exploit the secular papers to the exclusion of the church papers. Since the church paper reaches more people of its denomination than does the secular, the Raleigh Christian Advocate, for instance, reaching twice as many Methodist families as any secular paper in North Carolina, it would seem that the policy of exploiting the secular paper indicates a stronger desire for general publicity than for reaching the church people. Such a desire does not speak well for the church.