

April 1965

HOPE

anced Years

MEET MARLEE STEELE

Marlee and her twin, Varlee, were born December 26, 1880, in Sowers (now Irving) Texas. The parents, Isaac Sylvester and Mary Tompkins were stock and grain farmers. Besides the twins, there were seven other children. Her father died when Marlee was only 16 years of age, leaving his wife with six single children to rear and a farm to manage. One by one the other children married and established homes of their own, but Marlee stayed on for 14 years helping her mother with the children and the farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Tompkins were devout Christians, and following their examples, the twins began their own Christian lives when they were only 14. Varlee married young, and died young, leaving an infant daughter.

An older sister, Agatha, died in 1901, leaving four motherless sons. Marlee and her mother stepped into the breach, added the four to their brood, and continued to struggle with the task of being mother, father, counselor and farm managers to a family whose ranks were alternately broken and swelled by tragedy. The story of a family declining in size was repeated as these children also grew up and married, or simply struck out on their own.

Love had come to Marlee much sooner, but she would not leave her mother to struggle alone with the immensities of her problems. However, with most of the children now grown, in 1911 she married W. F. Barcus of Dallas, whom she had known most of her life. Bro. Barcus was a gospel preacher, and also operated a book store. The store gave them a financial stability that preaching alone did not supply in those days. Their union and happiness was to be a brief one, tho, for he died on April 10, 1913.

Marlee Barcus was to remain a widow for more than ten years. Then she met Ralph Steele, who worked in a wholesale dry goods establishment, and they were married in 1924. This marriage was destined to last 30 years. It was dissolved by Mr. Steele's death in

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Marlee Steele—

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1954, after a long, lingering illness.

For most of three score and ten years Marlee's life has been lived for Christ. Under the influence of Christian parents, and with the help and encouragement of two husbands who were Christians she has learned much and served long.

After less than two years of widowed loneliness Marlee decided to take residence in the Home. She moved to the Haven on the Hill April 21, 1956. Just nine days prior to her arrival she had buried a nephew whom she had reared. She has known much of the tragedy of death, as it has struck often and close to her life. Even as she was journeying to the Home, death struck again, this time taking one of her nieces. With her arrival came the sad news, and she unloaded her possessions and retraced her steps to Irving, from whence she had just come. Returning to the Home the following week, Marlee asked Supt. Pigg for duties to help her pass the time, occupy her mind, and serve those in the Home and its visitors. He gave her the job of registering visitors. She continued in this post of registrar and goodwill ambassador till she was incapacitated by a heart attack in November, 1956. She found many other things to do while keeping the register. As one philosopher said, "It's easy to find service to render, if you don't care who gets the credit."

To make life easier for all of us, and pleasanter for our neighbors, let us seek opportunities for service.

ONE MORE STEP

At this writing, April 6, 1965, Mr. Dickey and his men are enclosing a small open-faced porch between West Halls Nos. 1 and 2, adjacent to the nurses' station. It will enlarge that facility and give added space for storage of materials and equipment. It is just a small step, but it is a step forward. Like the learning of a new word by Junior, or growing another inch, it is progress.

Sarah McGowen, who lives on West Hall, has been in the hospital twice recently, but she is back home now and wants all of her friends to know about it. She says, "Thank you so much for all the nice cards."