

Special Papers.

SKETCHES OF TYPICAL LADY TEACHERS
BY MARGARET W. SUTHERLAND.

I HAVE been wondering whether "The Lady Teacher" was not a composite photograph taken from a series of pictures of lady teachers, succeeding one another rapidly and only leaving "in the stronger lines those traits which are common to many or all." Are not the different teachers whom we have seen types of different species, although belonging to one genus? Although we have known many who have the charm of marked individuality, yet do they not possess a sufficient number of traits characteristic of others, and in a kind and degree different from some, to make them typical of a class? I shall attempt to sketch a few such types. It may be with indifferent success, but the effort shall be honestly made. There is the country girl whose education, perhaps, has gone no farther than that afforded by the village school, who feels that because some relative of hers has taught, or because she has now a relative among the school directors, it would be well to teach at least a summer school in order to make a little money to get those special additions to her wardrobe which father deems unnecessary. Why should she do anything towards making her work of a professional character, since she has not the slightest intention of remaining at it long enough to get the elements of any profession? The school literary society will be a means of bringing young people together, and open up a way towards a more earnestly covered position. When she goes to get her second certificate at the end of one year, she longingly hopes that it may be the last she will need.

Again, we meet a bright, ambitious young country girl, determined to have an education beyond that which her parents are willing to afford, or it may be beyond that which they are able to give to all of their children, and therefore think best to give to the boys. This young girl, feeling that she has a right to all that her brothers have, is brave enough to work for it, and teaches a summer school, or a winter school it may be, helping herself along through a good academy or, perhaps, through college. While she does not do the best teaching that can be done, she puts a wholesome brightness and energy into her work that will be productive of good. She does her work quite as faithfully as the young man who is teaching school, while actually engaged in the study of law, medicine, or theology. But unfortunately for the country schools, they cannot long retain her services. The city will pay her better and afford her finer opportunities for advancement. She goes thither, and if she does not give up teaching for house-keeping, the chances are ten to one that you will find her occupying later in life a prominent position; perhaps, in the first rank of professional teachers.

There is at least one type more that I have found among the lady teachers of ungraded schools; a teacher for whom I have the deepest respect mingled with a tender pity. It is one whose early education has not been very extensive, but who has tried amidst many difficulties to improve it every year. She has attended county institutes and taken home many little ways of improving her school. But a small salary, which is shared by others whose claims she cannot resist, has kept her from traveling, or enjoying other modes of culture. She knows enough of what she has missed in life to make her hunger for it. But conscience, it may be in the right, it may be in error, has kept her life restricted until, although she knows its limitations, she feels powerless to break them. Added to this is the consciousness that she is growing old in the work, and that youth may crowd her out often to do work less intelligently and less conscientiously.

Of course, the city sisters of these country teachers have many points in common with them; but let us look now at some of the teachers of ungraded schools.

There are those who "hate teaching," but who consider it the most respectable or the most remunerative occupation they are fitted for. They are the ones for whom I have least sympathy, but for whose pupils I have the deepest pity. I hail the opening of a greater number of fields of labor for women with delight on their account; and long for the time when they will transfer their ser-

vices to the new fields. They are nearly always well dressed; and the fear that they may lose their situations and thus lose the means for procuring good clothes, added to the spark of ambition which I presume burns in the heart of almost every woman, keeps them from doing their work in a slovenly way, lest they may come under the censure of superintendent or director. They hardly know what a county institute is, rarely attend any association of teachers, can't afford to subscribe for any educational paper, and buy no more than three books in the course of a year.

We next see the pleasant young girl who has been rather a good pupil at school, with winning ways, a good share of enthusiasm which will take guidance cheerfully, though not always thoughtfully, from principal or superintendent, who has a natural sympathy with young life, does not make a great many mistakes although she hardly knows why or how she avoids them, passes a tolerably good examination every two years, or has the good fortune to have her certificate renewed, goes to the State or National Association occasionally, when she looks attractive, has a "jolly good time," and is a general favorite on such occasions with the majority of the staid superintendents found there every year, who, of course, like a variety after serious discussions of the deepest subjects with their profound brethren. This young lady teacher does little harm, although she does not make a very positive impression for good; and when she leaves the schoolroom for a home of her own, we all throw the rice or old shoes after her with heartiest good wishes, but without the regret that much is lost to the profession.

In every large city, even where there is a good training school connected with the normal school, there is a large number of teachers who have little or no professional spirit. They regard themselves merely as parts of a great whole. Their work is not poor, owing to careful supervisions. But they leave all investigation of educational problems to others; and think that educational gatherings are not for them but for their leaders. Their general reading, even of lighter literature, is limited;—their hours out of school being devoted to fancy work, sewing, or some form of recreation other than reading.

