

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Lownes Rust



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1860-1945



Elizabeth L. Rust.

Elizabeth Lownes Rust

Mrs. Mary Haven Thirkield



*"The joy of loyal service to the King
Shone through her days, and lit up other lives."*

Jennings & Pye
Cincinnati
1903

Bancroft

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THE WOMAN'S HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1902

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Elizabeth Lownes Rust

1835-1899

“A distinctive feature of the latter half of the nineteenth century is the development of so many good and true women.” Thus wrote Mrs. Rust of a leader among women, and well do the words fit her own noble, Christlike character. Her ancestry was noted for nobility of life, freedom of thought, and conscientious action. In her blood flowed Scotch purity and strength, united with the sanguine temperament of the Welsh. Her father and mother, coming from the Middle States, and beginning their married life in Baltimore, were both members of the Quaker Brotherhood. Devout in spirit, true to God’s leading, outspoken for the right, generous toward others, quiet and unobtrusive, yet bold and courageous in the hour of duty, they were noble representatives of the Society of Friends.

Born in such a home in 1835, Elizabeth Lownes Rust inherited the sterling integrity and philanthropic spirit of her father, as well as the beauty of feature, fine intellect, and strong character of her mother. The atmosphere of the home surrounded her from infancy with purity and refinement. She unconsciously caught from the parental love and instruction, lessons in the broader sphere of love towards humanity and the wondrous richness of love towards God.

In later years, as I saw the face of that Quaker mother entering the Western home in her simple garb of gray, I perceived the beauty and strength which had enriched the training of Elizabeth. In the early days, across the sea, her family had taken its place among the highest circles, and Mrs. Lownes, in Quaker costume, revealed a queenly presence and royal lineage as truly as though dressed in rustling silk. She had great influence and power in social and religious life. Her home was changed from the East to the West during Elizabeth's childhood, and Ohio welcomed her to its fresh and vigorous life. There the daughter availed herself of the educational advantages in her neighborhood, and graduated from Cooper Seminary, Dayton, in 1853.

Her young womanhood was devoted to helpful lines of service. During the war she was president of a branch of the Sanitary Commission, noted for

its zeal and success in furnishing supplies to armies and hospitals. Keenly alive to the needs of the times, she was eager to enlist in the **Young Womanhood** silent army of home workers, so loyal and effective in their assistance to the brave soldiers in the field.

She developed a strong taste for art, and for several years was engaged as Instructor in Art in the Cincinnati Wesleyan Female College **The Artist** during its earlier history. She greatly enjoyed this contact with youth, and the opportunity to turn their fresh thoughts into noble channels. She gained some recognition as an amateur artist and portrait painter, and in 1871 went abroad for further study. In Paris and Rome she enjoyed special opportunities under the guidance of Madam Marjoli, the sculptor, and Monsieur Jules Richome, the distinguished painter. In Paris she had friendly relations with the families of Drs. De Pressensé and Bercier, the distinguished Protestant divines.

This life in foreign lands and association with master minds was a great joy to her artistic nature. As the hand wielded the brush, and the colors were transferred from the palette to canvas, until the living presence seemed to stand before one, her soul caught the glow of the true artist, her mind was quickened, her whole being enriched. The Italian face, with its bronzed features and scornful eyes, reveal the wicked thought and sinister mind;

the peasant, in his humble toil and simple life, is in vivid contrast to the thoughtful monk wrapped in his gloomy cowl. Elizabeth Lownes reveled in this study of human nature, and brought back to her native land copies from the masters' works and portraits from the living representatives of European nations. Pastoral sketches, full of beauty and grace, were mingled with the deeper studies of face and form, revealing the breadth and depth of her artistic nature. On her return to America, the future was bright with promise. Attractive in person, her mind enriched by foreign travel, cultured and refined, she entered society to win instant recognition. Her skill as a portrait painter was acknowledged, and her moments were full of work and full of joyous hope.

Here love came in and changed her plans. She left the studio for the home; the easel for the manse.

Marriage

In 1875 she married the Rev. Richard S. Rust, D. D. Her life assumed a new meaning, her philanthropy widened its scope, and henceforth she became actively identified with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Milton says that a poet's life should be a poem. Mrs. Rust made this high truth a living fact. Instead of breathing forth the poetry within her soul by painting it in vivid colors until it seemed to speak, she let it shine through her life, adorn her home, and touch other souls, until, in place of the dead canvas, the living

features bespoke her power. She became deeply interested in the benevolent enterprises of the Church, and was in keen sympathy with her husband's work. Thus did they together live as one life,

“And reigning with one will in everything,
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it live!”

