

SAMUEL CLELLAND DODDS

It is the dictate of our nature, no less than of enlightened social policy, to honor those whose lives have contributed in any way to the good of their community and their associates; to bedew with affectionate tears the silent urn of departed worth and virtue; to unburden the fullness of the surcharged heart in eulogium upon deceased benefactors, and to rehearse their noble deeds for the benefit of those who may come after us. It has been the commendable custom of all ages and all nations. Hence the following feeble tribute to one of nature's noblemen. In contemplating the many estimable qualities of the late Samuel C. Dodds, integrity and industry appear as prominent characteristics—an integrity that no personal or other consideration could swerve, and an industry that knew no rest while anything remained undone. When a given task was accomplished, he would throw off all care, retire to his home and devote himself to domestic and social enjoyments, for which he had the keenest zest and relish. His temper was calm and equable, and his manners were emphatically those of the gentleman,—plain, simple, dignified,—despising sham and pretense of all kinds. His devotion to every duty was intense, while his perception of truth and worth was almost intuitive. Although his life was a busy one, his private affairs and his home making heavy demands upon his time, he never allowed it to interfere with his Christian obligations or the faithful performance of his church duties. Always calm and straightforward, never demonstrative, his life was a steady effort for the worth of Christian doctrine, the purity and grandeur of Christian principles and the beauty and elevation of Christian character. He had the greatest sympathy for his fellow men and was always ready to aid and encourage those who were struggling to aid themselves; yet in this, as in everything, he was entirely unassuming. When he believed he was on the right path, nothing could swerve him from it; home life was a sacred trust and friendships were inviolable. He commanded the respect of all classes by his exemplary life, and his memory will long be revered by his many friends and acquaintances

Samuel C. Dodds was born in the city of Bloomington, Indiana, on January 28, 1854, and his death occurred suddenly at his home in this city on April 23, 1913. He was the son of Clelland F. and Mary (Orchard) Dodds. Clelland Dodds, who was a native of Monroe county, Indiana, and who during his life was a prominent figure in business and civic life, was a merchant, then turned his attention to farming, and during his later years followed the real estate and insurance business in this city, meeting with fair success in his business affairs. He was the first mayor of the city of Bloomington. He and his wife, who also was a native of Monroe county, are both deceased. They were the parents of twelve children, namely: Corinne, Samuel C., Henry A., Ella B., Andrew J., William, John, Morton, Cora L., Frederick, Carrie C. (deceased), Mattie N. and Flora.

Samuel C. Dodds received his elementary education in the public schools of Bloomington, graduating from the high school, after which he took the literary course in the State University, graduating and receiving his degree in 1875, being only twenty years of age at that time. His first employment was as a clerk for his brother-in-law, Newell Sanders, who later became United States senator from Tennessee and now resides at Chattanooga, that state. At the end of a year he bought the book store from Mr. Sanders and ran it for nearly four years. Selling the store, he was then, for about a year, engaged in the lumber business, at the end of that period forming a partnership with

Showers Brothers and Henry Henley, under the firm name of Showers, Dodds & company, manufacturers of chairs, the plant being generally known as the North End Chair Factory. About a year later the firm name was changed to Showers & Dodds, but on March 15, 1883 J. B. Waldron bought a third interest in the business, the firm style being soon afterwards changed to S. C. Dodds & Company. This partnership was maintained for about twelve years, when Mr. Dodds sold his interest in the business to Showers Brothers. In 1894, upon the organization of the Monroe County State Bank, Mr. Dodds was elected its cashier and continued to discharge the duties of that position up to the time of his death. Though he had not enjoyed perfect health for some time prior to his death, his condition was not considered critical, and two days before his death he performed his usual duties at the bank. Therefore the news of his sudden passing away came as a profound shock to the entire community.

The funeral, which was one of the largest ever held in Bloomington, was from the First Presbyterian church, which was filled with relatives and hundreds of sympathizing and sorrowing friends. From the sermon preached by the pastor, Rev. John R. Ellis, the following words are quoted, not only as a tribute to Mr. Dodds, but as a beautiful word picture of his character and attainments: "Death is a solemn and mysterious event, come when it will and to whom it may. An instinctive and indefinable sense of awe pervades the reflecting mind when any human spirit passes into the belt of darkness, long, low and distant, where 'Life to come touches the life that is. The stroke may fall suddenly or be long delayed. But, come when it will, men reverently bow their heads, as they hear the Voice and confess the presence of the great God. They are hushed in silence by the nearness of the powers of the world invisible. This sense of the presence of God in death is heightened and intensified when a man dies in the vigor of his powers, who, by exalted purity of personal character and unselfishness of life, faithfully and loyally has served his generation. At such a time, and this is such a time, we stand so near to the thin veil that separates mortals from immortals. time from eternity, that the whispers of God may be heard by the children of men.

"When, on Wednesday morning, through the parting folds of that thin veil, our beloved brother was admitted to the 'General Assembly, the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, to God, the judge of all. and to the spirits of just men made perfect,' not alone the home from whence he has gone, but this church, that he loved, and this community, in which his noble life was spent, felt the hallowing touch of the hand of God.

"In all the tributes to the memory of Mr. Dodds none sheds richer luster upon his life than the beautiful testimony to a life-long loving chivalry, by the sorrow stricken companion of his life, who, in the hour of deepest shadow and shattering hammer strokes of fiercest grief, thinking of her beloved, through blinding tears, sees the whiteness of his character, and feels deep comfort in the message of the Master, a message tremulous with the wordless mysticism of the Christian faith, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.'

