

A BEAUTIFUL LIFE—A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY ANNA HOWELL CLARKSON.

In the passing of Mrs. Druscilla Allen Stoddard, June 1, 1913, a most interesting life came to a peaceful close. To the generation which is now in mature years, Mrs. Stoddard was known as an educator of unusual merit and distinction and as a woman of extraordinary intelligence. Iowa has never known a more forceful or more remarkable character. Her type of womanhood has gone the way of much that is unique and past the point of reproduction.

Mrs. Stoddard had her origin in the days of plain living and high thinking, in a time when a belief was a settled conviction, when men and women would die at the stake for principle and count themselves favored in having the privilege. She belonged to the hour of the Emma Willard, Lucretia Mott and Francis Gage influence, and in the time of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Marianne Dascombe and Caroline Severance—periods full of dignity and sublimity which left their mark upon those whose characters were formed in that early day.

Mrs. Stoddard was born near Batavia, New York, on June 18, 1821. Isaac Allen, her father, was of English descent, his family having come to America several generations before the Revolutionary war. The Allens who lived in that time were patriots and fought well for their adopted country. Lydia Bartlett, her mother, was also English and of the Quaker faith; her mother, in turn was a Harper, and Scotch-Irish. Lydia's grandfather, Captain George Harper, and his seven sons served all through the War of the Revolution. Mrs. Stoddard's father was a Presbyterian, but was won over to the Quaker doctrinal views by his earnest and devout wife, Lydia. The broad, liberal standards of that organization recognized woman as a power and she was considered the equal of man in all points of right and privilege. It followed that the girls in Quaker



Yours Affectionately
D. C. Stoddard,

families were given unusual advantages. Mrs. Stoddard early began an educational course which never ended. It was not possible to satisfy her desire for knowledge. The lapse of years did not dim her outlook into the unknown and the unseen. To the hour of her demise she drew in great draughts of wisdom from every available source.

The Allens were people of culture and believed in higher education for women as well as for men. The young Druseilla was sent to a Quaker boarding school at the age of fifteen; at seventeen she began her career of teaching in another Quaker school as an assistant to an intelligent woman who exercised a strong uplifting influence over her life.

Later, she entered the seminary in Troy, New York, which was founded by Mrs. Emma Willard in 1821, and completed a full course of study under this gifted pioneer instructor who opened the way for the young women of America. She was graduated in 1845, and at once entered upon the work of teaching in the mission school which had been established by the Quakers for the Seneca Indians in the Cattaraugus Reservation. She was most successful in this undertaking, but gave up the work in 1847 to marry Dr. Ira Joy Stoddard. Dr. Stoddard was a graduate of Colgate University, in Hamilton, New York, 1845, and is now its oldest living graduate. They started at once for India, where Dr. Stoddard had been assigned as a Baptist missionary to the Nowgong District in Assam. The long journey to Calcutta was their wedding trip. They feasted on salt provisions, hard tack and sea biscuits during this notable honeymoon.

When they reached Calcutta the monthly steamer which carried passengers up the Hoogly river had the day before departed, so they were obliged to wait in Calcutta for the next trip. The weather was hot and cholera was raging in the city; every one who could leave had fled to the highlands. Without fear this young couple braved the conditions and improved the hours of waiting in seeing the wonders of that interesting region. Every library, museum, garden and spot of interest claimed their attention. The Government mission schools, which were established by the Free Church of

Scotland and managed by that prince of missionaries, Dr. Duff, appealed especially to Mrs. Stoddard. There she found a thousand native boys studying in the English language all branches of educational work. The Museum of the Asiatic Society was another source of pleasure and information. She visited Serampore, sixteen miles from Calcutta, where the missionaries had planted their standard before the East India Company allowed them in their territory. This spot was owned by the Danes. Nothing escaped this zealous seeker for instruction which would help her in her intercourse with the natives. She knew nothing of the strange language and the numerous dialects of the country, but before the month rolled around she had made a start in the study of the Assamese tongue, and supplied herself with the necessary books of instruction. She became very proficient in a short time and was able to translate for others who were not so clever.

