

ST. PAUL HONORS MRS. W. T. FRANCIS BIG TESTIMONIAL---SILVER LOVING CUP PRESENTED

As a grand and fitting climax of the labors of Mrs. W. T. Francis in connection with the Anti-Lynching Law just passed by the Minnesota Legislature, came the large public testimonial tendered to her at Pilgrim Baptist Church last Sunday afternoon by St. Paul citizens.

Mr. Charles H. Miller, who had been most active in arranging for the meeting, acted as master of ceremonies.

After singing by the choir and prayer, Mr. James H. Loomis on behalf of the citizens said in part:

The citizens of St. Paul are indeed proud of Mrs. W. T. Francis, and justly so, for ever since girlhood and her graduation she has devoted the principal activities of her life to the uplift of our race. The creation of the Anti-Lynching Bill and the work, time and energy spent by her in order to secure its passage, proves that her ambition is to help her fellow-men. That law will go down in history as the most important piece of



MRS. W. T. FRANCIS.

legislation affecting our race that has ever been passed in our state. It is of untold value to the colored people of Minnesota and will be helpful as a precedent and a step in the right direction for other states, and even in securing a Federal Act, through Congress, to stop the awful American crime of lynching.

This public testimonial and this beautiful loving cup is evidence of the fact that we appreciate all that Mrs. Francis has done for the race, not only with regard to the Anti-Lynching Bill but through all of her years of service, and all good citizens of St. Paul stand ready to support her at all times in all her efforts in our behalf.

Mr. George C. Shannon, speaking on "Our Women," paid a great tribute to them in general and Mrs. Francis in particular.

Dr. L. Raymond Hill was the next speaker, and he made a wonderful plea for "Race Solidarity."

He was followed by Mrs. Mae Black-Mason, who rendered a soprano solo: "Oh, Divine Redeemer," by Gounod, in her usual artistic style.

Mr. Charles H. Miller, presented the handsome silver gold-lined loving cup, standing 17 inches high and bears this inscription engraved upon it:

Presented to Mrs. Nellie F. Francis by the colored citizens of St. Paul for her untiring efforts in behalf of the race and in securing the passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill, April 18, 1921.

In presenting the cup Mr. Miller said among other good things:

This is the era of men and women who dare. Long have we plodded in a furrow, not having the courage to come out of the rut, but today the progressive colored American seeks opportunity that does not come of itself.

Failure was in your path; but, you met it face to face, you were not afraid, but with clear-minded will, faith, courage, perseverance you grasped the opportunity to protect the race; and, with the help of God, you compelled failure to work to your advantage. Plunging into the tide of politics at its flood you were swept to victory. The Anti-Lynching Bill passed, you were its initiative, to you belongs the reward of efficiency.

I am reminded of another of your achievements as I listen to the melodious notes pealing from the organ. I become reminiscent. With dynamic power charged with the vibrations of living force you met the financial king of the world, Andrew Carnegie and succeeded in securing a gift of \$1,100. You have been charged with self-aggrandizement, but bless your soul, every time you have advanced by your own will power and brain up the ladder of fame. Unlike many others of the race with equal advantages who have dodged behind pillar and post to get away from the race, you have brought the race up with you. So mind not what others say or think in these matters concerning you and the race. Live so as to make the most of the life God has given you and let the tongues wag as they may.

It is a sad mistake to say there are only seven deadly sins, there are eight and ingratitude is the first.

Mrs. Francis, on behalf of the race, men and women of St. Paul, as a small token of appreciation for your effort in behalf of the race, in conceiving and working for the consummation of the Anti-Lynch Law pass-

ed in the Legislature April 18, 1921. I present to you this loving cup; and, while it is true all who desired had not the opportunity to contribute yet, they join us in spirit in the hearty endorsement of your work. Its inscription records the fate that out of your untiring zeal and effort you have emerged with success.

A Folk Song was rendered by Pilgrim and St. James choirs.

Mrs. W. T. Francis then arose, visibly affected, and responded in part as follows:

Your children will reap the harvest of our solidarity,—of our determination to stand together, to fight together, and, if needs be, to die together; for they are dying every day, the men and women of our race, martyrs to lynch-law, the fiery stake and the awful savagery of peonage; that these your children, may know full liberty and an equal chance in life. Or they must reap in the bitterness of sorrow, the fruits of our passivity and indifference; the frittering of our strength by suffering, petty strife and narrow jealousies to becloud the larger vision of our responsibility to coming generations.

