

# A SON'S DEEP TRIBUTE TO HIS VENERABLE MOTHER

(Continued from Page 1)

Congregational ministry at a Birmingham college, brought home with him a young Welsh theological student hailing from a remote farmhouse in Pembrokeshire. They fell in love, and when, soon after, Edwin Simon got his first charge in the Hulme district of Manchester, they were married in the little chapel at Rubery, near to her Worcestershire home.

To the end of her days she used to dwell, with the flush of a bride still on her cheek, on the details of this village wedding. She had been teaching a class of small children, and, unknown to her, her pupils arranged to strew Spring flowers in her path. It was her husband's birthday, and she chose the day because she considered that the anniversary had never been properly honored down in Wales.

There are many happy marriages, thank goodness, and this union of nearly fifty years was certainly one of them. The young couple were both of them country-born and country-bred, and there is not much rus in urbe in Hulme. But they entered on their task with zest and incomparable devotion. It was before the days of organized clubs for working boys or mill girls, but they gathered round them all sorts and conditions of young people—clerks in the Manchester warehouses, who had often themselves come from a country home, apprentices to dress-making, servant girls, no less than the daughters of neighbors, and gave them a glimpse of the life beautiful which some still living will always treasure.

She knew her English literature, and there was high debate on Carlyle and Emerson. It was characteristic of her insight that she firmly rejected the view, derived from Froude's account and once so widely accepted, that Jane Welsh must have been unhappily married; and when she visited, years afterward, the gaunt and lonely house on Craigenputtock Moor where "Sartor Resartus" was written, she filled the empty rooms with her vision of the high companionship of man and wife.

She had no singing voice, but she read aloud exquisitely from the poets—the early Tennyson and Jean Ingelow best of all. Any one who heard her tone as it passed through the gamut of "Songs of Seven" or dwelt, in a kind of musing retrospect, on the concluding stanzas of "The High Tide," will not easily forget the experience. Yet her delight in beautiful things did not make her impatient of daily household tasks. She would quote George Herbert:

Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws

Makes that and th' action fine.

She kept up a round of district visiting in a Manchester slum for years, gaily making friends—but never distributing tracts. She was incapable of the pose of a Lady Bountiful bestowing gifts on the needy, and the garments that her busy fingers were always making—for she was a most practical and accomplished needle-woman, usually reading aloud to a family circle as she sewed—always seemed to be given away to a friend, to a real people could be so delightful and friend, whose home troubles she shared and whose children she knew by name. At the little house in Moss Side there was never a Sunday evening when some lonely young man did not find himself invited to supper. And to one small boy she made the home in that grimly suburb a palace of enchantment. It seemed so easy to be good when good people could be so delightful and amusing.

After twelve years of the rigors of the North Country her health could stand it no longer, and there followed twenty years more in the milder climate of Bath. She filled to perfection the difficult role of "the minister's wife" with the endless round of visiting and condoling, with sewing parties and missionary teas. And the wonderful thing was that, notwithstanding her fine sense of values and her sensitive judgment, no one ever left her presence without feeling the better for her bright smile and vivid sympathy.

She had her own way with bores: "If I don't like what he is saying," she declared about a prosy preacher, "I can always plant out my thoughts." Her praise was worth having, for she only gave it when she meant it. She once considerably astonished an earnest band of church workers by declaring how she detested bazaars as a means of raising money.

In 1902 her husband gave up his regular work as a Congregational pastor, and then began the happiest of all the periods in her long life. Once again she lived in the country, first near Mells in Somerset, and afterward near Broadway. There were grandchildren to take care of, grandchildren who had lost their mother. And while her husband was enjoying his fish-ponds and his golf she lived with him through an Indian Summer of serenity which lasted for eighteen years more.

They had always longed to travel, and now they did so. The first sight of Swiss snow, the distant outline of the Rockies—she never lost her girlish ecstasy over each fresh experience. New friends as well as old gathered round, and increasing age made no difference to the bright flame of interest and sympathy which was reflected in her beautiful face.