The journey to Nowgong involved a further trip of nearly four weeks by land and water. After nearly seven months of travel and delay they were installed in the mission and teaching in the large orphan school which was within their jurisdiction. While Dr. Stoddard preached and taught, Mrs. Stoddard supervised the girls of the school, personally attending to their studies, food and clothing, nursed the ailing, and taught all the time as well. Intuitively she learned to heal the sick. Necessity, as well as being the mother of invention, is the mistress of all trades and secrets. She set her house in order (and her "order" was as exact as the planetary system), and trained the queer little brown men and women to do her bidding.

It was fortunate for workers in the mission that it was near some English gentle-folk. These families kept them supplied with the latest periodicals and books as they came from the mother-country—a valued boon, as Baptist missionaries had no money to spend on luxuries.

For nine years the development of the mission went on successfully. At the end of that time Dr. Stoddard was prostrated with continuous fevers incident to the country and was ordered back to America. Mrs. Stoddard had passed safely

through the ordeal of acclimatization soon after her arrival and was in perfect health, although her hearing had been impaired by the successive fevers and the use of remedial drugs. Three children had been added to the family, Bertha, Ella, and Ira Joy, Jr., all of whom are now living.

With great sorrow the edict to leave the mission was received and plans made for the homeward journey. Upon reaching this country, a high dry climate was sought, and Iowa was decided upon. The delightfully unique town of Pella held an inducement as it was the seat of a Baptist College, the Iowa Central University. This school had been founded in 1853, and was at this time about to occupy its permanent college building. Mrs. Stoddard was invited to take charge of the Woman's department, and as its principal she began her work in 1858, in which year Dr. Elihu Gunn was elected president. Dr. Emmanuel Scarff was the Director of the Academic department, with professors Caleb Caldwell, Carleton C. Cory and Julia Tollman as assistants. Dr. Amos N. Currier, who later was for many years a member of the faculty of the State University of Iowa, was the professor of Greek and Latin. It would be difficult to compile a sketch of the life of any one of these faithful supports of the young college without including them all, as their interests were identical and their lives ran in the same grooves.

Here, in this co-educational institution, indoctrinated with the Baptist faith, Mrs. Stoddard began a new era of usefulness. Her success was immediate. An extraordinary talent for teaching and controlling, combined with her rare enthusiasm brought rich results. The fame which she had earned as an instructor and organizer in the far East had preceded her and attracted the attention of the Baptists of the State who had sons and daughters to educate, to the advantages of the Pella school. Parents came from near and far to consult her about their young people, and after seeing this model teacher and learning of her methods, many sacrifices were made in order that her influence might be exercised over their children. She became a mother to the whole school and taught a large share of the classes which contained both young men and women.

The necessity for earnest work in securing students for the institution became apparent. The country was new, money was scarce, with strong wild-cat tendencies, no one had a penny to use foolishly, and while it seemed the fair thing to give a boy as good an education as possible, it did not seem so necessary to the average parent for the daughters of the family to have a course in college. The young women themselves had not put in a plea for equal advantages, and the hard-worked fathers and mothers had not yet realized that they had any right to them. Every man was a pioneer and every woman was a partner in all of his hardships and sacrifices. On the farms the daughters worked side by side with the sons in the busy seasons. A few who lived in the towns and villages had plenty and to spare, but there was no waste and no luxury in the small western communities.

Mrs. Stoddard realized the conditions and bent her energies to meet them. Her big heart yearned over the girls in the scanty homes; she knew the value of a liberal education to a young woman and the part it would play in each one's life, and she was determined that every girl within her influence should have as large a share of knowledge as she could possibly gain for her. A conference was held. The school expenses were cut down to the lowest rate. The homes in Pella were canvassed to see how reasonably the students could obtain board. No one in that early day dared to charge more than seventy-five cents or a dollar a week for good, wholesome food and a corner in a comfortable room; oft-times the latter was shared with half a dozen other students or members of the family. Rooms were searched for near and far, where students might board themselves and cook their own supplies brought from the farm. Mrs. Stoddard's "plain living and high thinking" philosophy imparted itself to the youth under her care, and no one murmured over any stress or privation. Many men and women of importance in Iowa today owe more than they can express to this noble woman who made the fight for them in the "fifties" and "sixties", which resulted in their obtaining a college education. Their children and their grandchildren are trained to love and reverence this wise friend who

saw into their future as a true guardian of the rights of the young.

