

MRS. CATHERINE LADD

"The name that heads this article will call a thrill of pleasure to many hearts—for this lady is "one of the most noted and successful of the teachers of the State of South Carolina," and hundreds of her old pupils, many of them now "teaching," scattered throughout the land, remember her kindness and entire unselfishness. "She is the most generous of women; her time, her talents, her worldly goods are at the command of all her friends," says one of her ex-pupils.

Mrs. Ladd is a native of Virginia—was born in October, 1810—married when eighteen years old to Mr. Ladd, a portrait and miniature painter. Her maiden name was Catherine Stratton.

For several years after her marriage Mrs. Ladd wrote poetry, which was published in the various periodicals of the day. For years she was a regular correspondent of several newspapers, and published a series of articles on drawing, painting, and education, which attracted considerable attention.

In 1842, Mrs. Ladd permanently settled in the town of Winnsboro, South Carolina, where she established one of the largest institutions of learning in the State, which sustained its well-deserved reputation until closed in 1861.

Mrs. Ladd has contributed tales, sketches, essays, and poems to various journals under different noms de plume—as "Minnie Mayflower," "Arcturus," "Alida," and "Morna."

During the existence of the "Floral Wreath," published in Charleston by Mr. Edwin Heriott, Mrs. Ladd was a regular contributor. Mr. Heriott, in a notice of the literary talent of the South, speaking of Mrs. Ladd's poetical works, said: "They were sweet, smooth, and flowing, particularly so; but, like Scotch music, their gayest notes were sad."

In 1851, she with ardor took up the subject of education, home manufactures, and encouragement of white labor, believing that the ultimate prosperity of South Carolina would depend on it. She reasoned from a conviction that South Carolina could not compete with the more Southern and Southwestern States in raising cotton, and an extensive system of slave labor would realize no profit.

Mrs. Ladd's plays, written at the solicitation of friends, and performed by them, were very popular. The "Grand Scheme" and "Honeymoon" were celebrated far

and wide. The incidents and introduction of characters showed that she had more than ordinary talent for that species of composition. Mrs. Ladd has a wonderful knack of managing young people.

After the commencement of the war, Mrs. Ladd gave up everything to devote herself to the cause of the South. She lived for the soldiers! Was elected President of the "Soldiers' Aid Association," which office she retained until the close of the war, and by her untiring exertions kept the society well supplied with clothing. Her pen was unused during the war, the needle

and her personal supervision being constantly in demand. In Winnsboro, no church is built, no charity solicited, no ball, concert, tableaux, or fair—nothing goes on without her cheerful and ever-ready aid.

Mrs. Ladd is said to be "homely," and dresses to suit herself, never caring about the "latest fashions," ignores "hoops," and always wears her hair short. Her manner is abrupt and decided; but one instinctively feels it to be "kind."

The "Confederate flag" is said to have originated with Mrs. Ladd, the first one, we allude to. The fire of February 21, 1865, destroyed the literary labor of 30 years. With the assistance of a Federal officer, Mrs. Ladd saved the jewels of the Masonic Lodge in the next house to hers; but the flame and smoke prevented her finding the "charter." By this time the fire had got so much ahead on her own premises, and the confusion was so great, that she lost everything.

It is said that outside of the walls of her school, Mrs. Ladd was the gay, social companion of every young lady under her charge. Following her to school-room, you instantly felt the change; though not perhaps a word was spoken, every young lady felt it. She has a powerful will and habit of centering every thought and feeling instantly on the occupation of the moment. The confusion of voices or passing objects never seemed to disturb her when writing.

A friend of Mrs. Ladd says: "Her quick motions show the rapidity of thought. Even now, at the age of fifty-eight, were you walking behind her, you might mistake her, from the light buoyancy of step, for a young girl."

Copied from "Living Female Writers of the South" by Mrs. M. T. Tardy.