

WOMEN TRIUMPH IN NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Eliza Flagg Young Placed at the Head of the Organization Heretofore Controlled by Men.



Mrs. Eliza Flagg Young, the New President of the National Educational Association.

FOR the first time in its history the National Educational Association has chosen a woman to preside over its affairs.

There is food for thought in this very radical action on the part of those who are the biggest factors in the educational affairs of the United States, especially in these days of woman suffrage.

All the more so because the victor won over the regular organization candidate and literally swept the convention.

It was not a suffragette movement, however, but an appreciative tribute to one woman, Mrs. Eliza Flagg Young.

The news dispatches have told how Mrs. Young defeated Z. X. Snyder, President of the Colorado State Normal School, by a vote of 617 to 376. This tells something about Mrs. Young's personality and her remarkable work for and in the Chicago public schools.

Mrs. Young is an ardent advocate of the "keep smiling" habit, and whenever she speaks, she wreathes her rather plain features in winning smiles, which she says will win out in the long run.

"The uplift is noticeable in the features of the school teachers' countenances these days," she says, "although I can remember when the corners of the mouth had a downward droop, which is very discouraging to the growing child. Scowling at a child in school and discussing the question of how to prevent whispering during school hours does no good. The teacher who interests the pupil need say nothing about whispering. The child loses its desire to whisper when it becomes interested, and the teacher's discipline then becomes automatic."

Many interesting stories of Mrs. Young's early days as a Chicago school teacher are told. Quick to understand a situation, she never falters when a word will be of some benefit.

Haynie R. Pearson, a Chicago attorney, tells of a little incident which he claims changed him from an indolent, fun-loving boy to an earnest business man. "I was a pupil of Mrs. Young and had been censured for playing during school hours," said Mr. Pearson. "As she was dismissing me, Mrs. Young put both hands on my shoulders, and looking straight at me with a half

smile, said: 'Haynie, did you ever think we owe it to ourselves to devote the same amount of time to work that we do to play, and in just as earnest a spirit?' It was a new thought, and I puzzled over it considerably, but the more I thought of her words the more I decided she was right, and that if I was ever to succeed as a man I had better begin to work as well as play in

took up her duties as teacher of the first grade in the Foster School.

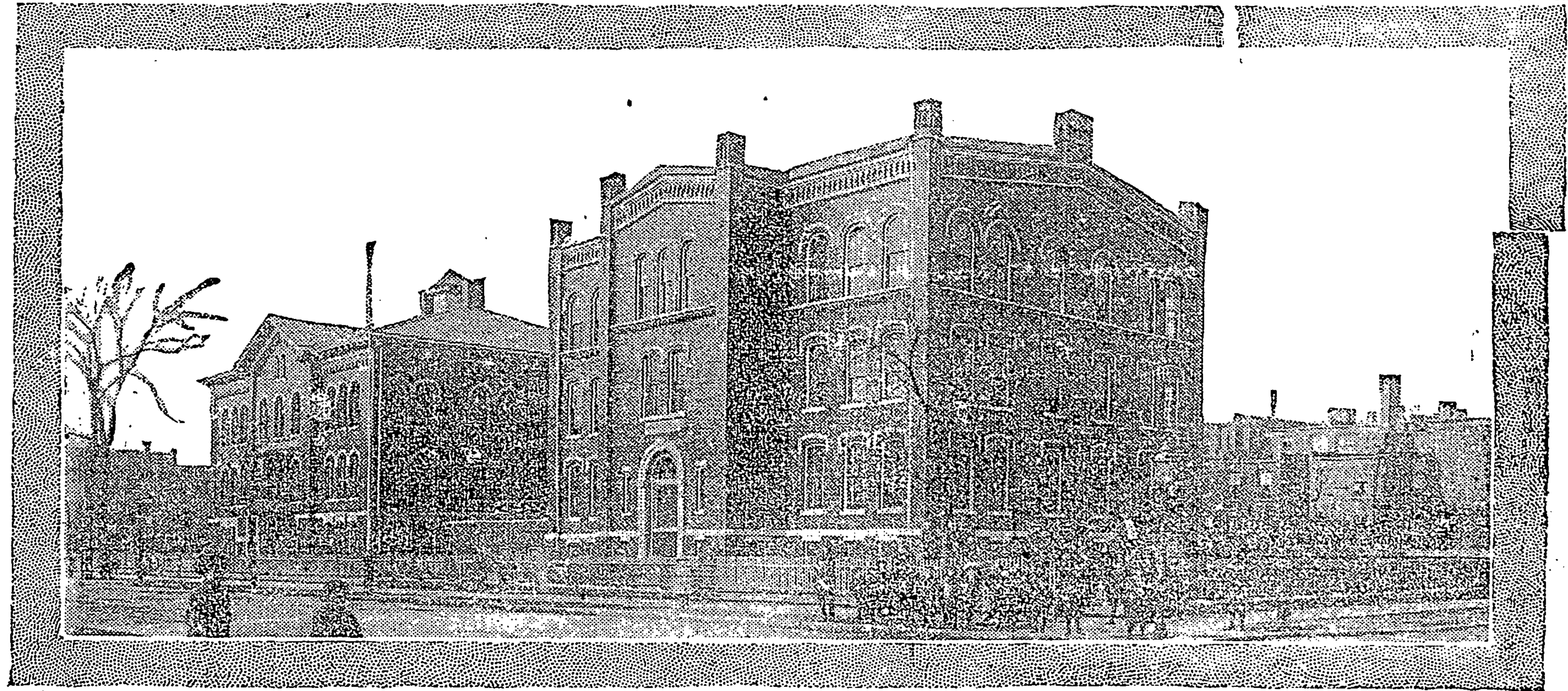
Six years later she married William Young, who shortly after developed tuberculosis and died. Having no children to care for, Mrs. Young plunged into educational work, and dedicated her life to bettering conditions along that line. Since that time, barring a few vacation trips to Europe, Mrs.