All through the long summers Dr. Scarff and Dr. and Mrs. Stoddard campaigned the country districts for students, telling the parents of the minimized expense. It was not long before the college halls were well filled. Nearly four hundred students were in attendance in 1861. When Fort Sumter fell, in April of that year, the first class was about to be graduated. The sad boom of the Nation's guns rolled out over the Iowa prairies and the big college bell tolled, calling for volunteers. The school was depopulated. Every man and every boy who was old enough to carry a gun enlisted, Dr. Currier marching out with the younger men. Dr. Scarff and Mrs. Stoddard were all that remained of the faculty. A few primary pupils and a half dozen or so of matriculating girls from Pella and the neighboring towns comprised the student body. If Mrs. Stoddard was wonderful and capable before, she was now possessed of an added glory. Her great eyes shone with a new light; every hour gave her fresh courage. *The school must live*,—she would put her whole life into it.

The two consecrated and devoted officials kept the college alive, not closing for a day or missing a recitation. The hearts of those who remember this devotion will swell with pride and emotion as they read the foregoing lines. Many of the young pupils who made up the college roll were needed at home, or the small amount of money paid for their board could not be raised. Not one of them could be spared. It was lonesome enough as it was. Those who could not afford to stay were given homes here and there. Dr. Scarff took all that his house would hold and Mrs. Stoddard filled her long, low rooms to overflowing. Trustees, doctors, and deacons housed a number, and the day was saved; the little remnant was kept together. This involved the closest economy in the homes of the two teachers. It all seemed as a matter of course at the time but larger experience shows this unselfishness in its true light. There was no repining or quailing; the Scarffs and the Stoddards were as cheerful and optimistic as if the affairs of the Nation and the almost as important college were at high tide.

Mrs. Stoddard was essentially a moulder of character; she instilled in every pupil a highminded view of life; her influence was elevating and ennobling in the greatest degree. She was an uncompromising purist in mind and manner. Her speech was lofty in tone, free from mannerism and prevalent jargon. Her fashion of dealing with her pupils and fixing their interest was most unique. There was no dozing in her class-room; her mental ray reached all minds however stupid. Finding out what each student could best accomplish, she developed their thought along indicated lines. She inspired an uncontrollable desire to know all of the secrets in nature's laboratory.

While she was filling the lives and minds of others with interest and inspiration, what can be said of the fragrance which did or did not come into the life of this noble and unselfish woman?

It is the way of humankind to assume that in whatever position one is found, there is where he or she belongs. A larger view changes our thought. Without a knowledge of a world whose fields are rich with the allurements of science, art, and philosophy, we realize nothing of the temptations which they possess for those used to loitering in their boundaries. We can know nothing of the heart hunger for the pabulum which to them is meat and drink, even life itself, nor of the lure of close contact with superior minds and cultivated tastes, (once felt, always longed for,) unless we have felt their compelling power.

Mrs. Stoddard was reared in an atmosphere of literary opportunity, her tastes were scientific, her habit studious and exploring. While she was retiring and somewhat diffident, she had the elements of leadership, commanding attention whenever she spoke or appeared in public. An argument was her delight and her points were always discussed in a clear and analytical manner. Who would dream it—she loved luxury as a child loves sunlight, and reveled in the beautiful in art and nature with rapt appreciation.

Every nature has two sides—one which is turned toward the sun, the other resting in shade, only coming into sight when

the light is strong. It takes courage to turn one's back on the sunny side of life, the one which is alluring and satisfying, and to confine the walk to the strict path of duty as it presents itself. We learn to love the way of duty, for it means discipline, and in the end, victory. None who walks therein would retrace his steps. Mrs. Stoddard sacrificed her natural longings to the enthusiastic love of the youth under her guidance, smothered the cry within her breast for more light, and kept bravely on.

