

A SCOTTISH TEACHER IN NEW YORK.

WHEN I landed in New York about three years ago I had no extravagant expectations of getting immediate and lucrative employment; and yet I was not prepared to find it so difficult to get placed. The objection to employing me—one which I met at every turn of the way in the first few months of my quest for work—might be formulated as follows: "You appear to have the qualifications necessary for the position, and personally you would be acceptable to me; the only fear I have arises from the well-known fact that American boys are so unlike English boys, and require different methods of discipline."

I first tried a well-known school agency in New York, which sent me several notices of vacancies in out-of-the-way places. For the nearest of these I applied by letter—it was in a ladies' college in Virginia; but, convinced by the lady principal's answer that what she really wanted was a sort of spiritual overseer and factotum, rather than a plain teacher of the humanities like myself, I dropped the negotiation and paid no further attention to agency vacancies.

At last, through persistent watching of the advertising columns of the leading newspapers, I did succeed in getting a position in New York as teacher of classics and mathematics in a school of about fifty boys. It was a preparatory or secondary school, and as it was not a boarding-school I congratulated myself on being well rid of the galling burden of playground and domestic supervision under which I had so long chafed in England. I may here mention that, after graduating in Arts at the University of Edinburgh, I had taught in a Scotch school for one year; and then, after some months of private tuition, accepted a situation in an English

boarding-school, where the salary, exclusive of board and lodging, amounted to sixty pounds a year. My salary now was to be seven hundred dollars about (£140), a figure which many American teachers would have turned away from, but which my circumstances did not permit me to decline.

As I have said, I had been repeatedly warned of the difference between American boys and British boys; and certainly, if their conduct in the home, and especially in the street, was to be taken as the criterion, the difference is patent to any observer who keeps his eyes open. But when I came to meet them in a well-ordered school—such as this one undoubtedly was—I found no such radical differences as had been predicted. Americans are too ready to assume that English boys are tyrannized over at school, and that no such pleasant relations as often obtain in their country between teacher and scholar can exist in a Scotch or English school. It is as difficult to convince them of the contrary fact as it is sometimes to make them believe that members of Parliament receive no pay for their services. At any rate, I found it no such hard matter to manage a class of sixteen well-grown American boys; indeed, they proved, as a rule, to be not only apt and intelligent at their work, but remarkably attentive and respectful in their deportment as well. There was not really a troublesome boy in the whole lot, the only source of embarrassment being a chubby-faced youth of German stock, who had a turn for practical joking, though he weighed about 250 pounds.

About half of my class had passed through the regular course of the school from the primary department up to the graduating class. These were pretty well grounded; but the