

Addendum 3 **FLORENCE MAY HOLBROOK**



105. Florence May Holbrook, 1860-1932.

Max Heindel writes in the *Rosicrucian Christianity Lectures*, page 278: “The following lines appeared in *London Light* a number of years ago and have been treasured by the writer as AN IDEAL PRAYER.”

With the help of the British Museum in London, England, the University of Washington in Seattle and the University of Chicago, Illinois, it was possible to trace the author of the aforementioned poem, and her biographical data.

Florence May Holbrook was born in Peru, Illinois in 1860, the daughter of Judge Edmund S. Holbrook and Anna Case Holbrook. He was one of the pioneers in the Peru community and had a part in laying out the original city. He accumulated considerably wealth, through real estate transactions, as did two of his brothers, likewise pioneers in Peru. The family moved away from Peru between 1862 and 1865.

Florence secured her education in Peru, Joliet and Chicago, including a course at the University of Chicago, from which she graduated in 1879 and received the degree of B. A. and M. A. She first taught at Oakland High School, Chicago, from 1879 to 1889, where she served as principal the last three years, and was principal in the Forestville Elementary School in

Chicago from 1889 to 1924, where she had a staff of twenty-seven teachers, and there were over thirteen hundred pupils; and some time at Phillips Junior High School in Chicago. An earnest pacifist, she was one of those who sailed to Europe on Henry Ford's peace ship in 1917. At one time she urged Americans to use the word 'peace' when they met their fellow men instead of the familiar "hello" or "howdy".

After the war, she traveled in Europe and in 1929 went to Russia to study conditions with the John Dewey commission.

She was a noted contributor to the educational literature of her days. The best known works are: *Book of Nature's Myth*, *Round the Year in Myth and Song*, *Northland Heroes*, *Elementary Geography*, *The Hiawatha Alphabet* and a dramatization of *Hiawatha*. After an illness of many months she deceased at home in Chicago on September 30, 1932.

The poem, *A Prayer* can be divided in six stanzas. It is contained in Al Bryant's *Sourcebook of Poetry*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968, p. 547, but omits the stanzas 4 and 6.

The same poem, but titled *Understanding* is printed anonymously in *Poems that Touch the Heart*, by A. L. Alexander (comp.) 1956, p. 372. But their stanzas 5 and 6 omit.

The complete poem, I assume, is reproduced by Max Heindel in his book mentioned above, and runs as follows:

A PRAYER

Not more of light I ask, O God,
But eyes to see what is:
Not sweeter songs, but ears to hear
The present melodies:

Not more of strength, but how to use
The power that I possess:
Not more of love, but skill to turn
A frown to a caress:

Not more of joy, but how to feel
Its kindling presence near,
To give to others all I have
Of courage and of cheer.

No other gifts, dear God, I ask,
But only sense to see
How best these precious gifts to use
Thou hast bestowed on me.

Give me all fears to dominate,
All holy joys to know;
To be the friend I wish to be,
To speak the truth I know.

To love the pure, to seek the good
To lift with all my might
All souls to dwell in harmony,
In freedom's perfect light.

The picture of Florence May Holbrook, provided by the University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, Washington, was taken from *Educational History of Illinois*, by John Williston Cook, Illinois: The Henry O. Shepard Company, 1912.

The data were taken from:

- *Educational History of Illinois*, Chicago 1912.
- *The American Literary Yearbook*, 1919.
- *The Daily Post-Tribune*, La Salle, Peru; Friday, September 30, 1932.

The British Library wrote to me on February 8, 1983, "The periodical entitled *London Light* no 1 vol. 1, 28 August 1880, has the sub-title 'an illustrated political, theatrical, musical, comical, satirical, sporting and society journal.'"

"The issue held by the Newspaper Library has twelve pages, which contain items of general interest taken from Society at large. Reports of society military weddings are printed together with short stories. The publishers were Messrs. Allingham & Holloway, 108 Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C."