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In Memoriam: Mary Fels, 1863-1953

Author(s): W. L.

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Matthew Decker, and produced by the skill of Theodore Netscher, Esq.”³³ But in Horace Walpole’s castle at Strawberry Hill was a most curious picture of Rose the royal gardener presenting the first pineapple raised in England to Charles II who is standing in a garden.³⁴ Decker’s truly Dutch passion for gardening was evidenced, however, by a holly hedge (then regarded as a great ornament) which Macky, a traveler through England, describes as “the longest, the largest, and the highest that he ever saw.”³⁵

Decker died suddenly on March 18, 1749, leaving a fortune reputed to be £100,000. He was survived by his wife and three daughters and was much lamented. The *Gentleman’s Magazine* speaks of his “remarkable evenness of temper,” his “uninterrupted tranquillity of mind,” his undisturbed domestic happiness. “Indefatigable in all offices of friendship, he advised with sincerity, admonished with freedom, and acted with zeal. . . . As he acquired his fortune not only unrepined but unsuspected, he enjoyed it unenvied. He enjoys it still, for he shared it with the poor.”³⁶

City College of New York

³³ Wotton’s *The English Baronetage*, London, 1741, Vol. IV, p. 185; Edward W. Brayley, *The History of Surrey*, London, 1844, Vol. III, pp. 101–2; Rev. Daniel Lysons, *The Environs of London*, London, 1792, Vol. I, pp. 453–4.

³⁴ Horace Walpole, *The Works of Horatio Walpole*, London, 1798, Vol. II, p. 423.

³⁵ Brayley, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 102 note.

³⁶ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1749, p. 141; *London Magazine*, 1749, p. 145; *Scots Magazine*, 1749, p. 150.

In Memoriam: Mary Fels, 1863–1953

A CULTURED WOMAN of generous sympathies and broad human interests, Mrs. Mary Fels was active in most of the worthwhile movements of her time and a leader in many of them. She shared the interests of her husband, Joseph Fels, reformer and philanthropist and a founder of the Philadelphia soap manufacturing firm of Fels & Co., and worked by his side from their marriage in 1881 until his death in 1914. Thereafter she carried on alone, her tiny, frail body nourished by a high soul. Neither age nor infirmity obstructed her; she was active until her death this year.

Mrs. Fels was born in Sembach, Bavaria, and attended St. Mary’s Academy in Notre Dame, Ind., and the University of Pennsylvania. She was president of the Joseph Fels Foundation and vice president of the Aaronsohn Memorial Foundation. The former was the coordinating body for some twenty-two foundations which she and her husband set up. Her philanthropies ranged from a farm colony in England and the endowment of many institutions in Palestine to prison, land and tax reform in the

United States and many other countries. The poor, the homeless, the refugee all were objects of her concern. But both she and her husband insisted that their philanthropies should be devoted to helping people to help themselves. She had a profound sense of the dignity and worth of the individual human person which colored her social thought and efforts, including her books, *Toward the Light* and *The Life of Joseph Fels*.

When this JOURNAL was founded, Mrs. Fels invited us to her New York apartment to inform us that if the project needed financial backing, she was ready to provide it. We explained that through the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation and its friends, adequate financial support had been provided; the big problem was to find trained scholars willing to deal with the problems of American democracy that interested us. She bade us to remember that she was always ready to stand back of us, and on that and many succeeding occasions when she relayed messages through friends, she gave us words of encouragement too generous to bear repeating here. But she did more than that. In the circles in which she moved, she never let an opportunity go by to interest leading scholars in the work of our group. Valued collaborators were enlisted through her efforts.

Her life was a blessing to all—to the many thousands—whom it touched. Her memory remains a blessing to all of us, one spurring each to become, in his small way, an instrument of God's Will as Mary Fels served so magnificently throughout a long and fruitful life. W. L.

In Memoriam: James J. Tompkins, 1870–1953

THE LIFE of the Rev. James J. Tompkins, widely-known leader in the adult education movement in Nova Scotia, and vice president of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish for more than twenty years, was molded by the conviction that ignorance was synonymous with poverty and that to abolish poverty education must reach the poor. His realization of that ideal in the founding of study circles outside university halls lifted up the common people of the Maritime Provinces.

The work of what became known as the "Antigonish Movement" has received the plaudits of followers of many faiths in other countries. The influence of the university's extension department has spread not only through the Maritime Provinces but in several countries.

Father "Jimmy", as he was affectionately known, was born Sept. 7,