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Agatha Tiegel Hanson

An Editorial Comment

Agatha Tiegel Hanson, the writer of this month's beautiful feature article, was born in 1873, in Pittsburgh, Pa., and lost her hearing at seven years of age—the result of spinal meningitis. Of her girlhood days Mrs. Hanson has this to say:

"I was very fortunate to have a wise and loving mother, and my home life with my brothers and sisters was very happy. After a while I did not miss my hearing so much except when it came to music. My mother had a sweet and cultivated voice, and the family concerts around the piano, with even my grandmother joining, were a great part of the home life. And that I missed. As soon as I learned to read I seized on the poets. I never cared for Whitman, or any poetry of that style, and much of the modern poetry leaves me cold. But the musical poets, Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier, Scott, even Byron, and many others, were my solace and delight. I memorized whole poems, and all my life they have been a pleasure to me, and I have felt in some small degree compensated. Owen Meredith's "Lucile" is a melodious tale I must re-read now and then, and Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" and Scott's musical lays have been life long companions."

Continuing, Mrs. Hanson says:

"I just did not find my heart in teaching and resigned to marry Olof Hanson in 1899. I have never regretted my decision, and would not for anything have missed my home, my beloved husband, and my three darling girls. They are all happily married, and I have ten perfectly beautiful grandchildren, and I am content."

The Deaf will remember Dr. Olof Hanson, Mrs. Hanson's husband, as an architect of international fame. Incidentally, he was the architect of the Main Building at the North Dakota School for the Deaf which even at its present age commands admiration for its architectural beauty. Of him Mrs. Hanson lovingly and feelingly says:

"Though eleven years have gone since my husband, Olof, left this earthly life, to me he is alive and near. Scarcely an hour passes that some memory of him, a word, a smile, a sentence, does not flash into my mind.

"He came of a good Swedish family, counting professors, bankers and ministers among his close relations. He was strictly trained, and had a charming courtesy of manner. He was of a most patient and self controlled disposition, and often remarked that every household should cherish two bears, bear and forbear. I very seldom saw him angry or impatient. And his demeanor was such that he was universally liked and respected. His last years were spent in the University of Washington, in the Department of Grounds and Buildings. He had charge of in-

specting all buildings for necessary repairs, and calculating what amount of weight any floor could stand, and various matters like that. He also had charge of the blue print room, and had on file complete plans of every building down to the smallest detail, which he made to small scale. When he passed away, the strong and sincere testimonials I received from the president of the university, the head of his department, many of the professors, and many hearing friends, pleased me much. I was comforted to know that they had appreciated him, and that they missed him.

"As an architect, he attained a great degree of success. In Seattle he planned the house in which we lived, and five others in the block. The courthouse at Juneau, Alaska, was his work, also a hotel in South America and many schools, public buildings and private homes in Washington State and Minnesota.

"He was of a deeply religious nature, and for many years conducted a Sunday School class for the deaf that was largely attended. When the Lutherans established a Church in Seattle, he proposed to leave the work, for he was an architect. But so much pressure was brought to bear on him that he took up the work again, and was ordained a deacon and then a priest in the Episcopal Church. But he never left his profession, and gave his spare time to the Church. Sundays he held services at Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. He sat up till late every evening, writing on various matters mostly relating to the deaf. They consulted him about many of their problems and troubles, and he took a deep interest in them. He served the Church without any salary, his living coming from his profession as architect. He received a small monthly stipend for a short time after his ordination, but that was soon discontinued. The collections at his services were all given to the diocese.

"He was very fond of his girls, and very proud of their high standing at the University, and their success after graduating, and they love Dad's memory.

"For me the light went out when he passed away. I could not make music without his sympathy and interest, though the poems and songs I memorized remain with me. To me the sun rose and set in him. A poem I wrote in the early years of our married life I quote from here:

And what is small estate, and what
Is simple life and low degree!
And what are honors, fame, and wealth,
And worldly pleasures, without thee!

Thou art the melody that sets
My pulse to measures of content.
Thou art the sun in radiance bent
Upon the spot wherein I dwell.