Then, after her husband died in

1920, came the last phase, spent under the roof of a devoted daughter at Manorbier, which Giraldus Cambrensis (who was born in the Norman castle there) declared to be the "most delightful spot in Wales." She was fond of comparing the place with the description in Matthew Arnold's "Forsaken Mermaid"—and, indeed, the description nearly fits. After middle age she always wore over her silvered hair a cap of special design—the Coiffe de Rospenden—which she had picked out as being the most becoming head-dress during a happy Summer spent in Brittany. Gerald Kelly has reproduced it in two splendid portraits of her, and in each you can see her dignity of poise and "that still look of hers" which all who met her will recognize.

Perhaps it is a mistake for a son, when burying his mother, to wear his heart upon his sleeve. Certain it is that all who had the fortune to know her well felt that her friendship was a perpetual benison, and no description can convey to strangers the flawless impression of fullness of life and sweetness of spirit that she spread around her. In these latest years of peaceful old age she spoke seldom of her husband, but he was always in her thoughts. She was not one to make a mope of sorrow; the beauty of holiness mingled easily with her sense of fun. "I always told your father," she said, "that I must be buried with my wedding ring on my finger; otherwise I might be tempted to flirt with the Archangel Gabriel." When she was laid by his side in the beautiful churchyard at Cheriton, she had her wish.

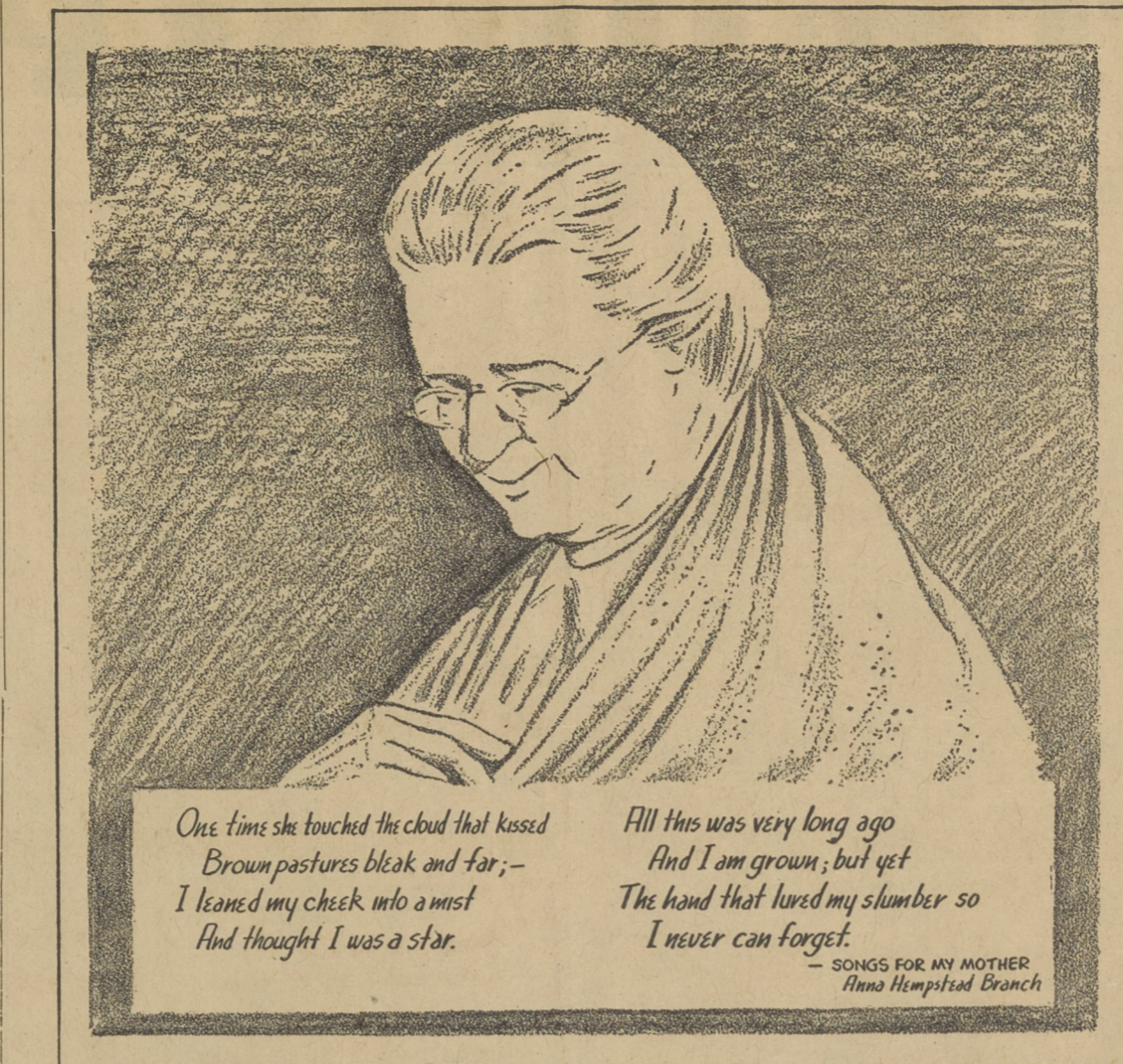
The days that follow the close of such a life bring many messages from those who knew her well, and even from some who once caught a glimpse of her and always retained the impression. Sympathizing friends often hesitate to write, wondering if silence is not best. But letters such as these do not only bring consolation; they fill in the line of a character, and they show that the picture is not overdrawn, or merely charged with emotional feeling.