Their home became a centre of Christian activity, and from it went forth forces which touched and helped humanity. In 1876, **The Philanthropist** Mrs. Rust organized a philanthropic movement for the colored people of Cincinnati, which continued its usefulness for several years. In 1877 she took an active part in the charitable work of the city, proposing plans for the amelioration of the condition of the poor, which were approved and adopted by the citizens, and a thorough organization of the city effected which proved most efficient in controlling vagrancy and elevating the needy. From these early years she was connected with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, anxious to cast her influence on the side of temperance and purity. She became identified with many local philanthropies, securing the employment of matrons at police stations, and women to take charge of the female wards of prisons. Because of this latter interest, she was appointed by the mayor one of the managers of the female depart-

ment of the City Workhouse. Always awake to every new enterprise, ever on the alert to improve and better the old conditions, she urged and pleaded for the admission of industries into the regular course of the public schools, and lived to see her plans and ideals put into action. Thus, while reigning as queen in the home, devoted and loyal to her husband, constant in loving thoughtfulness and tender affection, she was making a strong impression on the outside world. She mingled the ideal with the real. Her home, pure and true, was the absorbing passion of her life; but, with it all, a needy and suffering humanity right about her was not forgotten, and she went forth with courage and eagerness to uplift others.

In the course of time she traveled with her husband through the South. She saw the black man **Observations in the South** in his lonely cabin; she realized his ignorance; she felt his poverty; she longed to help him upward. She knew that improvement must come from within, that the people must work out their own salvation; but she felt the strong desire to reach the mothers and daughters of the race, to arouse within them courage and character which should overcome the barriers, and lead them on to material and moral success. Her sensitive heart was stirred, her artistic nature aroused to the strength and beauty which suffering and oppression

had kept hidden, and she longed to let Christ's love and liberty redeem and sanctify until the real person stood forth in living light, "a man for a' that." She dared to look this national problem squarely in the face, to urge speedy and generous action towards sending aid to these who bear the imprint of night, but whose hearts may be made pure and white by the dawning of Christ's day.

Who knows but for such a time as this she has come into her kingdom? Ripened in intellect, broadened in culture, consecrated in **Entering the** spirit, mature in wisdom, disciplined and **Open Door** equipped through years of experience and the faith and courage of a Quaker home, she discerned the open door, and was quick to enter and render her character and attainments a blessing to Methodism and America. Read a letter which she wrote in November, 1876, to a friend in the East, as it reveals her thoughts and plans:

"CINCINNATI, November 8, 1876.

"I hope that your sympathy and co-operation may be secured in a plan to interest Northern women in behalf of the freedwomen in the South. In view of the great need there is for moral and spiritual elevation among these poor creatures, and the terrible sufferings they are subjected to in consequence of their ignorance and degradation, it seems that not only their salvation but the future of our Government depends on Christian efforts in their behalf.

"To avoid the embarrassment of organizing a new society, and

to make our efforts available immediately, the Board of Managers of the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was petitioned to admit ladies to its councils, and to be co-laborers. This petition was cordially welcomed by the president, bishops, and Board, and granted, which opens the field to us at once to organize our mode of appeal, and to enter upon the work of collecting funds and to send missionaries to the South. While we will not abate our interest for salvation of the "heathen women" in foreign lands, let us not pass by, unheeded, the cry for help and the need of these, so near our own threshold.

"The schools established by the Freedmen's Aid Society are doing incalculable good, but it is hoped, through the help of Christian women, to elevate the homes by the moral instruction of the freedwomen. This is an absolute necessity to make Christian work among them deeply effective.

"We trust that the claims of this cause may meet a response in your heart, and that you may give to it the assistance of your sympathy and influence. Several of the best known and official ladies in the Church are engaged for the inauguration and carrying forward of this movement."

This line of work in connection with the Freedmen's Aid Society was not found practicable, as the introduction of women into the Board of Managers (by the law of the State) would endanger its title to property. Thus failing to secure the needed work through existing agencies, the interest aroused could not be set aside, but public and private appeals continued to be made. Women were employed as missionaries in Atlanta and New Orleans, who for several years were supported by personal gifts.

The approval of this enterprise by the General Conference of 1880 led to the organization of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. Let Mrs. Rust tell it in her own words:

“The first meeting in this behalf was called by the writer, and held in Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 8, 1880. After consultation with representatives of general Church work in Cincinnati, it was decided to form a new society. The constitution of the Woman's Home Missionary Society, substantially the same as was approved four years later by the General Conference of 1884, was adopted at a meeting held July 10th. While recognizing the fact that our cities presented the largest, and possibly the most important home mission field, the society, at first, sent her missionaries to labor among the neglected populations of the South, and employed teachers in the West for the planting of Christian schools among Mormons and Indians. The contributions of our few scattered auxiliaries could be united for the support of a frontier mission, but, at that time, unanimity in behalf of any one of our cities could not have been secured.”

Elizabeth L. Rust had been stirred by her enthusiasm, aroused by a high ideal, until a definite, intelligent plan revealed itself to her of putting that

ideal into action. Her faithful husband was her help and inspiration. Constant in sympathy, deep in interest, eager and ready to advise and assist, she found in him the complement of her own soul. Her heart grew stouter, and new joy and courage thrilled her being as she felt the throbbings of a kindred nature. Women listened to her words, and many followed where she led. It was no hasty impulse that prompted them to this action. They banded together in unity of heart and devotion of purpose. They aroused the Church to a new line of work, Christianizing the homes within its borders.

