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To the Mary Jane Holmes Memorial

By
Mrs. Clarie A. Ballard

A true artist in her work, a masterpiece in writings, was Mary Jane Holmes. She was once asked why she never had a villain in her stories, and she calmly replied, "I have never met one."

Mary Jane Holmes, a quiet, reserved person with beauty and dynamic personality, was humble, sympathetic and understanding toward humanity in general.

Back in Grover Cleveland's administration, there was a famine in our country. As thousands were hungry, Brockport was no exception. Mary Jane Holmes set up a kitchen in back of her home, where there was a small cottage. The old iron cook stoves were kept hot with kettles of vegetable soup. It was then the poor and needy came night and day for pails of soup. If their pails were too small, she would tell them to come back with larger pails. The Old Stanley Meat Market saved bushels of soup bones from three to five cents a pound for her to keep the soup being made. Nearby farmers furnished her with needed vegetables. All Vegetables were put through food grinders of that day, and pearl tapioca was added for starch. The most filling and satisfying soup ever made.

Lanterns hung outside at night as people came and went, as they trod through heavy snows, March winds, and April showers. Being so thankful for it. Never was anyone hungry while Mary Jane Holmes was keeping the kettles hot throughout the famine.

This is an example of her true self --her love for people, kindness of her heart. Real Christian woman of fine culture. So common and well liked.

Daniel Holmes was her husband, and a Brockport attorney. He also was of many accomplishments, helped Mary Jane in all her work. They had a beautiful marriage together. He was a familiar sight daily as he strolled down College Street to Main, with his bright red hair and old cane.

Mr. Holmes had a balcony built on the house where Mary Jane spent many hours writing her books. I have been told many of her books were sold in Southern states.

Her picturesque home is still clear in the minds of many of the older folks in Brockport. The iron deer in her front yard was such an attraction to school children that many would run into the yard just to touch it. It was a home that one would know could only be that of a true artist and writer. In her many travels, to Mary Jane Holmes, there was no place like home.

A great honor to our beautiful village of Brockport was Mary Jane Holmes, who has helped to make Brockport the progressive, fine village that it is.