"I only saw her once," writes one. "It was during the war, just before I went with my division to France. A preacher had been 'trafing' the Germans in unmeasured terms and I had caught the tone. I shall always keep in mind what she said to me." Here is another: "You made a fine election speech that night, but I have forgotten it all; what I remember so well is your mother's face as she sat on the platform."

It was often so, though she was entirely unconscious of the effect she was making, and was incapable of striving for it. She was a Puritan of the old school, and it was only in later life that she sometimes went to the theatre. On these rare visits to the play her enjoyment was that of an absorbed and delighted child. Sitting with her in the stage box to see the revival of "The Professor's Love Story," I was handed a note at the end of the second act from Harry Irving. It ran: "Who is the old lady you have brought with you who is making Henrietta Watson forget her lines?" At the end of the evening they invited her behind the curtain and treated her like a queen.

In the war years the outside staff at Upton Wold was reduced to one boy, temporarily employed in the garden. He has not seen her for twenty years, and he is a man now, and has moved to a different part of the country; but he writes: "I have met many fine people since those days, but your father and mother stand out in my memory as gentle, good and just. They could be firm, but not mean. What a happy country England would be if employers and employes could only work together as was possible with them."

There was sternness in her, for she was much too strong a character not to speak plainly of cruelty and wrong, but her power of rebuke lay far more in letting you know that she was grieved than in any denunciation, and the bright smile of



One time she touched the cloud that kissed  
Brown pastures bleak and far;—  
I leaned my cheek into a mist  
And thought I was a star.

All this was very long ago  
And I am grown, but yet  
The hand that lured my slumber so  
I never can forget.

— SONGS FOR MY MOTHER  
Anna Humphreys Branch

her gratitude for a service was like the bestowal of a rich reward. To the kind soul who tended her so lovingly in her last illness and discharged for her the intimate duties of the sick room she whispered: "When I go to heaven (and I hope I may), I shall run straight to the Throne of God and tell Him how good you have been to me and ask Him to reward you openly!"

One of her lifelong passions was devotion to her garden—not the mere pleasure of directing and enjoying the result (which some one has described as the satisfaction of being "gardened to"), but a keen delight in carrying out her own plan with her own hands and "making things grow."

She taught her children, and many other children, too, everything she could about English wild flowers, and for many years used to exchange letters with one of her brothers whenever either of them came across an unusual species. Her copy of "Flowers of the Field" still holds within its leaves some treasured specimens.

