831 words

For memorial meeting
to Mrs Schurz at
Wa[illegible] Club 8/4/18

AGATHA SCHURZ

Three noble qualities found daily and unconscious expression in the life of Agatha Schurz as I was permitted to see it. They were a fine sense of the dignity and responsibility of her position as the head of the household of her father; complete devotion to his welfare in his life and to his memory after his death; and firm and consistant fidelity to the great conservative standards of life and art.

It was a professional errand that first brought me into contact with Agatha Schurz. As an editor and as an ardent admirer of the career of Carl Schurz I was interested in the publication of his Reminiscences. He had already written in German for his family the story of his childhood and of the stirring youthful adventures which finally landed him a political refugee in this country. He shrank from publishing his narrative fearing that it savored of self-advertising. He hesitated also before the labor of completing the story covering as it did the long period of the Civil War of Reconstruction and of a succession of splendid efforts for purer political life in this country. It was my professional duty to add what I could to the urge of several of his oldest and most honored friends. And here I found at once protecting him from all undue appeal and pressure his wise, firm and completely devoted daughter. She understood the value of the contribution he had to make. Her pride as a daughter in his career, her devotion to the principles for for which he had so nobly fought made her want the completion

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of the great narrative. But she knew his spirit, knew how he gave to that which he undertook all his mind and heart and strength. He was frail. She would protect him unless he himself could find satisfaction in the arduous task and could be persuaded to pursue it with moderation. She was determined that he should not be overpersuaded. There were moments in the long negotiations, which finally led to the completion and publication of Mr. Schurz' splendid story, when I would gladly have retired from the enterprize so deeply did I come to admire and to sympathize with Agatha Schurz' protective care of her father. A nobler care a woman could not have taken upon herself, nor could a woman have exercised such a care with a completer sense of its dignity and worth-whileness.

Within the household which she so guarded from all intrusion which might distress him, she fostered the finest traditions. It was a household of good talk, of gay spirit, of genuine natural hospitality. There was music - the best; books - the best; people - the best. Through it there shone continually kindliness, sympathy, understanding. Agatha Schurz' great work was making a home where a man like Carl Schurz could be happy and free. In doing this she served not him alone but all the big group which loved and honored him.

When finally the great figure around which she had built her career was gone, there was no retreat, no laying down of cares. She went on exercising the same hospitality - continuing the old works of helpfulness and friendliness - supporting the best in music and in art. There was a heavy and important piece of work to be done in connection with Mr. Schurz' papers. They covered a period from 1852 when young,

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eager, ardent he landed in this country, almost to the day of his death fifty-four years later.

There were speeches, articles, notes and a vast mass of letters in both English and German, all vibrant with noble enthusiasm for whatever was good and equally noble disdain for what was evil. To examine and arrange these papers for an editor was a work requiring endless patience and care and for Agatha Schurz it was bound to be one of heart-breaking sadness. She put herself to it with wonderful devotion. Five years after the Carl Schurz memorial Committee decided to publish his writings as not only the finest tribute possible for him, but as the hightest public service - the six big volumes were in print. This heavy task could never have been completed in this time and with the wisdom and taste which characterized it if it had not been for Agatha Schurz' labor - a lhbor of which no one knew save the few who, behind the scenes, watched the books growing with life.

That she so kind, so firm, so steady should have left us so soon is one of those inexplicable surprises of life to which we never quite reconcile ourselves. Yet it happens to few women who fail of their full period of years to leave behind so complete and satisfying a memory. She did the thing she set out to do - saw it through to the end and she died honored by all those who knew her for the mastery of those qualities on which in the last analysis the happiness and the progress of society depends.

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