

CHRIST'S BEAUTIFUL VOLUNTEER

by John L. Hill

Introduction -

Sources - Miss Mather - Mrs. James - Personal Observation

I. Beautiful In Endowment

1. Parentage

Mother - Mattie Calendine, traced her ancestry back to the Mayflower. From the Colonial Period to the present her people--the Clarks, Betts, Scudders, Chadwicks, and Calendines have represented the best in American life.

Father - Jonathan McGee Heck, born on an estate in Western Virginia (near Morgantown), given his grandfather by Congress as reward for services in the Revolutionary War. The Hecks came to this country early in 18th Century from the Palatinate in search of religious freedom. Jonathan was a graduate of Rector College, Penn., and a successful young lawyer at the opening of the Civil War. He promptly cast his fortunes with his native state and enlisted at great personal sacrifice in the Confederate Army. He was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel of the 31st Virginia Regiment and was a member of the Virginia Legislature which signed the Ordinance of Secession.

Fannie was born June 16, 1862 at Buffalo Lithia Springs, Virginia, where her mother had gone that she might hear more often from her soldier husband and perhaps see him occasionally. Her home here was a two-roomed whitewashed cottage; her attendant a faithful Negro Mammy. She named her baby Fannie for her own little sister back home and gave her the other name, Exile, because she was born during mother's exile from home and husband. When Fannie grew to womanhood and became so intensely interested in missions, she added the name of her great-grandmother Scudder, whose family had many distinguished missionaries. So her full name became Fannie Exile Scudder Heck, always signed Fannie E. S. Heck.

2. Her Cultural Advantages

The home in Raleigh, the "City of Oaks," was handsome, hospitable, wealthy. The household consisted of father and mother and ten children, of whom Fannie was next to oldest. She was educated at Hobgood Seminary, Raleigh, and at Hollins Institute, Virginia, where Lottie Moon did her undergraduate work.

She had every qualification for a society queen--beautiful in face and form, charming in manner, gifted and accomplished in literary and artistic lines, an expert horsewoman, a crack shot at a target, an accomplished needlewoman in fine embroideries, a skilled woodcarver, and an inventor of at least two articles.

Truly, Fannie Heck was beautiful in Endowments.

II. Beautiful In Dedication

At age of 17 this attractive, winsome young girl gave her heart to Jesus, and deliberately chose to give all that she had in the service of the King of kings, a voluntary worker.

Nothing More Beautiful.

III. Beautiful In Service

1. In Local Church

(1) S.S. Teacher - class of boys of her own set - wonderful influence - after lapse of 39 years, the surviving members of the Class of 1882 presented to the S.S. of the First Baptist Church, Raleigh, a bronze memorial tablet containing this inscription:

In remembrance of Fannie E. S. Heck, Our Teacher, who illustrated precept by example, vitalized letter by spirit, and illuminated truth by life.

This tablet is a memento of the grateful love of a class of boys, who now in mature years count association with her among their greatest blessings.

(2) Missionary - to the poor and underprivileged of her own city

Her afternoon S.S. class
Clothing - Christmas Season
One-Room Church House

2. In Her City - A Citizen of her Town

(1) Charity - one of the organizers of the Associated Charities of Raleigh and for a time its president.

(2) Culture - one of five women who organized the Woman's Club of Raleigh, and was its first president.

She illustrated the truth of the statement, "The light that shines farthest shines brightest at home."

3. In Her State

At age of 20 she was chairman of the first Central Committee to organize and develop the women of North Carolina in missionary work. When N.C. W.M.U. was organized two years later, she was chosen president and served in that capacity till her death - a term of 31 years.

4. In Her Southland

When W.M.U. of S.B.C. was organized in Richmond, Virginia, 1888, she was present as an influential messenger. In 1892, she was elected president, though only 30 years old. She declined reelection on account of illness. She was again chosen president and served 1895-98, and 1906-1915.

To most of us mature people she is the W.M.U.

Her annual addresses set the objectives and ideals of W.M.U., and were followed enthusiastically. Y.W.A., G.A., and R.A., were organized under her. The Training School in Louisville was founded under her leadership and the Margaret Fund for missionaries' children was established during her administration. Her book In Royal Service, the choicest of our mission study books, is a thrilling story of W.M.U. work.

5. In A Wider Sphere

(1) N. C. delegate to Ecumenical Mission Conference, New York, 1900.

(2) Presiding officer, Joint Meetings of women of North and South. Baptist Conventions at Jamestown, Virginia Exposition, 1907.

(3) Represented Baptist Women of America at Baptist World Alliance, Philadelphia, 1911 and delivered a most impressive address.

(4) As Author --

Mission tracts and leaflets

"My Father's House") 100,000
"The Entrusted Letter")

Books

In Royal Service

Manuscripts written in hospital

"Everyday Gladness"
"Sunrise" (Poems)
"The Pageant of the Golden Rule"
"Counterpane Land"
"My Pleasure Book"

IV. Beautiful In Death

Stricken while teaching her S.S. Class -

She said, "I was stricken as lightning falls in the summer from the sky that was clear but a moment before."

She spent a year in Hygeia Hospital, Richmond, Virginia, facing death daily. Her room, the "Blue Sky Room," "Sunshine Corner," "House of Peace," named for its sunshine patient, became the center of that hospital. Doctors, nurses, patients looked upon it as a sacred place where they went to be cheered in hours of depression; while throngs of Southern women turned toward it for inspiration.

Day in and day out, in pain and in weakness, she preached the "Gospel of Joy." Her mind was very active. Writings: "Songs in the Night" until hand too weak to hold pencil.

Observations Sacred

One day they thought she was dying. It was all right, "but what disturbed me most," she said, "was that the months and years I had been with them, they seemed to think I would mind, that I was not true, that my talk about going to Heaven was a mere deception, and when one came to my room with one report and another with another, it stirred, though it seems strange to say, a deep feeling of anger, and as the night went on, this grew, and I tossed back and forth lamenting that I must have been so untrue that I must, as it were, be smuggled into Heaven rather than told that I was to have the privilege of going."

As the weary days passed, Miss Heck longed for her old home and was taken back to Raleigh where she had several happy weeks renewing her acquaintance with the oaks and flowers. surrounded by her loved ones in the handsome home of her youth.

The end came, August 25, 1915, as she had prayed:

Lord, grant me, if thou wilt,

"To slip away
As slips the night
into the dawning gray,
So soft
That e'en the watchers
watching
cannot say:
Here ends the night,
And here begins the day."

But only know
The night's thy night,
The day, thy day.

Beautiful ending of a beautiful life lived for Jesus - love's supreme consecration.