

## AN IDEAL SCHOOLMASTER.

There are various ways of judging the merits of a schoolmaster. One of the simplest and least effectual is that which may be called the extra-personal. Its method is to count the letters after his name, to glance at (not necessarily to read) the pile of learned articles he has written, and to note the names of the institutions in which he has been trained. These things are symbols, not without value, but it can hardly be questioned that they are worth less as evidences of success than the voices of generations of pupils who rise up and call him blessed.

Scattered now far and wide over the earth are hundreds of women who, in the diverse responsibilities which have come to them since their school days, bless the name of George U. Hay. In the name of those scattered hundreds, may I give the readers of the REVIEW some fragments of reminiscence?

Across the gulf of years into which many educational experiments have fallen, certain recollections stand out, clear and secure. Here was a schoolmaster who grasped and lived by certain principles which gently, quietly and persistently he worked into the life scheme of each pupil and made powerful there. Of these none was more compelling than the sacredness of the daily task. We might like it or dislike it, but there were few of us who resisted its claims. Relatively speaking, we did a good deal of work and, relatively again, we did it well. This is not the place for a history of St. John High School successes, but those who care to search will find that more than one university gives it an honourable place in the records. We are more concerned now with a different theme, that of the personal force and influence of this remarkable schoolmaster.

I have said that he taught the sacredness of the daily task. It is not to be supposed that he fell short in that other phase of the matter, that which gives life to the teacher's vocation, of making the task attractive. In literature, in history, most of all in his own most beloved subject, botany, he knew the secret of imparting his own enthusiasm and of securing in even larger and more willing measure the time and attention of his pupils. Very distinctly across the years comes the recollection of evenings when the Principal, with Mrs. Hay, who seconded his every effort, received the

girls in their home, and we read, tremulously, the essays which after long study in our literature class we had composed for this great occasion. To Dr. Hay as a teacher of botany a whole article might well be devoted. Under the stimulus of his enthusiasm, we spent hours ranging the hills and river banks of St. John in search of specimens, we crowded our rooms with presses, and gave up precious Saturday afternoons to mounting and naming our plants, and executing the fine pen and ink drawings which illustrated our note books. We were to find out later that we had but touched the fringe of a science, but I believe that no one of us regretted the time that we spent so. We had gained an insight into a wholesome pursuit which in days to come was to lead some of us afar. And meantime we had done a piece of work as well as we were able.

It was only in later years, perhaps, that we were able to appreciate some of our master's finest qualities. We comprehended dimly, if at all, the force which attached his assistants to him in such staunch loyalty, and preserved such order and earnestness throughout the school. But there were virtues which we did not miss, the unfailing patience, the tactful help, the appreciation of effort, the rare and discerning word of praise—these are things very dear to the school girl, and these our beloved master gave us ungrudgingly.

The testimony of an old pupil who cherishes a special gratitude to Dr. Hay may be cited. She came to the school a shy stranger untrained in the routine of classes and examinations. She was unprepared to pass the proper test, but in response to her earnest request she was placed in a certain class, one which almost any teacher would have pronounced too high for her. In a few months she had overtaken her classmates, almost solely through the unobtrusive guidance of the head master. Many years afterwards when they met as compatriots in the educational world to which the St. John High School had opened the door for her, she told him of what those months of training had meant. It was the consciousness that his confidence in her had placed her in that class, that spurred her to subdue nervousness and discouragement and earn her place. And with other lessons came the dawning knowledge that in the august reign of law there is a vast difference between strength and rigidity.