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DR. JENNY B. MERRILL

A complete list of graduates of Hunter College from 1870 to 1934 would include many distinguished names—none more so in the field of education than that of Dr. Jenny B. Merrill, whose productive life and distinguished service to education came to a close February 19 last.

In touch with Thomas Hunter, Dr. Douai, Elizabeth Peabody, G. Stanley Hall, Dr. Sheldon, Frances Willard, Earl Barnes, and other great educational leaders, Jenny B. Merrill was herself one of the great influences in the educational world for over fifty years.

She was the daughter of Benjamin B. and Jane Anne McBride Merrill, and was born in New York on September 4, 1854.

After graduating from Hunter (then Normal) College in 1871, she was appointed to the Training Department, first at St. Marks Place and later at 68th St. and Lexington Avenue, being named Critic Teacher in 1874, and Third Assistant in 1875. Also in 1875 she studied with Mme. Marie Kraus-Boelté, the first to practice Froebel's kindergarten methods in America, who later wrote an appreciation of Dr. Merrill in the *Pedagogical Digest*, rejoicing in her success as

student, teacher, and supervisor of kindergartens.

In her annual address as President of the Associate Alumnae, an office which she held from 1875 to 1877, Dr. Merrill urged the need of training kindergartners, foreseeing the establishment of kindergartens in the public schools long before their realization.

In 1877 President Hunter, believing little children should be trained, organized the first free kindergarten in the United States and established it at the Training Department of Normal College, with Jenny B. Merrill as teacher. Recognizing the rare quality of her personality and teaching ability, he appointed her teacher of methods in the College proper in 1878, and here for eighteen years she influenced successive classes of appreciative and devoted students who, as teachers, carried her message into the schools.

Three years before the Board of Education adopted kindergartens as part of the regular public school system, the New York Kindergarten Association, which Dr. Merrill had helped organize, established a kindergarten in the old mission-house of the Baptist Church, on the corner of 63rd Street

AN APPRECIATION

A distinguished woman;
A great educator;
A lover of children;
Above all an awakened Soul.
She has gone from us.
We cannot do her honor;
We can only seek to glean the
Message of her life,
Building upon it,
Utilizing her experiences as
Wisdom with which to proceed.

Dr. Jenny B. Merrill,

A great Soul.
She loved and served unceasingly.
She tenderly covered the weakness of all.
We love her for what she is.

Her favorite quotation:

“They may not need me, but they might,
And so I'll keep my heart just in sight.”

LILEON LOUISE CLAXTON.