It was my privilege to be with the small company of women when this Woman's Home Missionary Society was organized. Come with me for a moment into that cozy parlor in Cincinnati, and draw your chair up near the busy circle, where you may listen to the discussions of that band of earnest women as week by week they met and planned, thought and acted. Their brains were busy, their hearts were inspired, their lives were consecrated, their faith was undaunted. Clouds hung threateningly over them at times, but they always discerned the rainbow athwart the darkness. Prayers went up to heaven for Divine guidance, and I have seen those women stop all work and spend that hour upon their knees in fervent supplication. That little company, associated in the

**Leadership
In a New
Work**

**Early
Workers**

name of Christ to study his truth, to live his life, to do his deeds, shaped the beginnings of the work of this society. There was the fountain from which came the streams of Christian beneficence; there the roots from which sprang the growth of Christian service. Mrs. Rust rejoiced as a mother in the birth and growth of this organization. Pain was forgotten in rapture; weariness and toil lost sight of in success. The urgent needs of the ever-broadening field often filled those loyal women with fear and trembling; but buoyed up by Christian courage, cheered onward by loving co-operation, they became more united of heart, more earnest of purpose. God held them in his own intention until the hour had come when they emerged in spirit and in power, his handmaidens united in his service, embodied in the Woman's Home Missionary Society. Words of exhortation rang in the ears of those women, urging them to action: "But one hope for our land. It is the gospel. Let us set up the Christian Church and school on every hill and valley, until every wild waste shall blossom as the Lord's garden."

As the Church became aroused, the society rapidly grew. The East joined hands with the West, auxiliaries were organized in nearly every Conference, daughters followed the mothers' example and formed their "Circles," until even the little ones were drawn in

**Growth of
the Work**

as the "Mothers' Jewels." We discovered the mission fields lying so near at hand, and sent messengers with the glad tidings of salvation into the distant wigwams of the Indians, the low adobe huts of the New Mexicans, the josshouses of the Chinese, the cabins of the Southland, the far-away homes in Alaska; to the foreigners of every clime and hue in our large cities. The Lord marvelously opened the way, and his Christian workers followed swiftly as he led.

Never shall I forget the first annual meeting, when we hailed with joyous welcome our honored **First Annual Meeting** and true-hearted president, Lucy Webb Hayes. Her name and presence were an inspiration to our work, and the memory of her noble life will always be most precious. Well does Mrs. Rust say:

"The seal of the Divine approval was placed upon the society by the gift of Lucy Webb Hayes, one of the most illustrious women of the century, who for the first nine years of its history was its honored president. She came from the Presidential mansion, where she had borne testimony to the cause of temperance and the truth of the Christian religion, to preside at our meetings and participate in our deliberations."

Reports were uttered with trembling lips; new plans proposed, new fields entered, new obligations

assumed; but at the close of that session the doxology went up from all hearts. The Rev. Dr. A. B. Leonard, in a review of that meeting, writes:

“The most important event in Methodist circles in the Queen City that has recently occurred was the assembling of the first annual meeting of the Woman’s Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Monday, October 30, 1882.

“The report of Mrs. Dr. R. S. Rust, the corresponding secretary, was a carefully prepared and comprehensive presentation of the subject, history, and work of the society. The object of this society is to enlist and organize the efforts of Methodist women to co-operate with other societies and agencies of the Church in behalf of women and children, and all classes in our own country, who are in need of Christian sympathy and help. There is ample room for this new organization. It proposes to occupy a field which as yet is almost uncultivated by us as a Christian denomination. We have the numbers and the means with which to do this work, and God calls us to undertake it in his name and strength. Now that this society is fairly before the Church its auxiliaries will increase rapidly, and its funds multiply yearly; so that, in the near future, the home missionary work of Methodism will take rank with the most potent agencies of Protestant Christianity for the enlightenment and salvation of the neglected classes of our own country.”

At this meeting Mrs. Rust stated that the great inspiration of this whole movement in behalf of home missions has been the work of Bishop Wiley, who aided in its organization, and has added encouragement during all the way of its progress. He has given to it the best effort of his pen, his eloquence, and his money.

**Outlook
After One
Decade**

Ten years later as Mrs. Rust reviews the past she rejoices in its prosperity, but pleads for larger numbers and more earnest effort:

“This Society, in its organization and history, and in the efforts of its friends to secure recognition, and awaken interest in its special fields, has called the attention of our Church to the neglected portions of our country, to the dangers which threaten it, to its great responsibilities, and to its controlling influence upon the destiny of other lands. These efforts have deepened the sense of responsibility and obligation of our people, and have contributed largely to increase the tide of religious effort in behalf of home missions.