One who fifty years ago was starting his business life amid the bricks and mortar of Manchester recalls today how she showed him a sundew she had found in a Derbyshire ramble, and how her enthusiasm fired him to search for a similar plant till he found one on the moors above Glossop and proudly carried to her his prize.

This longing to bring some share of country joys to young people whose work tied them to the city was always urging her on. For years her husband and she organized and carried through a May-Day festival in the ugly school rooms attached to the Manchester chapel. Hampers of flowers and of moss were sent up from her Worcestershire home to deck out the building, and there were competitions to encourage writers of verse and prose, and a meeting to celebrate the annual miracle of returning Spring.

The hour of festival was 6 o'clock in the morning; for when it was over, Manchester work people had to be at business betimes. I well remember hurrying down with her in the dawn for the final preparations; the "knocker-up," with his long pole, was still going his rounds along the empty streets.

Our garden at Bath was only a small one, and she grudged the space that was taken up with kit-

chen vegetables. Her husband, who believed in making a practical use of much of the ground, found one morning that she had been out as soon as it was light in order to dig a proper corner, and had nailed up on the trunk of an adjoining pear tree the text, with Bible reference all complete: "Cursed be he who removeth his neighbor's landmark."

Gardening tasks with stool and basket, with gloves and clippers and

trowel, remained her joy to the very end. She explained the shortcomings of an unsuccessful candidate for the post of personal companion by saying, with a delicious twinkle: "You see, it was not her fault, but the poor thing didn't know the difference between the weeds and the plants!"

Here is a sketch of her written a few years ago: "An aged face, beautiful and tender, waxen white, and lined with sorrow and care, but

so quiet and peaceful, so old and yet in heart so young, so trustful. The little children say 'we love to play with her because she loves to play; she doesn't only play because we like it'—and the little children are right. She does love to play and is so joyous and cheery. So much sorrow has she known, but there is always room for another's sorrow, always time to listen to another's troubles and to give a helping word.

"Now her life is calm and easy, but I doubt if she is happier than when it was crowded and difficult. Those hands have known hard work and they worked willingly and cheerfully for those she loved. She is so frail that one is fearful that a breath would cause that white candle to flicker out. It will go out one day, but so softly and gently that we shall not realize that it is going until we feel the dark."

What was the secret of the impression which she made on so many, even on those who saw her but once and yet could not forget the meeting? Her personality shone through every word and glance, but it was the sense she instantly gave you that what she felt and said was the just expression of her calm, brave, sensitive spirit which gripped the heart. She did not need to insist, or repeat, or underline; her strength lay in her quietness; if she had praise to give, one thrilling smile expressed it all; if she had to chide, she never nagged.

Nearly sixty years ago we were walking, mother and child, hand in hand, down the street which led to our Manchester home. A group of small boys of about my own age, strolling along in manly independence, passed us on the pavement, and a glance from one of them prompted me to withdraw my fingers. I hoped she had not noticed the cowardly action and was relieved that she said nothing about it as we walked on.

As we turned in at our gate I took her hand again. She paused and said very gently: "My little boy, never be ashamed to hold my hand. A son is never too old to hold his mother's hand."

It was so like her to have said

## Clark D. Bishop Buried At Noxen

### Former Director Had 43 Great-Grandchildren

The funeral of Clark D. Bishop, 79, who died Sunday morning following an illness of complications, was held Wednesday afternoon from the late home in Noxen with services in charge of Rev. E. M. Greenfield of Hawley, a former pastor of the Noxen church.

Mr. Bishop was born in Rush, Susquehanna county, the son of the late John and Matilda Gibbs Bishop. While still a young man he engaged in the lumber business in Wyoming County with his father. The great part of his life was spent in Noxen where he was carpenter-foreman for the J. K. Mosser Tanning Company for more than 34 years.

He served as school director in Noxen Township for a number of years and was at one time constable. His wife preceded him in death some years ago, and his daughter, Mrs. John McKenna, a teacher in the Noxen schools, died about five years ago.

