

PRETTY GIRL, EX-REPRESENTATIVE'S DAUGHTER, MENTOR OF 'LITTLE RASCALS' IN DETENTION HOUSE

Miss Marie Esch, of Washington, Is First to Try to Inculcate Useful Knowledge in Class of Incurable Children

FOUR and twenty little rascals packed in a room!

And one charming girl teaching them. Dear knows, it is hard enough to be an ordinary teacher and cram facts into the craniums of average children. Any teacher will admit that it is difficult to maintain discipline in a roomful of youngsters squirming with energy and resenting restraint—youngsters who find it much more interesting to make faces and blow peas through a little rod than to ponder over the mysteries of readin' an' writin' an' 'rithmetic.

The ordinary class boasts a number of juvenile Haywards and Sid Smiths—little cartoonists whose pictures of TEACHER and of the various members of the class cause much merriment. Just what becomes of their talent as the years roll along is unknown, but it is a trial to the teacher while it lasts. Be she as beautiful as Cleopatra, these pictures of her are ever the same.

Normal classes screech out in childish soprano this little ditty written ages ago by some tiny wag: "No more Latin, no more French, No more sit on a hardwood bench. No more work and no more books No more teachers' sassy looks."

Willie Was Good Today, So He May Clean Up

Now, if normal, ordinary children are such a trial think what a life Miss Marie Esch, of Washington, leads!

For Miss Esch has the job of teaching incorrigible youngsters in the House of Detention.

At the end of a far from perfect

honor of putting the books away. A neat Pilgrim's Progress lay next to a book of the adventures of Baron Munchausen.

Little Indian villages in clay—complete with tents and camp-fire and buffalo—were on the window-sill, with no signs of life about them. Miniature clay fireplaces and English castles, draw-bridge and moat and turrets much in evidence—also molded in the white clay—rested on a table.

When the last of the children had gone, Miss Esch said with a rather weary smile:

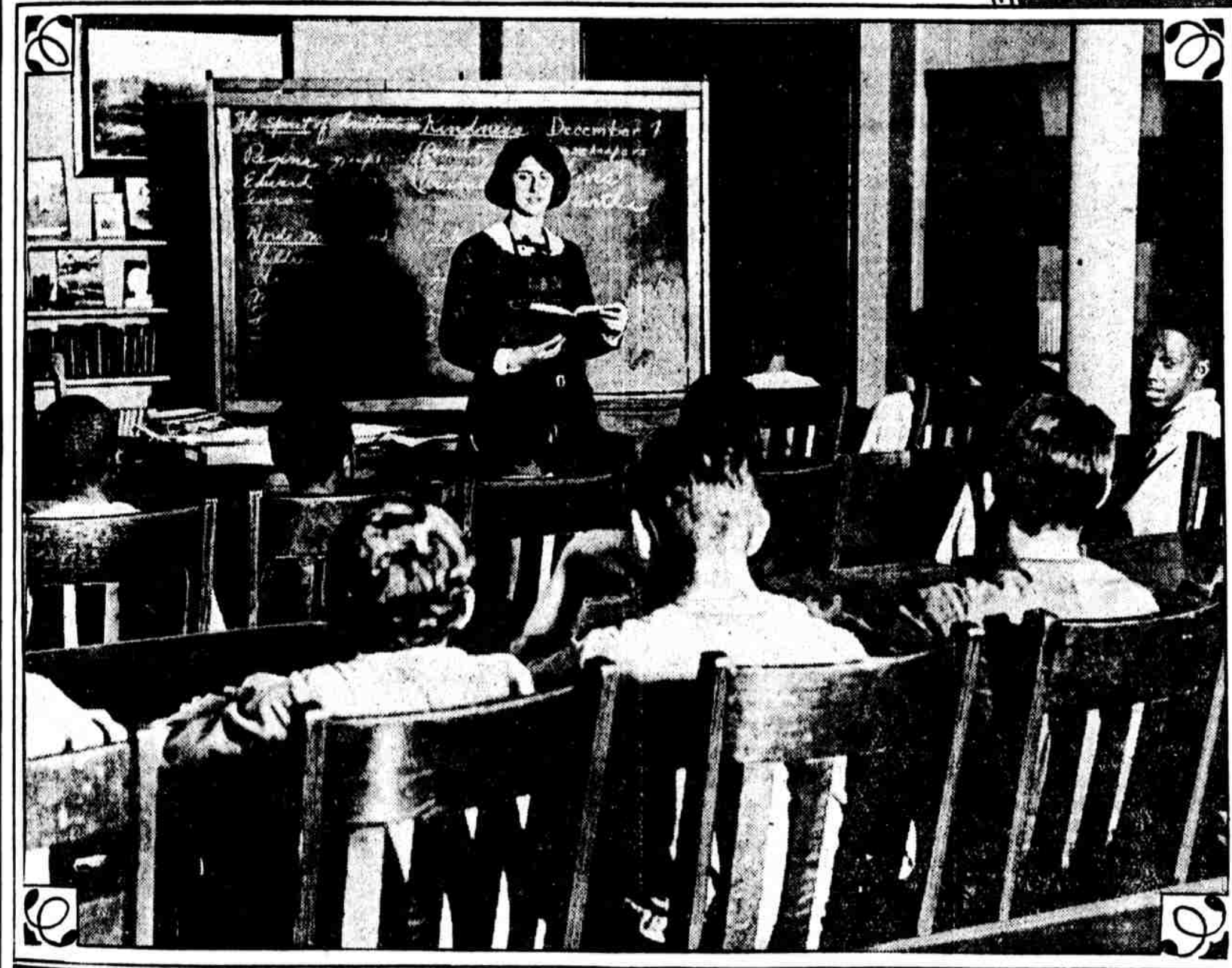
"I really don't know what people

pens to be. Generally it is for rowdiness or the children are runaways—we have some from Pittsburgh and other places. That good-looking boy you noticed me speaking to—well, he was here for stealing an automobile. Some are here because they have no fit homes to go to—while others are fugitives from justice. Quite a few are in for assault and battery."

Assault and battery! Pity the dainty teacher if the lads ever took it into their heads to show off their prowess in that particular line. But Miss Esch smilingly admits that she is not afraid—not one little bit.

But think of that! A class made up of rowdies and runaways and assaulters and batterers. It would make the nerves taut even to imagine drumming knowledge and a sense of responsibility into their young, irresponsible heads. But Miss Esch goes to her task with pleasure and confidence in the good she is accomplishing.

"I love the work—it is mighty interesting. The only worry I have is that it will wear me out, but I hope it won't. This is really just a trial until June 30, and if the results are



The school of the House of Detention in Washington is an experiment, and if results are obtained it will be continued. Under Miss Esch's kindly tutelage there seems little chance for failure

day Miss Esch was bringing the work to a finish. One little coal-black boy was running busily around the floor with a bucket and a little brush, a great pride in his shiny face, as Miss Esch explained to the assembled class—

"You see, Willie was so good today that he is allowed to clean up."

And the good little Willie attacked the floor with extra energy—and that done, went at the blackboard with the eraser. One wondered how much of the black would be left when he was through getting off the chalk.

After various little stunts in which Miss Esch always turned out the victor, the class came to order, gave a salute and pledged allegiance to the flag, by the Boy Scout formula—Willie dropping his bucket with a clatter in order to be at attention with the rest of the detained.

The class was dismissed.

And what a class it was that trooped up the stairs to realms above and new duties! The boys in their khaki regulation suits and white sneakers and the girls in pink and blue dresses—or checked, if they had been bad during the day. Even in the youthful female the best way to punish is to hurt the vanity—and picture the feelings of the one little incorrigible in her checked dress, while her law-abiding sisters paraded around in their virtuous solid colors.

They left the classroom, with its picture of President Harding holding the central place and its inspiring motto, "Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime," and the numerous books scattered around, for evidently Willie was not intrusted with the

coming in here to see this class must think. Sometimes the children are impossible and I am afraid that visitors do not understand. But I love the work nevertheless."