With the close of the Civil war prosperity again visited the Central University, and the old-time interest revived. Twenty-five of the "Soldier Boys" had passed beyond the call of their class-mates, but many returned to finish their interrupted courses.

Dr. Stoddard, who had found health in Iowa, had been for some time the financial agent of the college, but his heart was longing for the work with the natives in India. At his earnest solicitation he received another assignment. This was a hard dispensation for the community and almost more than the students could bear. Who would or could take the place of Mrs. Stoddard? None would attempt it. During the war there was not enough money coming into the college fund to pay expenses. Dr. Stoddard did not want to go away leaving the college in debt. When Professor Currier returned, in 1865, he found the institution sadly in arrears. Dr. Scarff tells how it was cleared from all incumbrance:

We were completely swamped. Stoddard, Currier and myself, and of course Mrs. Stoddard, formed a plan to raise the indebtedness, provided the Board would let us take the matter into our own hands. They consented and we went to work. At the Board meeting in 1866, we had the pleasure of showing that the college debt was entirely wiped out. Dr. Stoddard was our agent and canvassed the State, traveling five thousand miles in his buggy. Professor Currier was our secretary and treasurer. Without a 'Currier,' we would have failed. He was our right hand man.

All of these philanthropists worked for *almost nothing* and gave *about all* of it back to the college. They accomplished what seemed impossible. Mrs. Stoddard was always a part of

the executive meetings. She had a fine business sense, was fertile in plans and able to give specifications. The cashier of the Pella National Bank, Mr. Henry P. Scholte, writes of her financial ability: "You need make no apologies about your intelligence in business or financial matters. I have never done business with any lady who comprehended financial affairs so intelligently."

With the college once more on the highway of prosperity, Dr. Stoddard felt that he could be spared. His mission was established in the southwest part of Assam, among the Garos, an absolutely savage tribe which had never been visited by white men. The tribe proper lived in the hills and were unapproachable; they were not subject to British rule. The less savage Garos who lived in the foot hills were on British territory, and in a measurably safe region, and here the mission was founded.

In the first five years over five hundred Garos were evangelized and baptized. In 1899, twenty-eight years later, the Church had gathered into its fold over five thousand. Many organizations were formed and many chapels and school houses dotted the hillsides.

Mrs. Stoddard stayed with the Garo Mission three years, when she became a victim to the lowland fevers and returned to Iowa, leaving Dr. Stoddard in India, where he remained four years. As soon as Mrs. Stoddard regained her health she resumed her work in the college, and continued until advancing years and her infirmity of deafness made attendance in the class-room impossible. But she did not for one moment fail in her interest; her home was the rendezvous of the students, just as usual, and she really deserved a good salary as an "Advisory committee on the whole."

For the third time, in 1881, this devoted couple went to New York, determined to return to their mission in India. The Examining Board decided against them and they were obliged to give up all thought of finishing their days in the work which seemed to them the most glorious of all effort, teaching the untaught and benighted.

Again Pella, a veritable retreat for rest, became their home. Beloved and honored by all, it seemed a fitting place for them

to tarry in their sunset days. If Pella had possessed a large public library, a few museums, and an advanced lecture course, Mrs. Stoddard might have been content there to end her life. But her sands were not run out and she must know what the busy world was doing, and be near the storm center.

After the founding of the State Historical Library, Mrs. Stoddard made many trips to Des Moines to spend the day in research, in the valuable store of documents and fascinating books. Mr. Charles Aldrich always welcomed her with pleasure, for he knew that his monumental work in gathering all this interesting State data was thoroughly appreciated by this educated and discriminating visitor. An observer might frequently see Mrs. Stoddard boarding an early train at the station in Pella, bound for a long day in the Historical building. At ten o'clock at night she might again be seen alighting at the same station, tired but happy, and feeling well repaid for her three hours of travel.

In 1904 she and Dr. Stoddard removed to Plainfield, New Jersey, to be with their daughter, Mrs. Henry Whitney, and her family. She found great pleasure in being so near New York City, with its multitudinous advantages, libraries, parks and museums, and journeyed frequently to the great city to absorb its many delights and wonders.