“Since a separate society had been formed for woman’s work in foreign lands, the autonomy of our Church work could only be preserved by an organization of her women in behalf of home missions. Our associated womanhood must have an opportunity to consecrate a portion of its efforts and funds to the evangelization of our own country. There is no reason why woman’s heart should be moved in tender response to appeals for help in foreign lands, while she should neglect those quite as pathetic in our own.

“There is a clearly defined work for these organizations, and each may move in its own sphere without conflict, each shedding light and love upon the other; the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society aiding the parent society in foreign lands, the Woman’s Home Missionary Society aiding it in our own country, and the General Missionary Society, like a wise and loving parent, encouraging both organizations in efforts for the conversion of the whole world, all of them being animated by the same spirit, guided by the same wisdom, and upheld by the same Almighty power.

“In this crisis, the Church and State alike require the help of Christian women. They alone can carry into dark cabins and wigwams, and adobe huts and garrets and cellars where human wretchedness and vice abound, the methods and spirit of the Christian home, which is the foundation of the Republic.”



ELIZABETH LOWNES RUST.

These victories were not achieved without ceaseless toil and extensive travel. They involved repeated visits, consultations with committees, public presentation of the claims, and the selection of officers, which required more than one hundred thousand miles of travel. Social pleasures were all abandoned, home comforts often sacrificed, the artist's brush laid aside, restful hours surrendered, that Elizabeth Lownes Rust might give herself unreservedly into the Lord's hands. Correspondence often kept her pen busy until the small hours of the morning. While others slept, she planned and wrought. Original and inventive, she could not rest until some new thought had been put in writing, and sent hither and yon for the approval of other workers. Leaflets and letters were constantly emanating from her fertile brain, which should scatter broadcast the needs of the cause and the suggestive remedies. The missionaries in their distant fields were cheered and comforted by her frequent messages, and all lines of the work seemed to focus at her desk. The humblest toiler found a welcome in her home; the faintest call for help reached her ear; the suffering and despair in the farthest corner of America found a responsive chord in her heart. Her ever-watchful eye was quick to discern the openings of the present, the portents of the future. Summer's heat or winter's cold did

not hold her back from duty; long rides and little sleep were not considered when the word was needed and the personal visitation desired. She spoke not from theory, but from actual observation. She visited nearly every field where the society was laboring. She came in close touch with the missionaries. She realized their bravery and self-sacrifice; she saw the squalor and degradation of their surroundings; she knew the power of sin which they were called to combat.

Her reports were full of interesting information; not mere words and sentiments, but burning, living facts! Arguments, strong and convincing, enforced the wisdom of her plans and actions. Her logic was cogent; her pleadings were convincing; her common sense was an element of strength. The training from her youth among the Friends made her strong in the faith that God works through those who commit themselves to the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Few knew how tireless was her energy; how completely was she absorbed in her work. No thought of salary ever entered her mind; no remuneration for service was ever given. To me was given the rare privilege of living in her home, and I am glad to reveal this unselfish and complete giving of herself to others, which lay hidden from the outside world. Vacation and leisure were unknown terms to her. Rest and ease were no longer ex-

pected or desired. Work was God's tonic. As she bent in prayer for his guidance, his grace sustained, his arm steadied, his voice said, "Be strong, be faithful, and I will lead you home."

For nearly twenty years she was thus led, as she watched the rapid, wonderful growth of her beloved work. Let her own lips tell the story:

**Expansion
and Growing
Hope**

"Viewed in the light of the past, the year is full of hope, and the influences set in motion for the triumph of Christ's kingdom in our beloved land, with the accumulated forces of years past, increased by those of years to come, assure us that, though Christ tarry for a season, yet he, at no distant day, in conquering power will surely come. . . . The rapidly changing conditions in the country require corresponding modifications of method. The society has demonstrated its ability to manage its work intelligently, conduct its business upon a safe financial basis, and adapt its plans to the providential changes of the hour. Profiting by experience, and with increased funds and influence, it is able to take a broader view of obligation, look deeper into the problems offered for solution, and enter more earnestly upon the discharge of duties connected with its mission. . . . It should so arrange its plans and methods as to be prepared for the work of the Church in the twentieth century."

Mrs. Rust realized that the future of the poor girl in the South was hopeless without the perfect union of faith in Christ and education;

Industrial heart and mind must be alike renewed.

Homes
Established

It soon became manifest that to secure this object, more was needed than mere house-to-house visitation. In consultation with others, the suggestion came, which led to the establishment of our Industrial Homes. Their good effects were soon apparent, and such buildings were erected all over the Southland, reaching and uplifting the womanhood of the race, training the poor white and poor black along similar lines, bringing them more closely together as one in Christ Jesus. At the dedication of such a Home, named in honor of Mrs. Rust, Bishop Atticus G. Haygood, a brave and noble champion of the right, who spoke whereof he knew, uttered these strong words of approval:

“Dig wells in the desert and in the rocky places. Plant these Industrial Homes all over the South. Send out one well-trained woman from such a Home; she will be worth a regiment of lady missionaries and their visitations. She will live among the people who need her; she will be a specimen and an inspiration to them; she will incarnate what you seek to teach.”