Miss Esch is the daughter of ex-Representative Esch, of Wisconsin, and was born in La Crosse. While at the University of Wisconsin—the dearly beloved Madison that gets a gurgle of delight out of any young person from the Western State—she did some social work among the Italians in their quarter. That was her only taste of social work until she launched into this new field.

First Time Idea Was Tried in the Country

For two years after graduation Miss Esch taught English and history in the high school, then last summer she was abroad.

When she returned to Washington in the fall she looked around for something to do—many, in fact most, of her friends were doing nothing and getting bored and blasé while doing it, so she determined to get busy.

And get busy she did, with a vengeance. The Board of Education in Washington decided last fall to have a teacher for the children in the House of Detention—and this was the first time the idea was tried anywhere in the country.

Miss Esch heard of the decision and applied for the position. She was appointed by the board and immediately took up her duties.

That was just two weeks ago. "The children here," Miss Esch explained, "are in for their first offense, whatever that offense hap-

pens to be. Generally it is for rowdiness or the children are runaways—we have some from Pittsburgh and other places. That good-looking boy you noticed me speaking to—well, he was here for stealing an automobile. Some are here because they have no fit homes to go to—while others are fugitives from justice. Quite a few are in for assault and battery."

Assault and battery! Pity the dainty teacher if the lads ever took it into their heads to show off their prowess in that particular line. But Miss Esch smilingly admits that she is not afraid—not one little bit.

But think of that! A class made up of rowdies and runaways and assaulters and batterers. It would make the nerves taut even to imagine drumming knowledge and a sense of responsibility into their young, irresponsible heads. But Miss Esch goes to her task with pleasure and confidence in the good she is accomplishing.

"I love the work—it is mighty interesting. The only worry I have is that it will wear me out, but I hope it won't. This is really just a trial until June 30, and if the results are

not satisfactory this class will be made a glimpse of an unknown world—a world peopled with the most romantic and noble characters of all ages. Think of the hearts stirred by tales of the days when knighthood was in flower, when all nobles were fair and there were jousts and tournaments, forsooth.

Dreams of Other Days Brighten Drab Life

And think of the dreams the little starved minds and souls weave from the haunting tale of Hiawatha—tale of woe, war and wampum—peace pipe and happy hunting grounds. And though they are under the influence of Miss Esch but for one day, they receive thoughts to brighten many a sad hour—a beautiful new land of dreams to be explored.

"We have no many colored children as white," Miss Esch continued, "and some days it is pretty discouraging. I will have my back turned for a moment and will hear a conversation like this: 'You took my clay,' a ready answer from a younger child."

"You did."

"You're a liar!"—and then the fun begins.

"Then I have to turn around and appeal to their sportfulness to prevent a fight. I would never accomplish anything if I said to them, 'Now boys, stop. You should know that it is not nice to fight and little gentlemen do not do it.'"

"I have to ask them if they think it is fair play to take each other's things, and if they were watching a game and one of the players did such a trick, what would they think of him? That generally ends the trouble, for they have a sense of fair play and sportfulness that is quite remarkable."

"Jane there," Miss Esch confided in a whisper as a lot about eleven scurried around picking up bits of paper, "stop. I have a favor to ask. Leave her silver stars to put out for the Christmas poster and she would not do it."

The little Jane decided to cut up instead of cut out. That was the trouble. Then in the most gentle voice gentle but compelling—Miss Esch reasoned with the reluctant Jane.

"Jane shall I tell Miss N— how naughty you have been, or will you be a good girl and tell her yourself?"

"Ah knows Ah ain't going to tell her," replied Jane.

Miss Esch is one of a large family, of which family her mother said years ago:

"We have rather a houseful. I told

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

Reactions of Pupils Fluctuate Daily

"Some days the children react beautifully and I feel that I have really done some good. Then another day I will go home feeling that I have accomplished absolutely nothing," she said in her sincere manner.