"This innermost utterance of the Sermon on the Mount suggests the key to the whole life of our departed friend. I do not mean, this supreme benediction of our Master means the attainment of absolute perfection in this earthly life. It does mean, perfection of aim. It does mean moral and spiritual single-mindedness, freedom from all duplicity. A man of pure heart is one whose will is set straight for God. * * * Mr. Dodds was, in and

above all else, positively and pre-eminently a Christian man. He possessed great simplicity, purity, and humility of character. He had convictions, the princely passion of convictions; careful and patient in coming to conclusions, he was firm in maintaining them. A kind and courteous Christian, a worthy follower of Him who has been called 'The world's first gentleman.'

"During the brief year in which it had been my privilege to know him we have been in intimate fellowship and I feel a sense of deep personal loss. A busy man, interested in his daily task, sharing in various ways in the manifold affairs of civic life, he was never too busy or too absorbed in merely temporal affairs to give time and thought to the service of his church, which, with his home, lay close upon his heart. As one has written in a beautiful tribute to his life, 'To him the church was not a mere matter of form, but a means to reach the highest and the best.' Always a faithful attendant at the mid-week service, his voice was heard in prayer; simple in expression, broad in range of interests, thoughtful of the varied needs of humanity, his prayers were an inspiration and a gracious benediction to us all.

"I need not dwell this afternoon upon the genial, attractive, dignified service rendered in welcoming strangers to our church, week by week. We shall miss him more than my poor words can tell. My brothers, by the memory of this Christian Great-heart, bowed in sorrow here around his lifeless form. here in this house of God, fragrant with the memory of his unselfish service in our Master's name, I summon you today to rally to the cause to which he gave the last full measure of his devotion. There is a vacant place—you will not leave it vacant. We cannot fill his place nor do the work he did so well, but we may fill our own, and in the same spirit which inspired him do the duty given us to do.

"A choice spirit has left us. A brave, large-hearted, optimistic soul, a life from whence radiated an atmosphere of cheer. One who loved his fellows and made the world brighter for his living in it. The shell of his splendid manhood is confined for the grave. The man himself, his faith, his conscience, his purity, his spiritual sentiments, the man who dwelt within the earthly tent, has passed from service here into the larger service of the better world."

At the grave, in beautiful Rose Hill cemetery, the Knights of Pythias, of which Mr. Dodds had been an appreciative member, conducted their ritualistic burial service.

The following beautiful tribute to Mr. Dodds is quoted from the *Bloomington Evening World*: "In the death of Samuel C. Dodds the state of Indiana has lost one of its best citizens. In all that counts towards the ideal man he was prominent. In the first place, Mr. Dodds had character of the highest type. He stood for the best things. He was a part and parcel of the best things. His thoughts were pure and his actions squared with his thoughts. In the second place, he had genial personality. He had the faculty of becoming interested in the daily affairs of the people about him. When one met him he felt at once that Mr. Dodds was genuinely sympathetic and sympathetically genuine. Some way or other, one felt that there was just a little more sunshine in the world after he met Mr. Dodds. In the next place, Mr. Dodds was a success in the business world. In business, he did not tear down his fellow workers. He built up by those means which are in harmony with the teachings of Christianity.

"As a citizen, Mr. Dodds was easily one of the foremost. He loved his city with a passion that was all-consuming. Any movement that had for its object the betterment of

his home city met with his hearty support. He knew when to say no and how to say no. He was geniality up to the point that met his approval and then he was firmness personified. He was always courteous and those who differed with him admired his fairness and his open hearted honesty.

“The bigger the position one occupies the more opportunities there are to make enemies. Mr. Dodds held many important positions, but his genial it fairness and honesty were such that he had remarkable success in making and holding life-long friendships. Old and young, rich and poor, will unite in giving him their tribute of praise.

“As great as Mr. Dodds was in other fields of work and pleasure, it was in his home life that he showed best the real character of the man. Many men carry the sunshine into the world and reserve the shadows for the home. Not so with Mr. Dodds. He was the ideal husband and the hearts of the people of this community will go out to his noble wife.”

Politically, Samuel C. Dodds was an ardent supporter of the principles and policies of the Republican party, though he was never in any way an aspirant for public office. Fraternally, he was, as before stated, a member of the Knights of Pythias and of the Phi Delta Theta college fraternity. He was prominent among the alumni of Indiana University and always maintained the deepest interest in the welfare of his alma mater. In the civic life of the community he was for many years an influential factor, having served as a member of the city council and as president of the Commercial Club. He was also interested as a director in the National Stone Company and was a stockholder in two local building and loan associations.

Religiously, Mr. Dodds was for many years a member of the First Presbyterian church, of which he was an elder at the time of his death. He had been elected a delegate from the Indiana presbytery to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, which meets at Atlanta, Georgia, in May, 1914. He was a liberal, though entirely unostentatious, giver to all departments of church work and was never happier than when he saw the church's interests advancing.

On October 17, 1878, Mr. Dodds married Nellie Winters, the daughter of George W. and Clementina (Herd) Winters, of Columbia, Kentucky, though her father was a native of Pennsylvania. He was a successful farmer, tobacco raiser and cattle buyer, and in politics was a strong Republican. Mrs. Dodds is descended from sterling old patriotic stock, a great-grandfather having fought under General Washington and, with him, endured the terrible hardships and privations at Valley Forge. Mrs. Dodds is a woman of gracious qualities of head and heart, which have endeared her to the large circle of acquaintances which she enjoys. She, too, has been active in the interest of the Presbyterian church and she well merits the large measure of esteem which is accorded her.

(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 488-493)