Is it strange that these Homes met with marked success? The matrons are true heroines, leaving the impress of their personality upon the girls they teach. The girls become living missionaries.

“The dear Lord’s best interpreters
Are humble, human souls;
The gospel of a life like hers
Is more than books and scrolls!”

Within those walls they learn the dignity of labor; they discover that brains and skill are needed in the commonest acts of life; they realize that the simplest vegetables may be made savory, the plainest utensils be most useful. Silver or tin may hold the same food, but the care and thought in its preparation make it palatable. As they pass from room to room, from one line of work to another, that secret so often hidden becomes revealed—the vast difference between housekeeping and home-making. One is a business, the other an art. They are taught to combine the two, and while cleaning up the cabin and making it and all within most healthful, they also add the little touches of beauty and comfort which shall reach the soul, and transform the hut into a *home*. Thus is their character, as head, hand, and heart are alike renewed, made all rounded and complete.

**The Industrial
Home
Idea**

Mrs. Rust caught a glimpse of the new light in the cabins. She writes:

"I have recently visited several of our industrial schools in the South. Though I had large expectations of this work, yet it has **"Light in the Cabins"** become greater and broader in its early achievements than I had ventured to expect. If this branch of our work can be vigorously prosecuted, it will not be long before we shall witness great triumphs in the elevation of the women and homes of the poor people all over the South.

"Observation had given me the facts which gave force to this remark. As our train passed through one of the richest cotton-growing sections, in a two hours' ride, besides the small stations, I did not see a single house—only one-room cabins, sometimes alone, and sometimes in clusters. These were without windows, and one unacquainted would hardly have suspected that they were human habitations. At that time I counted in the fields thirty-two women and one boy hoeing cotton and corn.

"We are convinced there is no way of reaching and aiding the women and girls in these neglected sections so successfully as by training educated young women in practical duties, and sending them out as teachers. They can carry into the distant rural districts these higher ideals of life, and instruct the people in methods of correct liv-

ing more successfully than missionaries not of their own race and unacquainted with their peculiar needs.

“We were greatly pleased by the atmosphere of trust and confidence which prevailed in the homes visited, and which attested the sweetness and firmness of the management. Few of the girls have previously known anything better than rough cabin and field life, so the restraints and refinements of a home must be acquired. There was something very touching in the confidence of these girls, as though the old ways had been laid aside as cast-off garments, and a new life was surely entered upon.”

Look at the new mother, as she goes forth from our Homes! Visit the place where she reigns as queen! Equal with her husband in intellect, congenial in taste, thorough in housework, full of sympathy for the needy ones about her, her heart aglow with a mother's love; she turns crudity into beauty, disorder into order, the drudgery of work into a joy, the cares of childhood into a Divine and holy mission. No wonder her boy's eyes sparkle, her two rooms attract and allure,—her very living speaks louder than any words from pulpit or platform. “It is the man who is the missionary, it is not his words. His character is his message.”

**The New
Mother and
Homemaker**

No one rejoiced more than Elizabeth Rust at the sight of these blessed results; but while her heart was ever deeply interested in the welfare and improvement of the Southland, where first her sympathies were awakened and thoughts aroused, she was not narrow, or blind to equally great needs in other fields.

**The Field
Broad as
America**

As secretary of the society, in co-operation with the Board of Managers, she wrote and planned for similar Homes throughout the West. She joined her energies with those of others, until the heathen within our midst were constantly brought to our view, and evangelizing agencies were scattered from shore to shore, carrying the redemptive power of Christ's gospel into the darkened, benighted homes.

Dr. Daniel Dorchester, Jr., said of this society, at its anniversary: "We recognize you as the heart force of the moral and spiritual condition of our Nation."

But the far-seeing eye of Elizabeth Rust did not stop at the Nation's horizon. She writes:

**Home and
Foreign Mis-
sions One
Work**

"We ought to secure a fuller recognition of the Woman's Home Missionary Society, in view of the relation it bears to the foreign field, and the influence for good that may be wrought upon the world through the evangelization of this country.



RUST HALL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

We must save and hold this country for Christ as a base of supplies. We can not furnish means and missionaries for the wide world, unless the Church at home be strengthened and its resources developed, unless the baptism of the Holy Spirit shall come upon the women, who constitute more than two-thirds of the membership of our Church, and aid them in their efforts to save this country for Christ."

Truly, Home and Foreign constantly clasp hands in this work for God. We would save and convert the idolatrous and superstitious in our own land; we would train and furnish missionaries for their own in other lands; we would bring the world to the foot of the Cross!