"I have class from 10 until 4—though I never know from day to day how many I will have in my class, so cannot plan very well. I have to have a roll call every day. In the morning we have recitation work and in the afternoon we have the individual. The main trouble with the children is that they have never worked together, and they do not know how to play together or in the right manner. They are always taking things from one another. It is this sense of community spirit and the rights of others that I have to try to impress on them. Just when I have made some appeal to their sense of fair play, they leave. Almost the most wearing feature of it is not knowing what will happen next. I have always to be prepared for an emergency—that's the worst of it." For Miss Esch, standing there in her trim blue dress, looked equal to coping with any emergency.

"Some of the children are mentally deficient—they are sixteen years old and about in the third grade. For instance, I said to one of them, when I saw his clay untouched: 'What on earth have you done all day?'

"Gosh, I made my clay soft," was his reply.

"The whole day he had spent in softening up a bit of clay. The Negro children have no sense of molding—they do not seem to be able to grasp the way to work the clay at all. They can not mold," added Miss Esch with an expressive movement of her fingers, as though she held a lump of clay and were shaping it.

"My family is very much interested in the work I am doing. Some nights I stay until 5:30 and other nights I work at home, painting for the next day. Of course, it takes up a lot of time and I can't keep up with other things the way I used to. Some nights I am too tired to go out and dance and I have no sympathy off, but on the week-ends I celebrate." Miss Esch smiled as she passed her hand over her brown hair.

Is the Daughter of Former Representative

Miss Esch is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Jacob Esch. Her father, as Representative Esch, was long prominent among the Republican leaders in Congress. He was one of the framers of the Esch-Turner bill for the Federal regulation of national rates, and of the Esch-Cummins Transportation Act. For twenty-two years he represented Seventh Wisconsin district at Washington, then in March, 1921, he became a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

So it will be seen that Miss Esch comes naturally by her desire to be doing something.

Miss Esch is one of a large family, of which family her mother said years ago:

"We have rather a houseful. I told

Miss Marie Esch, Washington, D. C., daughter of ex-Representative Esch, teacher in the House of Detention

ties the utmost care is necessary in selecting a career. I am opposed to what is known as making children 'show off.' I believe in their being sociable and helpful and early habits of hospitality cannot fail to make amiable and genial men and women. Some witty person has remarked that spoiled children are always those who live next door to you—never in your own home. I have made an earnest effort to make this witticism true."

It was twelve years ago that Mrs. Esch made these remarks. Can it be that she had some intimation that her third daughter would spring a real career on the world? At the time Mrs. Esch was saying these things, Marie was wading knee deep in June, skipping around with short hair and short skirts, with never a thought of the future and the grave thing she was going to do some far-off day; never a thought that she would one day be the first girl to teach in a House of Detention in the United States.

But that is just what she is. The Esches are of German descent. Hearing this one would be inclined to picture Miss Esch as a round-faced, fair-haired young lady—fat, of course, or at least plump.

On the contrary, she is more of the Spanish or Italian type, with somewhat of an olive complexion, clear eyes and long features. She is rather tall.

Doesn't Look a Bit Like a School Marm

She does not look a bit like a school-marm. But few teachers nowadays look like the conventional schoolmarm—that poor, much-maligned creature—serawny, straight-lipped and with hair combed tightly back and as often as not holding a threatening switch in the hand.

In her stead comes the trim, efficient young girl, pretty and dainty. She needs no switch, or at least she wields none. Perhaps the younger generation is better than the girls and boys of other days.

And Miss Esch, good-looking and human, keeps splendid discipline in her incorrigible class with no visible means of chastisement—it is the power of persuasion and of reason that rules the children and makes all go merrily in the little classroom in the House of Detention.

one of my friends that my oldest boy had just gone to college and we missed him tremendously. She was heartless enough to laugh and say that she could not possibly see how we could miss him unless we had a roll call. This is the first one of my children to leave home and it makes an epoch in our life. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-

views about the education of children, and their general training along every line.

"You see, the problem is a larger and more varied one for me than for the average woman. I have taught my little ones the rudiments of education and have watched their development. We have permitted them to be every particular of your mental bent. I realize, and so does my husband, that in this age of special-



Miss Esch finds real enjoyment in teaching these little first offenders who are placed in her care for a few days