

The Washington Historical Quarterly

SARAH LORETTA DENNY—A TRIBUTE.

In the death of Sarah Loretta Denny, Seattle has suffered a loss. The helping hand of the needy and troubled is forever stilled. But her work was well done, her rest well earned, and she went to the great Master, leaving the world the better for her having lived.

Miss Denny came from good old southern stock, both her father and mother being southerners, her father coming from Kentucky and her mother from Tennessee. In the year 1835 her parents settled in Knox County, Illinois, and there, near the little town of Abbington, on February 14th, 1851, she was born. It was just at a time when the fever to "move westward" swept the land, and when but a tiny baby the home was broken up, and on the 10th of April the long, tedious march across the plains to Oregon began—a march full of dangers and hardships; then, for five weary months, a prairie schooner was her home.

The family settled first on a farm near Salem, Oregon. Here they lived until Miss Denny was eight years old, when her parents again moved, this time to Seattle, where they remained, and where she made her home until her death. Here she attended the public schools and the Territorial University. For several years after obtaining her education she taught school in Seattle and on Whidby Island.

As a child her great love of nature was noticeable; flowers and pets, rather than little playmates, were her companions, and especially fond was she of all feathered creatures. No doubt this natural love of nature was developed by the grandeur of the scenery with which her life was surrounded.

Early in life she entered the church, being a charter member of Plymouth Congregational Church of Seattle. As a church

worker she was earnest, conscientious and untiring. She was an active member to within a few months of her death, when her health, much to her sorrow, compelled her to give up her work.

Her father died in 1875. She and her mother continued to live in the old home, on the corner of Third and Union, where the Federal building is now being erected. Upon her mother's death, in 1888, she made her home with her brother, Arthur A. Denny, and his family, until her death on July 25th, 1907.

The keynote of her character was to do good in secret. The main study in life, her one life thought, was to do the most good possible with what she had, whether much or little, and to do it quietly. Her unassuming nature shrank from publicity, and many a family in the time of stress and worry has been helped, but by an unseen hand; and how many times flowers and fruit were sent to the sick, food and clothing to the needy, without the name of the sender. It was not for glory or praise or thanks that she gave, but for the love of suffering humanity, the love of giving—and the thought that as she went her way she might do what she could to lessen the world's suffering. She was always ready with a smile and a word of encouragement, and was never too busy to listen to any story of real trouble, and then to help in her own quiet way.

Miss Denny possessed a strong character, a fine intellect and keen wit. She never swerved from the path of right and duty; there were no two paths for her—just the one. She was a deep thinker and a great reader, and was remarkably well informed, having time to read only the best, for time was too short and life too full to waste any precious moments on the mediocre. Her quiet sense of humor and fun, and her bright smile and witty sayings, will long be remembered by those who loved her.

"The good is oft interred with their bones" is not so with Miss Denny, for when the memory of her goodness, and the warmth of her many kindnesses have passed on with those who have known her, the good that she planned will live on and grow. Generations to come will reap the benefits of her thoughtfulness and charitableness as found in her last will and testament. In death as well as life her thought was of the suffering, the poor and needy, and her beloved church.

Her will is conceded by all to be one of the very best yet executed in the State of Washington. She remembered all her relatives with gifts of various values, and then divided the bulk

of her fortune, estimated at more than \$300,000, among the most worthy charities and public institutions. Among the bequests are the following:

The Congregational Home Missionary Society of New York.....	\$10,000
Women's Relief Society of Seattle.....	10,000
Congregational Home Missionary Society of the State of Wash- ington.....	5,000
The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.....	5,000
The Women's Board of Missions for the Pacific.....	5,000
Young Women's Christian Association of Seattle.....	5,000
Seattle Seamen's Friend Society.....	4,000
Salvation Army, for work in Seattle.....	2,000
Crittenton Home	2,000
Young Men's Christian Association of Seattle.....	1,000
Thomas and Jessie Kenney Home for Old People.....	20,000
Pioneer Association of the State of Washington.....	20,000
University of Washington, for the establishment of fellowships....	25,000
Toward founding a Pulmonary Hospital in Seattle.....	10,000
Toward a fund to aid Seattle firemen injured during the discharge of their duty.....	5,000
Seattle General Hospital.....	10,000
Plymouth Congregational Church.....	5,000

The people of Seattle are well aware that every one of those bequests has been most worthily bestowed. They reveal a fine sense of appreciation on the part of the quiet, unassuming philanthropist.