Every line of work inaugurated by the society, every new field entered, but increased the zeal and added to the joy of Mrs. Rust. The Immigrant Homes, which welcomed and sheltered the strangers as they landed on our shores; the Mission Homes among the Orientals and New Mexicans; the centers of help for the Indians; the blessed retreats for God's little ones; the rapid spread of Deaconess Homes—all revealed to her God's approval, but called for more efficient workers. She writes:

**Training-
school and
Rust Hall**

"If our Society purposes to occupy this field successfully, it must make provision for an adequate

supply of thoroughly trained women for the service. In view of these conditions and obligations, we consider the Lucy Webb Hayes Memorial Training-school for Missionaries and Deaconesses, located at Washington, D. C., the most important enterprise of the society, and the one which should have the most generous consideration. The location of the school on North Capitol Street affords ample space for enlargement, and there is urgent need of additional dormitory and departmental accommodations."

This need has been answered in the erection of Rust Hall, which will be a memorial to her worth, and a blessing to all future generations. Almost her last act was to write in its behalf and plead for its completion. Standing in the Nation's capital, near the place where she was born, overlooking the beautiful city, the valley of the Potomac and the heights of Arlington, it well represents her sterling character, the Nation's weal for which she pleaded, and the intelligence and skill demanded in Christ's work.

Mrs. Rust was a woman of vision. As Paul of old, she caught a sight of the risen Christ. The moral degradation, the alarming ignorance and vice, caused her to think and fear; but she was not overcome, for she saw the remedy. She did not tarry to think of the odds against her, but timidity and sensitiveness were lost to sight as she realized her

**A Woman
of Faith
and
Vision**

duty, and gained help from Christ to enter the conflict. Bravely, hopefully, enthusiastically, she stood for the right. Words written of another well fit her character: "The greater the odds, the more resolute her bearing; the more desperate the fortunes, the more resonant the ringing cheer of her tone. History has shown that a great faith is the wisest and sanest of all guides."

Listen to her thoughtful words, as she looks forward into the coming years:

"It is wise, in formulating plans, and in organizing Christian work, to regard the claims of the enduring future, as well as those of the transient present. It is the relation that the present bears to the future that gives it significance and controlling power. Improvements in the management of worldly affairs follow in rapid succession, and clearer views and greater consecration should characterize the agencies and methods employed by the Church of Christ in elevating the people, and in saving the world. It is short-sighted policy to limit our plans of work to the present. We should take a more comprehensive view of the needs, possibilities, achievements, and conquests of the twentieth century. We should carefully scan the horoscope of the future, watch its earliest indications, and adjust our plans and movements to the possibilities of philanthropy and religion, as they may be un-

rolled to our vision by the unerring wisdom of Divine intelligence."

Women of vision are needed to-day. We are at a turning point in the history of Home Missions. The era of extension is passing into the era of strengthening and energizing. Twenty years ago the women were timid and doubtful; now they are full of faith, with plans matured and work accomplished. The future lies before them, rich with opportunity. Duty bids them enter, and Christ promises the victory.

The true greatness of Elizabeth Rust is revealed in her last illness. Heroic in suffering, she continued to sustain her beloved work until both heart and flesh failed her. Her spiritual sight became clearer, her faith stronger, and God gave her strength to suffer and endure. It is easy to smile when all goes well. It is noble to be joyous in the hour of trial. As she left the doctor's room, and received the word of fatal illness, she seemed to enter at once into the care of the Great Physician. Meeting a friend, she said, "I may live six months, I may live six years; but I must work all the harder, that every moment may count for my Master." These words were put into action, and for three years she tarried not, save as the hospital claimed her. Even her sick-room became the center of work. While she dic-

**The
Hour of
Triumph**

tated scores and hundreds of letters pertaining to the welfare of the society, she often penned a few choice words to her friends, speaking as from heart to heart. One of those who came very close to her life was Mrs. H. C. McCabe, and to her she reveals the sacred thoughts of that upper room:

“It has seemed to me that the Angel and His presence has been at my right hand constantly.”

“I am busy all the time, for the work presses. Whether I am to be here years, or only a few weeks, that is in His hands. I am blessed in the fact that I have the strength and the heart to do what the *hour demands*. I have given my case over absolutely into the keeping of my Heavenly Father, and I do not worry about it.”

“I am not so strong as I was a year ago. I am obliged to rest an hour after working two or three, and so I sandwich work and rest all the days. Friends think it strange that I try to continue; but why should I not? If God gives me the strength and the disposition, I should be culpable if I did not use it, and the opportunity in his service.”

“How glad I would be to look into your face, and have the inspiration of your well-rounded spiritual life. In the last few days I have grown very weak. My talking is very spasmodic, because of the oppression of the lungs and shortness of breath. The powers of nature seem to be falling away.