Surviving are the following children: Mrs. Thomas Patton, Noxen; Mrs. Burton Waltman, Mrs. F. B. Anderson, Long Island, N. Y.; Miss Angie Bishop, Wilkes-Barre, and Voyle Bishop, Johnson City, N. Y.; 30 grandchildren and 43 great-grandchildren.

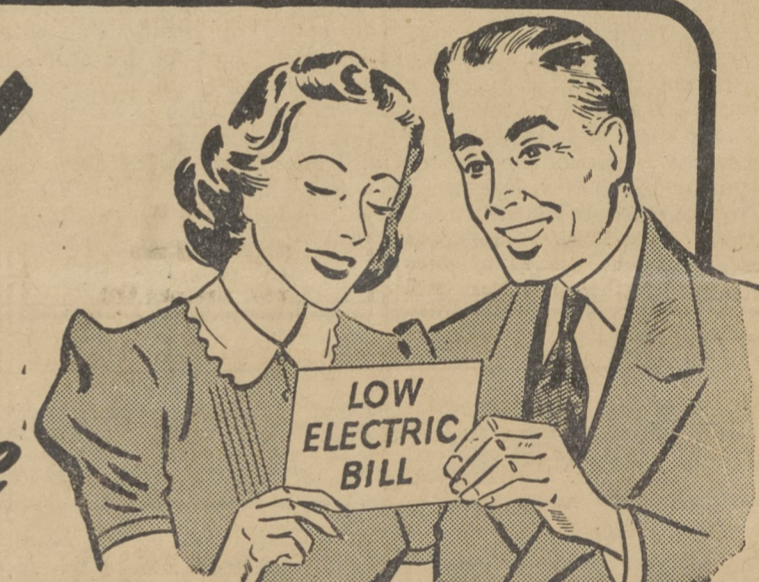
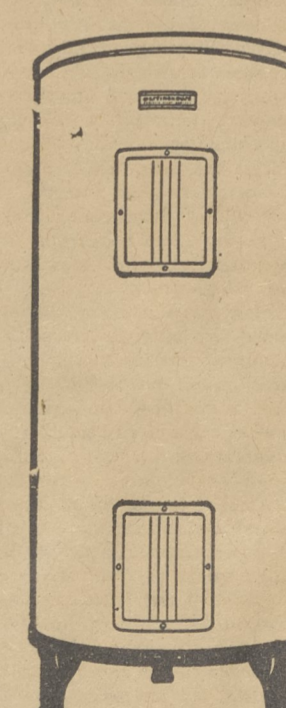
Interment was in the family plot at Orcutt's Grove cemetery.

nothing till my disloyalty sought to make amends. She never referred to the incident again; I am sure that within an hour it had passed completely from her mind, for with her to forgive was indeed to forget. But with her remorseful 6-year-old the memory endured. It came back for the last time with that handclasp that means so much when the dying can speak no more.

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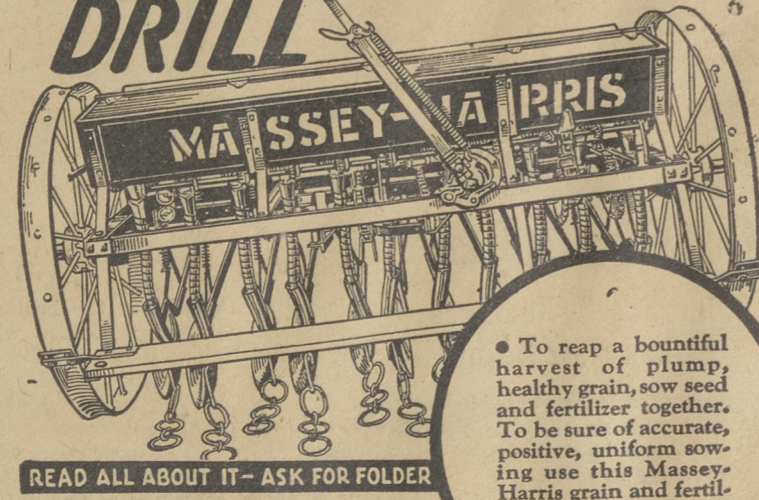
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