

wing, and among them the alert teacher is certain to find dormant talent, perhaps even genius. Whatever she finds, she must search continually for experiences to make every child happy. We believe that the teacher who accepts the stimulating challenge of working with children could never grow staid and placid. Teaching holds excitement a-plenty, if one but recognizes it.

"Sour pussers"? Hardly. In the first place, we are convinced that one requirement for every teacher ought to be a sense of humor. For that, alone, could see her through a seemingly major crisis that actually ought to be laughed into a minor one. In the second place, we wonder how a teacher could long remain at her job and fail to find humor in the amusing incidents that color her daily life as a "school-marm." At any rate, please don't count us among the "sour pussers."

Our friend insists that teachers are a clannish lot. It is hard for us to see how a teacher, who works with children from all sorts of homes and, therefore, will get acquainted with adults in every walk of life, can become narrow in her friendships. We believe that the teacher, holding the respect of fellow-townpeople, is welcomed into all community activities.

Not the least of the reasons why we know we will enjoy teaching is that we love children. We love their games, their songs, and stories and take a pleasure in hearing of their experiences. In fact, we feel that a love (yes, we mean *love*) of children and their "doin's" should be a prerequisite to teaching.

So, to those who would deride, we say, "We're teachers!"

And, as we say it, our shirt buttons pop with pride.

## I ENJOY TEACHING

By an Experienced Teacher,  
MARY V. THOMPSON

*Helping youngsters interpret living and the world is real, significant, and exciting. Mary V. Thompson pauses in her busy life as a teacher in the public schools of Philadelphia to discover why she likes her profession. We believe that her faith in the value of a teacher's work reflects the devotion of teachers everywhere to their jobs and that such devotion is this country's best guarantee that the present chaotic state of the world will not last forever.*

YES! I ENJOY TEACHING. Perhaps this sounds a little strange in a world at war where there is so much emphasis upon guns and ammunition. Until a short time ago I had never thought of

what I was doing in the light of whether or not I liked doing it. But the more carefully I examine the thought, the more convinced I am of its truth.

Unconsciously, I have always liked

teaching, or, let us say, living with children. They have kept me fighting the daily battle against discouragement. Their need and the pull of their faith have kept me from venturing into seemingly greener pastures of personal achievement.

When the gathering maelstrom began to burst over Europe and Asia and rolled threateningly closer to us each day, there came for me a crystallization of value—of the value of the many little “big things” we were taking for granted. When we, too, plunged into the cauldron, I took personal stock.

My English inheritance stubbornly refused to consider relinquishing a way of life that meant decency and freedom. My Irish blood demanded an active part in the scrap. The Scotch bit agreed with the other two, but held out for a cautious evaluation of how the scrapping spirit could best be used to retain the ideal.

Looking at my children with a new awareness, I knew I had to stay with them. They are the citizens of tomorrow; the builders of the new world. My many years of teaching had been but an apprenticeship preparing me to meet the challenge of children's needs now. Youngsters are so vulnerable in their faith and affection. My place in the “sun of service” is taking up the slack for tomorrow's citizens.

Taking up the slack means becoming a sounding board for the growth of children while families and communities go about the grim business of actual combat and production. Today's children need help, guidance, and comfort in meeting today's problems so that in working out the difficulties of the moment they will grow strong enough to meet their destiny of tomorrow.

If we are to win the peace, our children must have every opportunity to grow into adults who have the moral stamina to make decisions. They must have the courage to take the consequences of having made decisions when faced with a world hangover of bitterness and hate. They must grow physically strong, mentally and emotionally well-balanced, and spiritually sound. They must have strong, understanding hearts.

To so grow, our children must have adults who believe in them, no matter what they do, adults who can guide them in creating for themselves a great and abiding self-respect, adults who can help them evaluate themselves. These things are a challenge to the best I can hope to be. If I have in any degree the ability to meet this challenge, I say in all humility it has come from the children. They are my source of strength and inspiration. They are my stake in tomorrow.



Nothing in education is so astonishing as the amount of ignorance it accumulates in the form of inert facts.—Henry Brooks Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*.

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