When I want to be changed from one side of the bed to the other, they help me into a chair, pull me around, and then settle me on the other side. I can not walk at all. If the miracle we are expecting is wrought, I hope to be with you for the September meeting, and to be able to keep my hand on the work. I give dictations of important letters every day, almost. The Father is very good to me, though I suffer greatly from weakness and difficulty in breathing. I feel quite at rest."

"I find that I must hurry to get my share of the Master's work done, *unless* a miracle is wrought in my behalf. But I am not repining. I am so glad that He gives me grace to keep all the shadows out of our home, and strength to do my work."

"I want you to pray, dear friend, that I may not lose faith and courage. I have all along felt so sure of my Helper, and such peace and rest, that when these last days the foundation seems to be slipping away, I was frightened by my own weakness to reach my 'tower'—or does God test us in these ways? To-day I feel as strong as Samson (not physically, for I am much weaker than at any time since I left the hospital). The disease is steadily gaining a firmer hold. Then I thought maybe, in sending this extra suffering of the last few days, God is rebuking me for my selfishness in thinking so much of *my own need* of healing. I am trying so

hard to save my life, when I should be willing and glad to lose it. My eyes are turned toward the 'everlasting morning.' I receive gladly the benediction *of service yet a little longer*. I ask God continually, if my services are needed, to heal, and keep, and use me."

"I am too tired most of the time to think intelligently; but I *appreciate* and I am so thankful when a day comes like to-day, that I can get through many letters, business of the society—a good, long dictation."

"I have for some time felt so sure that relief would come that I have not made an iota of change in my work these last days, though the doctor said I had reached the 'last stage' of the disease. This morning I gave four hours' dictation, and have been busy this afternoon, and with a light heart have done my work, singing praises all the time."

"My faith takes hold of the promises."

Does not the power of Christ shine through these words? Do you not catch the note of triumph as she steps into the presence of the King? Almost at the last hour, her devoted husband writes: "The disease does not relax, and her vital forces are weakening. She is full of courage and hope, and assures us that she is resting in the eternal arms of her loving Father."

She entered upon her eternal rest, October 3, 1899.

Strong and earnest words came from many friends, paying tribute to her life and **Strong** character. One of the highest testi- **Testimonial** monials was given in these lines by a sister in an other Church—Mrs. Eliza G. Sage, of the Baptist denomination:

“The highest tribute to Mrs. Rust is that she endeavored to do her duty to humanity, until this became her highest pleasure, her ruling passion. When I first knew her, as Miss Lownes, she was an artist, devoting her superb vitality to that absorbing vocation. But ‘art for art’s sake’ could not hold such a nature as hers. Like Sir Ashley Cooper, she heard innumerable voices calling for help. So she quietly laid aside her art, and turned all her enthusiastic effort into the Christ work. When next I met her, she and Mrs. John Davis became my guests at Hartford, the season that they together traveled over New England establishing your great Home Missionary Society. I saw that her ideals had changed. She had a more glorious motive than any that art could give. I was also struck with her great earnestness. In 1895, Mrs. Rust founded the Civic League. She was carrying great responsibilities as the Secretary of your Society. Another woman would have considered her hands too full to feel

the claims of a new duty. Not so Mrs. Rust, although she was writing hundreds of letters and traveling everywhere in the interests of the Home Missionary Society. She felt profoundly that the women of Cincinnati were called upon to serve their city, and could only do so efficiently through a special organization for civic work. Burdened as she was with your duties, she assumed this service of inaugurating the Civic League. Her first step was to create a sentiment favorable to it. She talked with individuals in her own enthusiastic way. She held conferences with circles of ladies. She wrote letters to those whom she could not meet. Judging from the number of letters she wrote within my knowledge, her work in this direction must have been very great. When the first meeting was held, over a hundred women were present, all by her gentle persuasiveness, and pledged themselves to support the movement. She was a veteran organizer, and her plans were all carefully matured. Nothing was left for haphazard. The board of officers chosen were able and faithful. Some of the most efficient women in the city joined the society; but all regarded that one strong, serene woman as the inspiration of every meeting. She possessed the subtle power of leadership in a very unusual degree. More than that, she possessed the genius for hard work.

“The shadow of her last illness darkened her life and compelled her withdrawal from the active work of the League, but she attended our meetings occasionally. It was at one of the last meetings which she attended that she said to me, as nearly as I can recall: ‘I know not which it is to be—life or death; but I am happy either way. If I live, I shall be spared to my husband; he needs me. If I am to die, I shall still be happy, for I know that I shall go to heaven!’ Her face glowed as though heaven itself were shining on it. I have often heard Christians speak confidently, even triumphantly of the immortal home, but I do not recall an instance when the realization of immortal happiness so transfigured a face or so thrilled through the tones. I felt that it was a revelation sent to my distrustful heart through her. It seems easy now to see that glowing countenance in the presence of the King!”

