

A TRIBUTE TO WESLEYAN

BY BELLE ROBINSON BUTLER.

A school or college with an aggregate attendance of 325 may justly claim to be regarded as a good one. While Wesleyan lifts in a moral, social and religious sense not only enlightens intellectually but up-such a vast clientele, it can also lay claim to the still prouder distinction of being the oldest woman's college in the world. Such an institution has its rightful place in the history of colleges, and Wesleyan today stands crowned with the laurel wreath of success.

Sixty-five years ago there stood upon the stage in the old chapel at Wesleyan, the first young women to receive a diploma.

The college has grown in every way since then. The oldest alumna, who has not seen Wesleyan since she left her gates so many years ago, would not recognize the great advance in every direction.

Nearly three-quarters of a century have passed since this momentous event, wonderful in the history of woman's education—the founding of the first woman's college.

The occasion of the first graduation day left such an impression on the minds of the very few surviving graduates of Wesleyan's first year, that in review, the sixty-three years that have elapsed since this event are overlooked, and that day is recalled as vividly by them as the events of yesterday.

The Alumnae association of Wesleyan is perpetuating loyalty and love for its Alma Mater.

The graduates of the college being anxious to revive the friendships formed in their girlhood days, to inquire into the histories of those with whom they mingled in the past and to form a nucleus around which many shall gather to contribute to the prosperity of the college formed themselves, in 1859, into an Alumnae association. The true principles of co-operation have been honestly tested, and the association has proven highly successful and beneficial to every one connected with it.

The alumnae of the Atlanta chapter, with Mrs. William Lawson Peel as their president, have brought into the work a social feature by calling the members together in the springtime of the year, allowing them to enjoy heart to heart talks of the good old days, reviewing with tenderness and pride the growth of old Wesleyan.

Tuesday afternoon, our annual meeting took place. It was an afternoon of freshness and splendor. The old and the young

of the alumnae enjoyed indulging in reminiscences. I can not describe this meeting. I might as well try to weigh in balances the perfume of flowers or the melody of song. As the roll was called a response in the form of a short address was given by one member of each class.

Mrs. Elizabeth Flournoy Branham responded for the class of 1840; Mrs. Susie Pullen for the class of 1841; Mrs. Eliza Ingraham for 1843; Mrs. Ella Clanton Thomas for 1851; Mrs. Clifford Lewis Pemberton for 1854; Mrs. Rowena Gunby Mitchell for 1859. For the class of 1858 Mrs. Cordella Dessau Atkinson responded in a beautiful tribute to Wesleyan's women. From this class were graduated women who have gone into foreign fields to impart knowledge. Mrs. Young J. Allen, the wife of the great missionary to China, who is radiating her beautiful influence, was a member of this class. Mrs. Alice Culler Cobb, of Wesleyan faculty, is another.

The class of 1863—the war time class—was represented by Mrs. Florida Redding Carr. Mrs. Minnie Jackson Scrutchin responded in a clever rhythmic tribute to Wesleyan and to our alumnae president, Mrs. Peel.

Mrs. Fannie Lamar Rankin, in her usual bright way, responded for the class of 1876, and at the close presented the president with a bouquet of pink carnations on behalf of her class.

The year eighteen eighty-one was answered to by Mrs. Ida Price Smith; 1881 by Mrs. Emma Davis Willingham; 1887 was answered in a clever good wish by Mrs. Jessie Munroe Rickey, and Mrs. Annie Bates Haden gave a delightfully interesting sketch of the class of 1888, this year marking the half century era in the history of the college.

Perhaps one of the most glowing tributes paid old Wesleyan was the response of Miss Lucy Evans for the class of 1898.

A short history of the college as it is today was sent the association by the president, Dr. J. W. Roberts, and read by Miss Julian Perdue, one of the under-graduates of the college.

These meetings only bind the chain of girlhood friendships more tightly, and fill us with a larger determination to be the womanly woman, the ideal of tenderness, charity and love.

Let us stand always united, members of the alumnae, and laugh at stormy weather, smiling the time away, with deep-rooted love for our Alma Mater and faith in her works always in the heart of each of us.

BELLE ROBINSON BUTLER.