The Emma Willard Association (New York City) of which she was a member brought her many happy days. At the meetings she sometimes met comrades of her own time in the seminary. The writer had the privilege many times of attending the business meetings and annual banquets with Mrs. Stoddard. On the last gala occasion, November, 1912, in company with Mrs. Stoddard, and her grand-daughter, Mrs. Lewis Ryan, a delightful afternoon was spent. Mrs. Stoddard was announced as the oldest graduate of the Emma Willard Seminary present, and a call was made for a speech. Without a moment's hesitation, she arose, made a quaint courtesy and said, "Thank you, girls," and sat down. It was done so daintily that every one cheered.

In 1911 Mrs. Stoddard was seized with "wanderlust," and made a trip to California to visit her daughter, Mrs. Thomas Ryan, travelling entirely alone. She was then ninety years of age, in perfect health and mental vigor.

Her visit was a triumphal progress. Many students of "Central" and old friends from Iowa were scattered up and down the coast. They vied with each other in showing her attention. She returned full of spirited and happy reminiscence. She visited Pella during Commencement week on her return trip, and met many of the college friends and old-time students. Her enjoyment of life was keen because she kept pace with the times and was never behind the movements of the world. Deeply religious on a broad plane, her interest was unflagging in the affairs of the Church. An exponent of good government, she was posted on political lore. She feasted on the advancing views of the hour, and read everything that was worth reading on various subjects. Time did not hang heavy on her hands; she found so much to do.

For the last few winters, Dr. and Mrs. Stoddard lived in Germantown, Pennsylvania, during the severe weather in the comfortable Nugent Home. It was there that the last summons came, after an illness of only two days. A week before her death she returned from a visit to her grandson, Captain Ryan, and his family, in Fort DuPont, Delaware. A slight cold was troubling her which gradually increased in severity. Unwillingly she kept her bed on Saturday. On Sunday evening, with a wave of her hand, and a calm "Goodnight," on her lips, her spirit passed into the other life which is eternal.

The remains of our dearly-loved friend lie in a quiet spot in the college town of Pella. As was her way, everything was prepared for this home-coming. Two of her children were present at the memorial services in the church and the college chapel. Many from various parts of the State assembled to do her honor, and spoke from full hearts words of appreciation and affection.

Dr. and Mrs. Stoddard dwelt together sixty-five happy, harmonious years without a note of discord. What a lesson in

this moving feast of matrimony of today! They were not at all similar in character but their temperaments proved to be complementary equations, governed by a great deal of common sense, bearing and forbearing. Dr. Stoddard survives his loving mate; he is ninety-three years of age, in delicate health, and deeply stricken by the loss he has sustained. His is a lovely character; he is always carrying a mantle of charity to throw over an erring friend. May all of the good which he has so freely bestowed return to him now a thousand fold.

Dr. and Mrs. Stoddard were always devoted and true to their friends, and they had no enemies.

We cannot call the out-going of Mrs. Stoddard "death," it is the moving on of generations; one passeth away and another generation cometh, but the Earth abideth forever.

\$200 REWARD.

Ran away or were stolen from the subscriber from a house near Salem, in Henry county, Iowa Territory, on Thursday night the 11 inst., two negro men, whose names are Winston and Henry but they having been runaways since the 11th of August last, have called themselves Jack and Bill. They had found their way into the new purchase of Iowa, and the subscriber found them there, and was returning with them home to Missouri stopped to stay at a house, from which they escaped or were stolen.

Winston is 26 or 27 years of age, is black, 5 ft. 8 or 9 inches high, wore away a sealskin cap, blue jeans coat with the skirts cut off, and dark casinet pantaloons. Henry is a yellow boy, 18 or 19 years old, 5 ft. 5 or 6 inches high, wore a blue cotton frock coat, gingham roundabout, new fur hat and buckskin pantaloons. I will pay the above reward to any person who may bring them to me in Boon County, Missouri, or \$100 for either of them; or \$100 for securing them or giving me such information as may enable me to get them. It is supposed that said runaways will be assisted to escape by some particular white men.

THOMAS FLYNT.

—*Iowa Teritorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser,*
Burlington I T., April 6, 1839.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.