



For Hands and Feet, She Uses Courage

(Continued)

was made superintendent.

A shocking blow almost devastated her shortly after she began teaching. Her sister Clara—who had been a mother to her—died of cancer. "It made me question whether life was worthwhile," she says.

But she was encouraged by the words of her pastor: "When things get rough, the Carlsens praise the Lord and work a little harder." Anne did both and found a purpose again in living.

REMEMBERING the crises of her early years, Anne Carlsen observes: "The spirit is a wonderful thing. So resilient, so hard to break. It makes us come through so much pain and disappointment." That spirit is what she tries to impart to her big family at the school. "I suppose I was born with a sunny disposition," she maintains, "or maybe smiling is just a habit with me."

Today, at 44, Dr. Carlsen is a poised, neatly groomed executive who gets around with remarkable dexterity. She drives a car with an arm cuff and other gadgets specially made for her, and is

active in a dozen civic, social, church, and professional groups. Last February, she wasn't a bit fazed when Rotarians sent her on a two-month trip to Australia, where she made talks before

education and rehabilitation groups. Still not too steady on her substitute legs, Dr. Carlsen occasionally falls, recently broke a shoulder bone and ended up in a hospital for five weeks. Acci-

dents like this don't disturb her. Once, on her way to a party, she slipped on the ice and cut her scalp; after a physician stitched her up, she went to the party as if nothing had happened.

About her physical shortcomings, Dr. Carlsen has a healthy philosophy. "I've always thought of my disability," she says, "as one of the accidents that happen in a certain percentage of

births. It just happened to me. I accept it as I do the color of my eyes, and I live with it. As I say to my youngsters, the world's great achievements are not physical but mental and spiritual."

The school Dr. Carlsen heads, rated as one of the best of its kind in the nation, is a modern, fully equipped, half-million-dollar structure at Jamestown, (pop. 15,000) in the heart of a

farm-trade community. Although operated by the Lutheran Hospitals and Homes Society, the school is open to any child who is too seriously handicapped to attend a public school. The students come from 16 states and Canada. Most of the school's income comes from public contributions.

The school's aim is to treat the "whole child"—mind, body, and soul. To Dr. Anne, her students are "just kids," not cases—"That's the way I longed to be regarded when I was their age." To her, nothing is more gratifying than watching a youngster change from a withdrawn and resentful child to a mature individual who can reach out to others and know that life is still good. Dr. Anne helps effect this transformation by imparting her own self-confidence.

TAKE JANE, for example, a pretty, golden-haired child. When she was six, Jane would lie awake at night crying because the braces on her withered legs were so uncomfortable. But when the night supervisor offered to unlock the braces, Jane refused. "I must learn to walk by myself!" she insisted. "Dr. Anne says I can." Jane grew up at the school. Today she is a sophomore at the University of Illinois, planning a career in mathematics.

Dr. Carlsen feels well rewarded for a lifetime of untiring work—not in the rewards of national honors or international reputation. Her rewards are the achievements of her graduates who, despite disappointments and heartbreaks in the outside world, have constantly pushed on and won places in society.

David Rife, for instance, is a research physicist with the Federal government. Irvin Nelson, paralyzed by polio, is an accounting student at the University of North Dakota. Most dramatic is Richard Johnson of Crystal, N. D., who is crippled by a spinal disease, has a malformed hand, cleft palate, poor vision, and a hearing impairment.

At 12, he was sent to a state hospital for the mentally retarded. Through Dr. Carlsen's efforts, however, he was educated and went on to own a typewriter sales and repair business, drive an automobile, and become active in community affairs.

The triumphs of her students are far more important to Dr. Carlsen than her own. To her, they are her reason for life and, perhaps, a reason for her own handicaps. A quotation from Tolstoy kept under the glass top of her desk sums up this dedication:

"Life is a place of service, and in that service one has to suffer a great deal that is hard to bear but more often to experience a great deal of joy. But that joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service, and have a definite object in life outside of themselves and their personal happiness."

(For a thumbnail sketch of the Illinois man who succeeds Dr. Carlsen as "Handicapped American of the Year," see page 20.)

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