Words of like tenderness and praise were spoken by her co-workers in the Church at the **Loving Tributes from Co-workers** memorial meeting held soon after her death. No better thoughts can close this sketch and linger in our minds than these tributes of love:

“In an interview with Mrs. Rust, Mrs. Fisk asked her if there was anything she could do for her, saying, ‘We women want to do something

for you.' 'O no,' Mrs. Rust replied, 'I am resting in the arms of my Savior, as a child nestles in the arms of its mother; you can only love me and pray for me. . . .

"Mrs. Fisk introduced Mrs. H. C. McCabe, a lifelong friend of Mrs. Rust, and her beautiful tribute began with a description of the 'upper room' in this noble home of Methodism, sanctified by prayer and by the conferences and counsels of the servants of God and the friends of man. Then followed the close analyzation of the life and character of this noble woman, which Mrs. McCabe, from years of close intimacy, was able to give. In closing, she said: 'Eighteen years we have had our great and talented leader. In her earnestness, her creative power, her genius for work, she thought of everything, she grasped everything. Holding the center, she was ubiquitous on the whole circumference. In her the corresponding secretary was innate. The true corresponding secretary is, like a poet, born, not made. From the open grave of one who so long came, and went with us, from the contemplation of the glory into which she is received, let us turn each individually, and seek the indwelling of that Spirit by whose ennobling we may carry forward with new life and vigor the work to which our departed and beloved Secretary gave, perhaps sacrificed, her life.'"

Mrs. Fisk then called upon Mrs. Aiken, record-

ing secretary, who followed with a tender tribute to Mrs. Rust: "Where nobler tributes to the life, character, and work of our lamented Mrs. Rust are woven into a wreath of immortelles, I would add only a little sprig of evergreen,—simply giving you a glimpse of her as she slowly vanished from our sight. During the midsummer days, before the ladies left the city, a Business Committee meeting was held in the spacious parlors of her elegant home. I found her there alone. 'How are you, Mrs. Rust?' I said. With a radiant smile shining as a rainbow over the tearful face, she cheerily replied, 'A bit nervous this morning; but I am better.' Two weeks later, I found her in great feebleness of body, reclining upon the couch in that large and light 'upper room,' of which Mrs. McCabe spoke,—the *sanctum sanctorum* of the home. The heart and brain then gave dictation to the ever-faithful secretary, Miss Wommer. As I inquired after her health, she smiled and said, 'O, I am better,' and in earnest words spoke of her wonderful trust and unfaltering faith in God. On another occasion, when in the midst of heroic endurance of intense suffering, there came the same answer, 'Better.' When last I saw her in her own quiet room, scarcely able to speak, while the light of eternity shone in her eyes, she indicated that she was '*better* this morning.' My unuttered words were, 'Yes, better further on.' Soon thereafter all that was mortal lay before us,

encircled by the choicest flowers, while the immortal had joined the choir invisible, and in tones triumphant testified in unison with the unnumbered chorus that 'It is better farther on.' "

The president then introduced Mrs. Jane Bancroft Robinson as the familiar friend of Mrs. Rust, and competent to speak of her life and work from this standpoint. Mrs. Robinson said: "Friends, it is hard for me to speak here; for rarely has a society of women gathered as we do to-day, to mourn the loss of a great leader, and to share in the triumph of her great deeds." A short *résumé* of the work of the society in its early organization was given, the prophetic vision of Mrs. Rust for the society, and her self-sacrificing efforts for it during all the years. As a friend, she "bound us to her with hooks of steel." As a *philanthropist*, her sympathies were not confined to her own Church and work, but in local charities she bore her part. But of her work as corresponding secretary of our society, Mrs. Robinson spoke at length. From the first she had a prophetic grasp of the work of the society, its magnitude, and its possibilities. When the faint-hearted and fearful would say, "We can do no more," she would cheerfully exhort and persuade and wisely lay the plans that would be accepted. She *discerned character*, and warmly welcomed every one who could bring any talent, any gift, to the upbuilding of her beloved society. "Our

great work now to her memory is Rust Hall, named alike for Dr. and Mrs. Rust. This hall will commemorate, in a form far more lasting than marble or granite, her noble life-deeds. To-day, friends, the close of this wonderful century is rounding out the twentieth year of this society. Could we form into one long procession those who have been helped by its beneficent work, we should see represented every class that Mrs. Rust so prophetically enumerated. There would be the teachers and mothers from our colored schools of the South; the Indian girls, and the New Mexicans from our Industrial Homes; the women who have been guided out of Mormon errors; the Chinese girls who have been rescued to a pure, free life; the foreign sisters, who, as immigrants, have landed on our shores; the poor, the needy, and the ignorant who have been helped by our deaconesses; the little children from our orphanages—all of these I see in my mind's eye, as in one grand procession, marching along on the highway of life to nobler, happier living, because this great-souled woman, and all who with her have helped to make this society effective, have been true to their light, and 'followed the gleam.' And it is no mournful dirge they chant, but a song of solemn triumph; for rest and reward and blessed immortality are hers. 'She rests from her labors, and her works do follow her.' "

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