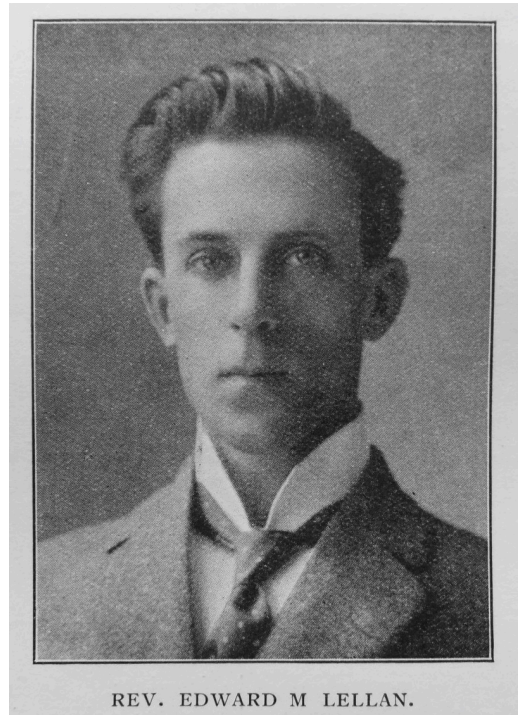


Rev. Edward McLellan - A Loyal Son of Primitive Methodism

Transcription of article published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by G. Carver Lennox

OUR readers will remember that the author of last year's story, 'The Ruin,' and of several stories that have appeared in *Springtime*, was compelled two years ago on account of his wife's health to try the effect of a sojourn in California. The Rev. Edward McLellan, in taking this step, did not sever himself from the Primitive Methodist ministry, but merely asked the Conference for leave of absence, first for a year, and then for two years. He is a minister of exceptional gifts of speech, and as a preacher and platform speaker has made for himself a fine record. His literary gifts, too, are remarkable, and he ranks among the two or three most arresting writers of fiction the denomination possesses. It was a great grief to Mr. McLellan to have to leave this country. He loves his Church and revels in its service. Few men in the ministry have so high a sense of what they owe the Church that placed them in that position, and no sphere of service anywhere else would tempt him to desert the Church of his choice. He

was fortunate in finding in California a sphere that gave considerable scope to his remarkable gifts, and at the same time furnished conditions calculated to place his wife in circumstances most likely to promote her recovery. It will be a great joy to her friends to know that the improvement has been so steady and well maintained, and that she hopes with her husband to return to this country and resume circuit work at the next Conference.



REV. EDWARD M. LELLAN.

Meanwhile it will interest many of our readers, whether they be personal friends of Mr. McLellan or among those who have been fascinated by his literary productions, to know something of the work he has done during his comparatively brief sojourn in California. To many on both sides of the Atlantic it will be a matter of surprise that Mr. McLellan should be able to return to this country. To begin with, his account of the climate is enough to make those who have been familiar this last winter with little but fogs and rain, to long for an opportunity of exchanging places with him. Think of a land of almost endless summer. Last December scarcely gave a drop of rain, and every day was a perfect summer's day. The radiant skies, the balmy atmosphere, the orange groves golden with fruit, make up a picture which suggests a veritable paradise. To leave this for the dull, grey skies, the foggy, depressing atmosphere of the north-west of England, implies that there is in this land of ours some magnet of irresistible attraction for our friend.

Then it will be no easy matter for Mr. McLellan to tear himself away from the people among whom he has made his home for the last eighteen months or two years. They have learnt to respect and admire his brilliant preaching gifts, and for his personality, so bright, so genial, so vivid and magnetic, they have come to entertain something more than admiration or devotion. They not only know him and find his ministry a joy, they also know what he has achieved. Chula Vista is in the San Diego