There is another class—possibly not large,—of which I have seen a sufficient number to warrant the making of a distinct group, who with splendid qualities never make a professional success, either dying an early death or enduring hours of suffering every year of their lives. Their intellectual endowments are rich and they have sterling moral qualities; but they have a nervous temperament upon which the restlessness of all natural children wears heavily. They have a conscientiousness which makes them satisfied with nothing short of the best, and they carry care around with them, thus exhausting vitality faster than they replenish it. They need fresh air and sleep; but I should advise, when taken in time, rather than frivolous recreations in which they cannot become interested and which, consequently, do not have the very effect which is desired,—a drawing of their minds away from school cares,—a real study which would engross thought and tone the system.

And now I can take time for but one more sketch, although I feel the incompleteness of my work. It is a type of that class of women who deserve to be called professional teachers, and who, I am proud to say for the honor of my sex, are increasing in number every year. Such teachers come from the ambitious country girls whom we looked at earlier, from the good normal school graduates, from the college girls, and, for the encouragement of all be it said, from the high school graduates working up from the humblest positions to those of honor and trust, completing college courses almost entirely, by private study. They are the happiest and most independent women workers in the world. They have studied books, they have studied life. They know the hearts of boys and girls so thoroughly that they can touch with the greatest skill just the most responsive chord. They know the line of educational thought in the east, west, and south of their country. They know something of schools in other countries. They have heard the leaders of educational thought in the United States; and have an acquaintance not only with the most active workers of their State, but give a helping hand to every earnest worker in the county to which they belong. They have a positive appetite for good

works on pedagogy, and look for educational papers and magazines with the same eagerness with which some women await the fashion paper or the latest novel. To broaden and beautify life they study with delight science or literature; and often refresh themselves with the beauty and grandeur of nature. They have reached the positions which they hold,—positions with salaries not as large as they should be, but large enough to free them from petty anxieties,—not merely by hard work, but by wise work which has kept them "healthy in body, healthy in mind, healthy in soul."—*Ohio Ed. Monthly.*

Current Thought.

HALF the bad work in the world arises from want of hope, not from want of vigor. That Will-o'-the-Wisp high "cleverness" in schools, and "genius" in more sapient regions, has tricked more into "the filthy-mantled" pools of conceited ignorance, or hopeless despair, and stopped more work, than any other cause, besides being at the bottom of much false teaching, and luring nations to their destruction by false glitter."—*Thring.*

THE school does not exist for the purpose of relieving the home of any of its responsibilities to the child. The home, to the limit of its ability is the natural and the best place to educate the child.

That which the school has been created to do especially, and which the home cannot do adequately, is to give the child the necessary training in *intelligence* that he must have if he would not be driven to the wall in the battle of life. This intellectual training has been given up to the school by general consent.

But adequate intellectual training is impossible without a corresponding culture of the feelings and of the will. Adequate intellectual education involves adequate character-building. It is in this work, what we call character-building, that the school and the home must act together. Character is the grand result of all education, and intellectual training, which is the distinctive function of the school, is an essential factor in it. Character cannot exist without intelligence. But character-building has never been delegated to the school in the sense and to the extent that intellectual training has been so delegated. The family cannot shift the burden of character-building from the home to the school. In this education of the higher spiritual nature, the family and the school must unite, and it is here that the school and the home come upon common ground.—*Illinois School Journal.*

THE legitimate object of all true training, either in school or family, is manhood. In all correct judgment the man is more than his accomplishments;—more than what he can do. * * *

The demand has long and noisily confronted us that the education in our schools shall be "practical." To this all agree. But what are we to understand by "practical?" Here lies the difficulty. Some say: "Teach a child what he shall do in after life." On the face of it, this seems a reasonable proposition. Close examination proves it to be nonsense,—not worthy of respectful consideration. Who has the prescience to tell what a child is to do in after life?—especially an American child? To-day Illinois is represented in the U. S. Senate by a dry-goods merchant, and the mayor of Chicago was trained as a plumber and civil engineer.

It will not be seriously questioned that the *man*, launched on the world of affairs, should, so far as he can, devote himself to that which he can do the best, and which he can do better than the average of his fellow men. It is undoubtedly the duty of the farmer, as it certainly is his aim, to bring to market the largest amount of grain and stock in the best condition his farm can be made to produce. But he will be more of a *man*, and hence a better citizen, if while producing these material products he knows something of botany, chemistry, and geology. Taking more interest in his work by reason of his knowledge of helping science, he will be just so much more of a man.

The province of education is to make the *man*. The exigencies of his lot will determine what the man shall do. The most impractical of all educations is to so train the child as to make him dependent on some one avocation for his support in life.—*Intelligence.*