And my plea, in response to, and in sincere appreciation of this testimonial and loving cup which you, the citizens of St. Paul, of your own accord and without regard to my preferences in the matter, have summoned me here to receive from you, is that we take up the keynote that has been sounded in these splendid speeches here today and frown with all the strength of our minds upon the destructive and selfish agencies and efforts to hinder earnest and altruistic service which imperil our efforts to enlist the co-operation of those who would sponsor our cause and be of service could we but present a united front. Listen to the plea of the black poet:

"O, black people, cease your sleeping, Get you off the road to folly; For your children's sake awaken! shun the snares of petty discord Which dishearten and divide you. For division is your weakness."

I have met you today, at your request, not in a spirit of triumph because of the great honor which you have bestowed upon me,—for I affirm that I, or no one would wish to experience in life any greater honor than that to be selected as the object of the good will and unanimity of purpose—the first upon whom the city of St. Paul has ever conferred such a distinguished honor—but rather in the spirit of sadness that it should be necessary to urge legislators of this or any other state to write statutes declaring for the same rights for which 65 years ago Abraham Lincoln believed he had died, and the soul of old John Brown was sent marching on. And to assure you of my willingness at all times to assist in securing from the white people of Minnesota, and of the United States, if needs be, the civil and political rights as well as the social justice to the race to which we belong and which you, our citizens in this well-filled church edifice today represent with such dignity, culture and fine spirit. Again I thank you.

The congregation and choirs sang a song. Revs. H. L. P. Jones and J. A. Foster made a few remarks. Mr. B. L. White recited the poem entitled: "Rev. J. A. Foster pronounced the benediction and thus ended this remarkable occasion.

Those who subscribed and made the testimonial possible were:

- Chas. H. Miller, J. H. Loomis, C. H. Logan, Hammond Turner, Wm. Pettit, J. Q. Adams, Dr. L. R. Hill, Dr. H. L. P. Jones, Wm. A. Walker, R. M. Johnson, Mrs. W. B. Elliott, Dr. J. R. French, J. Louis Ervin, O. C. Hall, W. G. Root, George B. Lowe, J. Bibeaux, Harriet E. Williams, Albert J. Brooks, Mrs. Holcomb, H. F. McIntyre, Mrs. Frances Davenport, Mrs. Amanda Bell, Bert Buckner, Mrs. A. C. Lyles, Joseph E. Johnson, Nelson Herron, Wm. Cannon, Mrs. M. Bradshaw, Mrs. J. W. Milton, Mr. J. J. Johnson, James Ward, Wm. Love, Mr. and Mrs. G. K. Grisson, Frazier & Taylor, E. A. Hatton, Charles Ballard, Horace T. Craig, Mrs. Eleanor B. Smith, Ralph Allen, Mrs. G. W. Moker, Jean Matthews, J. H. Dillingham, C. W. Wrigington, Walker Williams, L. M. Terrell, Thos. Neal, W. J. Tucker, Mrs. Emma Coble, Mrs. Addie Bellesene, Mrs. Ida Mills, J. S. Sparks, J. R. Lynn, The Helper, Willard H. Reynolds, W. R. M. McDowell, J. A. Greer, S. W. Wright, Geo. C. Shannon, Mrs. Hattie Oliver, Mrs. E. W. Lindsay, George R. Manning, J. C. Black, Mrs. Birdie High, Hugh Schuck, Mrs. Ida Mae Murphy, R. C. Shano, Everywoman Progressive Council, S. E. Hall, J. B. Johnson, Dr. V. D. Turner, Wm. G. Hood, Geo. W. James, M. L. Barksdale, A. V. Hall, W. B. Elliott, Jas. Grisham, James McNeal, George D. Howard, Leander Sheets, L. McConnell, J. O. Nesbit, Thomas H. Nichols, S. W. Williams, Evan H. Bridges, Perry Allen, W. Ware, Geo. Willis, Sidney Cuthbert, Mark Fort, Charles Shepard, J. Turner, C. H. Fendle, W. B. Brown, F. King, Geo. R. Temple, Eugene Rocks, Joseph W. Reed, Geo. Benton, W. T. Joyce, D. Pope, Mrs. W. A. Johnson, James A. Lee, Dr. O. D. Howard, W. V. Howard, Geo. G. Butler, Peoples Shining Parlor, Geo. Winn, Astoria Sanitary System, Curley Campbell, Owen Howell, Wm. Gamble, R. N. Travis, M. McCarty, W. Yeiser, Huey McCarty, S. Taten, A. S. Weber.