

NEW ENGLAND SPINSTERS.

What Becomes of the Surplusage of Women in the Eastern States.

It has often been asked what becomes of the surplus of the female over the male population of some of the States, especially of Massachusetts and Connecticut and perhaps of some of the other "down east" commonwealths. An estimable lady by the name of Miss Rebecca Jones, who herself belongs to that number and who was a school-teacher for nearly twenty years in a small New England town, and who is now visiting friends in Brooklyn, gave some interesting statistics bearing upon this point to the writer of this article. Said she:

"I have kept a record of the girls who have graduated from the high school of my native village, where I have been a school teacher since 1871, what they have done and what has become of them."

She gave the figures for the classes of the years 1871 to 1876—from eighteen to eleven years ago—and strange figures for any marrying and giving in marriage community they are. Continuing, she said:

"The average age of the female graduates from a typical New England school is between sixteen or seventeen years. Hence it will appear that the women of whom this list has been made, ranging to-day between twenty-nine and thirty-four years old, have done the greater part of all the 'settling in life' that they are likely to do. Out of a total of ninety-nine graduates there were twenty-seven marriages, eleven deaths and sixty-nine are still single. Strange as it may seem, the eleven deaths were all caused by consumption. There have been two cases of insanity, both of the twenty-seven married group. The largest number of children of any is three. Three of the girls went to college after leaving the high school, all of whom are married."

"Of the unmarried sixty-one, twenty-one follow a very usual feminine calling—that of schoolma'am. One is at Hampton, Va., teaching the Indians; the other twenty are in country schools in or near by their homes. Three set type; one reads proof; one is head dress-maker in a large establishment in New York city; four are dressmakers on their own hook; one is practicing medicine; three are music teachers, fifteen are stitchers and buttonhole makers in shoe shops, and the rest are home bodies."

"Just what has brought about such a preponderance of spinsterhood it is not altogether easy to say. Some people have contended that it did not exist, but statistics prove to the contrary. Such people have explained the great surplus of women in New England on the supposition that most of them are widows, made so by the hazardous occupation of the men along the Eastern coast. Widows there are in plenty, but the sixty-one of my records certainly never married."

"Probably most of them never had an opportunity to marry. There are few marriageable young men at the present time to be found in most of the small New England towns. The serene quiet of this most lethargic rural section of the country does not suit the active spirit of young men of the day. They go away before they are old enough to marry, and the chances are that they don't come back again."

"If they do return they are impressed with the lack of money in New England, outside of the cities, by the length of time since the houses have been painted and the amount of calculation required before he can find a place where he can satisfactorily spend a dollar. They do not stay long enough to admire the hardy thrift that can wring a comfortable support from the stony soil where a New Yorker would starve, and the girls they left behind them can not compare, so they seem to think, for beauty of dress, fascinating coquetry or small talk of society with the blandishments of the city girls, who have insensibly become to them the standard for admiration."

"These things considered, it is fortunate for the spinster that she is fast learning to think it a natural and not altogether unpleasant state of affairs to be what she is. They do not look an unhappy lot, and New England is learning to be tender of and appreciate them. She does not call them 'old maids,' and the fiction of their youth is kept up till they die. One may hear of the 'Fisher girls,' the 'Smith girls,' and so on for weeks before the truth dawns that the 'girls' are well past the half century milestone of life. They never married and no one was ever cruel enough to mark out any line beyond which they ceased to be young. They are self-respecting and universally respected."

"There are New England towns in great numbers, where the best educated and best bred Yankee girl, of the best colonial families, can go into the shoe shop and work there for years after she has ceased to be a girl, save by courtesy, and still read the classics and move in, perhaps lead, the most aristocratic society of the town."—*F. I. Smith and Expt.*

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL.

—During the last year the sum total of educational gifts in this country was nearly \$5,000,000.

—Amusements are to religion like breeches of air to the flame—gentle ones will fan it, but strong ones will put it out.—Dr. Thomas.

—The Sudan has been almost totally neglected by Protestants as a field for missionary effort. It has a population of about 60,000,000 people.

—A grant of \$600 a year was recently made out of the appropriation for the Indian Bureau to aid the industrial school carried on in Dakota, near the Crow Creek Agency, by Miss Howard, a daughter of Joseph Howard, Jr., the journalist.

—Young people ought to be interested in our public schools. These schools open the doors of knowledge to all classes and conditions of American youth. We can not begin to estimate their importance in the development of our national life.

—No business pursuit or employment should be engaged in, however profitable it may be, or may promise to be, if we can not glorify God in connection with it. No plea of necessity, or force of circumstances, is justifiable for wrong doing.

—Again and again, at home and abroad, the world has seen and confessed the power of the old-fashioned Bible and its truth to brighten the face of human society. If free religion can do it better, by all means let the world see it done at once.—Boston Congregationalist.

—It is no more possible for an idle man to keep together a certain stock of knowledge, than it is possible to keep together a stock of ice exposed to the meridian sun. Every day destroys a fact, a relation, or an influence; and the only way of preserving the bulk and value of the pile is by constantly adding to it.—Rev. Sydney Smith.

—The cost of maintaining public schools in New York State last year was \$14,980,841, an increase of more than \$1,200,000 over 1887. This money was for the education of 1,772,958 children of school age, of whom 1,033,269 attended school. The number of teachers employed was 31,726, at an average annual salary of \$419.75.

—The foundation of all education, from the time a child first begins to learn, is thoroughness. Whatever is attempted must be carried out thoroughly, until the learner becomes master of the subject. Thoroughness is the groundwork of all good habits of mind, and a child's mind is as much a bundle of habits as its body.

—"We have so much to be thankful for," is an exclamation often heard from the thankful heart, and it is all true—so true that if but the veil that obscures our earthly vision were lifted, and we could see for a moment how much has been done for us, perhaps it might lead to increased thankfulness expressed in life and deed, even if less in words.—Christian at Work.

WIT AND WISDOM.

—Truth can be outraged by silence quite as cruelly as by speech.

—An unkind criticism is like a pin—the better its point the more it hurts.—Merchant Traveler.

—We have great respect for the penetration of the man who discovers good qualities in us.—Boston Courier.

—The man with polished manners rubs along easily through the world—but it is because he rubs that he is polished.

—Nothing will render a man useless than to live among people who think that every thing he says is right.—Milwaukee Journal.

—We are all of us more or less humbugs in this world, but most of us won't allow anybody but ourselves to say so.—Somerville Journal.

—When you have found the master passion of a man, remember never to trust him where that passion is concerned.—Lord Chesterfield.

—The man who is drawn into a scheme to invest one cent and draw out one dollar may not be a fool, but he is in no danger from brain fever.

—Tolerance and charity come with age and experience. I see no fault committed that I myself could not have committed at some time or another.—Goethe.

—No Congress, nor mob, nor guillotine, nor fire, nor all together, can avail to cut out, burn or destroy the offense of superiority in persons. The superiority in him is the inferiority in me.

—The art in which the secret of human happiness in a great measure consists, is to set the habits in such a manner that every change may be a change for the better. The habits themselves are much the same; for whatever is made habitual becomes smooth, and easy, and nearly indifferent. The return to an old habit is likewise easy, whatever the habit be. Therefore the advantage is with those habits which allow of an indulgence in the deviation from them.—Paley.

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