

MISS JULIA TUTWILER REMEMBERED AS ONE OF ALA'S GREATEST WOMEN

One-Time Tuscaloosa Teacher Won Imperishable Fame As An Educator

By Mrs. Elmer Clanahan Springer

The secret of success lies in the possession of a great mind, a great soul, and a great ambition which are so integrated in an individual as to produce self-sacrifice and service. Recollections of Miss Julia Strudwick Tutwiler are as a touch of romance we feel in a bit of lavender and old lace. The fragrance of rosemary and thyme [thyme] lingers about her life. In our memories it was full of self-sacrifice and service for the people of Alabama.

Only that person who can develop with the times can hope to contribute much to a constantly changing civilization. Miss Julia contributed doubly to civilization in Alabama because she not only developed with her day but she saw far into the needs of the future. She was an advance thinker and a true seer.

Lyman Abbott called her "the first citizen of Alabama"; Bishop Fitzgerald, "the 'Angel of the Stockade"; her students would call her "a master teacher"; someone called her "the Jane Adams of the South"; and those who knew personally call her "a bank of credit on which we could draw supplies of confidence, counsel, sympathy, help and love--a gem whose lustre the strong acids of poverty and misfortune could not dim."

She possessed Christlike sympathies, the virtues of charity, tolerance, broad mindedness, patience, persistence and a very high regard for her fellowman, which is absolutely essential if one is to reach the heights and be of the greatest service. Her's was a high place of thought and action.

Miss Julia Strudwick Tutwiler was born August 15, 1841, in Green Springs near Eutaw, and passed away March 24, 1916. Seventy-five years--a long life, nobly spent. She was not old. Nobody ever grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old as a result of their ideals.

She received the greater amount of her educational training from her father. Dr. Henry Tutwiler was an unusually capable man. For more than forty years he conducted the famous Greene Springs school in Hale County, Alabama. This school was known as the Rugby of the South. Dr. Tutwiler was professor of languages at the University of Alabama. He was twice offered the presidency of this institution. He was a close friend of Thomas Jefferson and a classmate of Edgar Allen Poe.

After Miss Julia's early education under her father she spent two years in a school of French in Philadelphia and one year at Vassar College. She spent one year in study at

Washington and Lee University, at Lexington, Va., and from there she went to Germany where she remained 3 years.

The Boston Journal of Education sent her in 1878 as a special correspondent to the Paris Exposition. She then spent a year in study in France. To attend schools in foreign countries was a very unusual thing for a woman of her day. And most unusual, a thing never before done by an American, she passed the government examination for German teachers. Imagine what a cloak of glory this was for an American woman of the nineteenth century. Her great store of facts was fertilized by ideas which materialized into realities such as successful teaching, education reforms, prison and child labor legislation, and writings which will ever live.

Miss Tutwiler was a talented writer. While she was in Germany she supported herself by contributions to magazines. Returning from Germany she taught in the Tuscaloosa Female College from 1876 to 1882 with the exception of one year. From Tuscaloosa she was called to a private school at Livingston, Alabama. She began this school with four students. It soon became, under her influence, a State Normal School, and she served as its president until it numbered over two hundred students. Late in life she resigned, leaving much accomplished at this institution. She had such a position for excellence that while a student at Vassar she was asked to teach classes.

She made many contributions to the people of Alabama, her teaching being only one of the many. She started and fostered advancement in education for Alabama. She introduced kindergarten methods in the state. She led the way for co-education in the University of Alabama and other state institutions. In appreciation for her work the University erected a beautiful dormitory which bears her name. Loan funds of some of the Southern colleges bear her name as appreciation for her untiring service to the youth of Alabama. She gained from the Legislature many contributions for schools as well as influenced the organization of schools in the state. Many deserving people were helped in getting their education by her efficient influence.

No wonder she is enshrined in the hearts of the people of Alabama. This is true not by the above facts alone, but she was a pioneer in the reform prison laws and child labor laws of the state. She waged warfare against saloons, oppression and other such evils. Her Prison Reform Bill in the Legislature was about to be defeated. Some of the politicians were about to vote against it, but on looking in the balcony and seeing Miss Tutwiler in the posture of prayer were moved and changed their vote. There is a great proverb that states that he who ceases to pray ceases to prosper.

She wrote beautiful poetry as well as educational articles for magazines. The Alabama State song is one of her most artistic contributions. The last verse of the song is typical of her attitude toward the services she rendered.

*Little, little can I give thee
Alabama, mother mine
But that little hand, brain, spirit
All I have and am are thine.
Take, O take the gift and giver
Take and serve thyself with me
Alabama, Alabama, I will aye be true to thee.*

Her life is filled with accomplishment which remain the marks of greatness, the necessary elements of excellence. She is the purest figure in Alabama history--a guiding spirit to those with whom she lived and to those who live after her. What a privilege to reflect upon her seventy-five years and feel her power.

Miss Tutwiler's life is as the benediction of a gorgeous sunset in all its natural splendor--too great for even an artist to reproduce, yet so magnificent an inspiration as to always be a cherished memory in the hearts of the people of Alabama.