

KATHLYNE KNICKERBACKER VIELE.

CONTRIBUTED BY W. R. SIMPSON.

Miss Kathlyne Knickerbacker Viele, of Yonkers, N. Y., died suddenly at her summer home in Ridgefield, Conn., on Sunday morning, Sept. 28th, 1924, and was buried in the peaceful cemetery of that beautiful town she so loved. Miss Viele was in her 72nd year, having been born at New Brighton, Staten Island, New York City, Jan. 12th, 1853.

She became an annual member of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Jan. 9, 1909, and a Life Member, Jan. 20, 1922.

On her father's side she is descended from the old Dutch stock which landed on the present Manhattan Island just 300 years ago. Her mother's lines, the Griffins and Sands, carry her back to the original settlers of Block Island. Edward Dorr Griffin, of this line, was President of Williams College.

Miss Viele's brothers and sister are all known in literature; Herman, before his death in 1908, having written several delightfully whimsical novels, besides poetry. Francis Viele-Griffin, her brother, is very favorably known in France, where he has long lived, for his volumes of French poetry. Mrs. T. Nelson Strother, her surviving sister, is also a novelist. Perhaps Miss Viele's legal training,—she was a graduate of the Woman's Law Class of New York University, coupled with a three years course of lectures on philosophy and history, which she attended as a mature woman at Cornell University,—influenced her toward research work. Her logical and ordered mind found great satisfaction in delving into genealogy which she took up in 1908. Her method of handling her material on this subject makes delightful reading. The three books she published relating to Viele genealogy are:—

Two Hundred and Fifty Years with a Dutch Family of N. Y., 1909; *Viele Records*, 1913; *Sketches, Knickerbacker-Viele and Allied Families*, 1916.

Having finished these, she began a study of the Ackermans, as she wished to classify a family not yet recorded. This she finished very recently.

Miss Viele's early life was so filled with service for others that, apart from the many interesting papers she wrote for home clubs in Yonkers, she had no time for writing imaginative literature. Upon the urgent solicitations of her friends, she recently completed an autobiography, a most intimate account of her varied life—much too intimate for publication. It is written in a humorously philosophical style. This biography Miss Viele titles:—*By Divers Paths; A Journey of Three Score Years and Ten*.

In the Preface to this work she writes:

"It must appear a poor narrative which uses a foreword as a crutch on which to hobble into recognition. Yet so it is, I must explain, and apologize. This narrative is written in response to the theory that each human life has a unique story to tell, parts of which, at least, may touch an answering chord or even prove an inspiration to other lives. Thus considered, the disclosing of one's experience becomes the work of the altruist, not the garrulous recital of the egotist. * * * But I must hobble on—"

Miss Viele's pen is as keen as a rapier but there is always a button sheathing its point.

Miss Viele was a member of many societies organized for patriotic purposes. Her Colonial and Revolutionary ancestry admitted her to all the principal societies relating to these periods. Her poor health in later years prevented her taking an active part in their meetings and she concentrated her interests on the Daughters of the Holland Dames. She worked her best on a committee appointed to select a memorial commemorating the landing of the Dutch settlers



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Mamaroneck, N. Y., Graveyard Inscriptions.

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on Manhattan Island in 1624. A monument has been decided on to commemorate this event, although Miss Viele personally felt that a memorial in the shape of a fund for a free scholarship in Columbia University to be applied to the education of one or more girls would be of more benefit and would better conform to her ideas of service.

It is in her devotion to service for others that we know the real woman. In her early years when St. Luke's Hospital in New York was being organized by Dr. Muhlenburg, she volunteered and served as a nurse. A short time in a Protestant Sisterhood convinced her that this sphere of service was too restricted for her larger ideas. In the early 80's she started a fresh air work, one of the first efforts to give city children with parents of very limited means, a two weeks stay in the country. This work was started at Ashford Hill, back of Ardsley in the Westchester County hills on her father's former country home. This place of seventy acres came into the possession of Miss Viele's grandmother, Mary Sands Griffin, and through her generosity, her granddaughter was able to make the work permanent. Miss Viele personally carried on this work for many years, with all its worries on account of lack of sufficient funds, which sometimes seriously hampered her. Her idea, always, was to keep her work from developing into an institution type of charity, and she was loved by her flock as a mother. The beneficent work established by her still goes on.

In the early 90's while at Ithaca with "her boy" whom she had taken in his early years to bring up and educate, she deplored the lack of hospital facilities for Cornell students. Through the medium of friends, the help of kind philanthropists and with the whole hearted aid of the faculty family, she raised a fund that would support at least two beds for students in the Ithaca Hospital. Her years at Ithaca were the happiest of her life in her association with the high thinking, simple living members of the Cornell faculty and their wives.

During the World War many young women met for war work at her Yonkers home. In her youthful spirit she joined with them in the making of thousands of garments and comfort bags.

Kathlyne Knickerbacker Viele never married. The example she set of mother love, however, may be regarded as her greatest contribution to service. For nearly forty years she devoted herself to two lives whose "lines" did not genealogically cross hers. She pledged herself to the parents responsible for the lives of these two children to bring them up as if they were her own. What could bring more gratitude to them for their devotion to her, and what more encouraging to those who hesitate to follow her example in this respect, than her very recent words—"It was the best investment I ever made."

Her epitaph in their developed minds and in the minds of her devoted friends reads,—*"The beloved Comrade."*

MAMARONECK, N. Y., GRAVEYARD INSCRIPTIONS.

The Gedney and other Family Burying Grounds, Mamaroneck, N. Y.

CONTRIBUTED BY MRS. SELLECK E. COLES,*
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The Gedney Burying Ground on Mamaroneck Avenue, Mamaroneck, N. Y., contains the oldest graves of this family in Westchester County.

* Assisted by Mrs. Theresa Hall Bristol (Member of the Publication Committee of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society) and by Miss Irene Gedney Horton and Selleck E. Coles, Esq.