

6-79 BERTHA E. BUSH, 1920

Bertha E. Bush known to thousands through her writings and the touch of her beautifully serene personality passed into new life June 2, 1920. Nine years of suffering came to its close with the liberation of a spirit long anxious to be freed to the fullness of life. It was always her wish to be helpful. Almost to the very last, as long as her hands would hold a pen, she continued working, determined that the disease would not bind her. As her real condition became apparent and it seemed certain that her time for writing was nearly done, she worked only the harder, anxious that her two unfinished books should be completed. And when delirium came, her dreams were in story form with frequent interspersions of verse whose meter was plain although the words were not clear. She worked because she loved those for whom she worked.

She has published many booklets and articles and one novel, "A Prairie Rose," but in children's stories and children's verses she was at her best and it was her wish that she be remembered as "A lover of Children."

Bertha Evangeline Bush, the eldest child of Henry H. and Minnie Wright Bush was born May 30, 1866 at Galva, Illinois. At the age of three she went with her parents to Hancock county, Iowa and grew to young womanhood in Garner. In 1891 she graduated from Grinnell college where she won scholastic honors and was elected to the national Phi Beta Kappa society. Later she took the degree of Master of Arts, at the same time teaching in the public schools of Grinnell where her work continued until she was called home to Garner to care for her niece, Laura Olds Inglis, who had been left motherless at the age of nine months. These two were as mother and daughter to one another, living together almost continuously, in college, in Nebraska, where her niece was teaching, and throughout the last year in Chicago, and finally they were together when the end came in Wesley Memorial Hospital.

Her friends like best to remember her as she was in Garner at the time of her full vigor when scarcely

a worthy work in the town did not have her name associated with it. In church she led a splendid young people's work and as primary teacher for ten years scores of men and women remember "Miss Bush" as their beloved first teacher whose understanding sympathy guided them through the difficult mazes of learning to read and showed them a path of flowers instead of prickly discipline.

At Franklin Nebraska, 1918-19, though very lame from her rheumatism, she was happy in a dormitory full of lively girls and loved nothing so much as being allowed to enter into the joys and problems of academy life. "Aunt Bertha," as she was lovingly called by teachers and students, was a quiet pervasive influence in the rushing tide of student affairs, and many a girl carries away with her as one of the most precious possessions the thought of the sweet faced invalid who loved and was interested in every detail of their lives; and many a teacher felt her cares slip from her as she came into this quiet presence and received the word of encouragement and belief which helped so much.