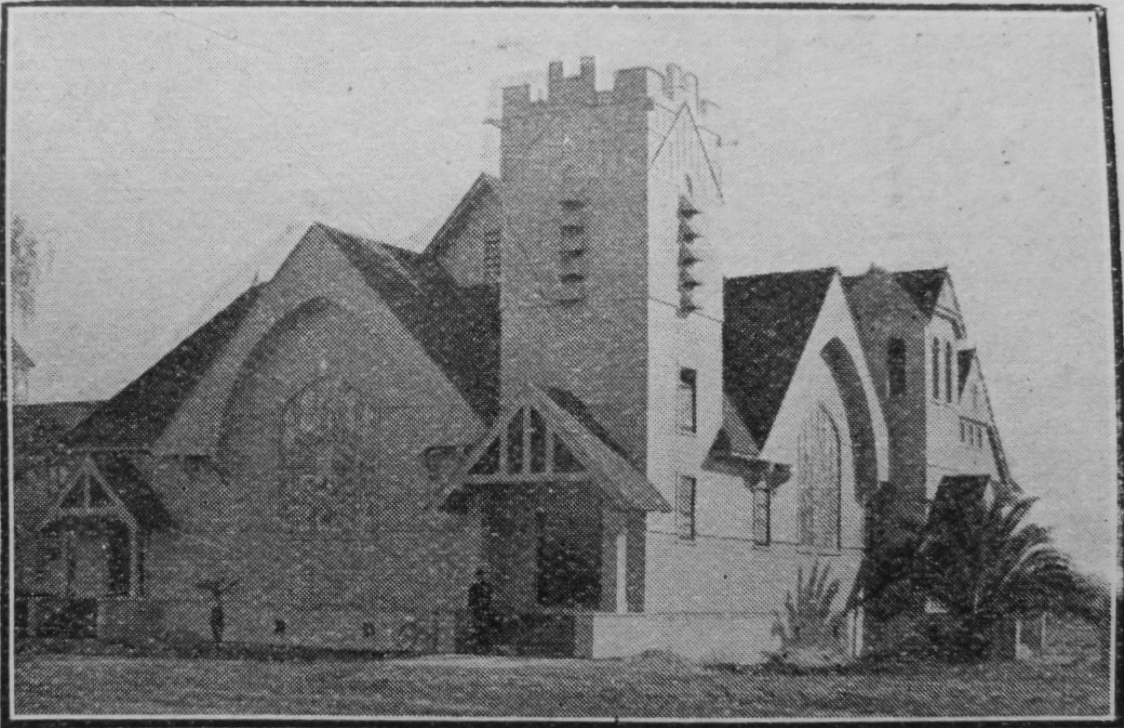


region, a charming rolling country of orange and lemon groves. It is a wonderful country and evidently has a great future before it. The Pacific coast will boom for the next century and the port of San Diego is bound to be one of the greatest in the world when the Oriental trade comes that way, as it will in the near future. Mr. McLellan believes it is destined to become one of the greatest cities in the world. As many people can be housed there as in London and New York, and every house would command beautiful views.

Here Mr. McLellan has won not only the devotion of his American conregation, but has accomplished something akin to a miracle in exorcising from the community the sectarian spirit. It will be a surprise to many of our readers to learn that over there denominationalism sometimes runs mad. If a new town springs up and there is any sign of growth, most of the churches want to be represented in it. Sometimes in a small town there will be six churches and seven or eight congregations, all of them mighty poor. It would have been the same at Chula Vista but for the heroic policy Mr. McLellan advocated and carried out. Within a year the divisive and schismatic impulses, usually so natural under the circumstances, have been overcome, and all sects and classes have been welded into a splendid unity. Bringing to his task a kindling enthusiasm, a rare breadth of judgment, a conciliatory temper, a magnetic personality, a genial humour and great pulpit gifts, Mr. McLellan has achieved what many an American minister would have given a decade of his life to accomplish.

As the traveller enters the town by train, a writer in the *Pacific* informs us, the spacious imposing church which Mr. McLellan has erected is the most striking object which meets the eye. The building occupies a site next the public school, and has been erected at a cost of nearly 8,000 dollars. Of this sum 5,000 dollars were raised before the day of dedication last December, most of it locally, and before the close of the opening day 1,600 dollars more were pledged and paid. With 1,000 dollars

from the Church Building Society the building will be practically free of debt. Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, are all found in the membership, and the church assumes a very different aspect from that which it presented on the arrival of Mr. McLellan at Chula Vista.



NEW CHURCH, CHULA VISTA.

It may be a painful discovery to his people when they learn that their gifted pastor is returning to England. It cannot altogether be a surprise. He has never concealed the fact that he is a Primitive Methodist from top to toe. He has never lost an opportunity of glorifying his beloved Church. And yet to many of us it still remains a wonder that he should find it possible to leave so fine a sphere, so devoted a people, so beautiful a country. The church is a very handsome building, and is admitted to be the finest village church in California, if not in the States. But then Mr. McLellan's heart is in Primitive Methodism and dear old England. To him climate, beauty of location, and money, are not everything in this world; the offer of £500 a year is not even a temptation. He is very grateful to California and its people for what they have done for him and his family, and very grateful to the Church for the opportunity it has afforded him, but he thinks he has paid his debt and can leave it with a clear conscience. Having erected a beautiful church and very nearly paid for it, and built up a fine congregation which will be a joy to any man who succeeds him, he has something to look back upon with gladness, and this will make leaving it all somewhat easier.

He intends to leave California on the 1st of June, will travel leisurely across the continent, calling at several points on the way to stay with friends he has made since going out to America, and hopes to arrive in this country about the middle of July. He will be warmly welcomed by his many friends and admirers, and we anticipate that the experiences of the last two years will have greatly developed his

character, and must in the coming years enrich his ministry.

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1911/552