and often carried our cups back into the parlor."

These changes were wrought greatly to the satisfaction of the late President Harper, although he had been known to disapprove most heartily of having any member of the feminine sex in the faculty. On one memorable occasion Dr. Harper invited Mrs. Young to the department of pedagogy. "Don't

worn off. "I teach because I love to; it is my very life and the grandest work in the world," she said when asked if she would ever stop.

"Why should I stop? I have taught every grade from the first up and have found inspiration in each. There was the Foster School, where I taught first, then the old Brown School, out on the west side, the Skinner and others,



Brown School Where Mrs. Young Taught in 1870.

call it pedagogy," returned Mrs. Young, "call it the department of education." "But," returned Dr. Harper, "we are all engaged in the work of education, you know." Nevertheless, a few months later, when Mrs. Young submitted the programme to the President, the work of teaching others how to teach was designated "department of education," and the name was amicably accepted by Dr. Harper. Since then the department of education has stood.

Before Mrs. Young entered the University of Chicago as a teacher, she aroused the interest of Dr. Harper by her judgment in the matter of text books.

Mrs. Young held that four or five text books, all different, should be used in the grammar grades, although all on the same subject, for, she said, one child will tell another what is in his book and excite the other to interest by seeing in what way it is different from his own book. "Fine idea!" exclaimed Dr. Harper. "I want a woman like that to introduce educational reforms," and he immediately sent an invitation to Mrs. Young to accept a position in the university. But Mrs. Young sent back word that the university had nothing to offer her which she would accept. The presumption, of course, was that a doctorship was about the highest honor the President would confer upon a woman. Dr. Harper, however, was not to be denied. He offered her a full professorship.

"But I haven't a doctor's degree," argued Mrs. Young, "and I cannot teach those who are working for their highest degrees when I haven't one myself."

"It's the woman I want, not the degree," answered President Harper; but she made him wait until she won her summa cum laude.

One of Mrs. Young's first requests was that she might be allowed to serve tea and cake at class. "Bless your heart, yes, serve anything you like," answered the delighted President. "I'd like some myself."

Mrs. Young is enthusiastic about her work, the novelty of which has never

where I could feel my mental powers increasing by communicating with the various minds and getting their ideas."

Just before her appointment to the position of Superintendent of the Chicago Public School, July 30, 1909, Mrs. Young spoke at length on her ideas of the duties of her office.

"A superintendent should spend the mornings visiting and the afternoons in the office," she said. "Upon finding something interesting, a whole day may well be devoted to following it up, and another day if deemed necessary. Routine business cannot succeed, and going over a stipulated piece of ground mechanically cannot and never has succeeded."

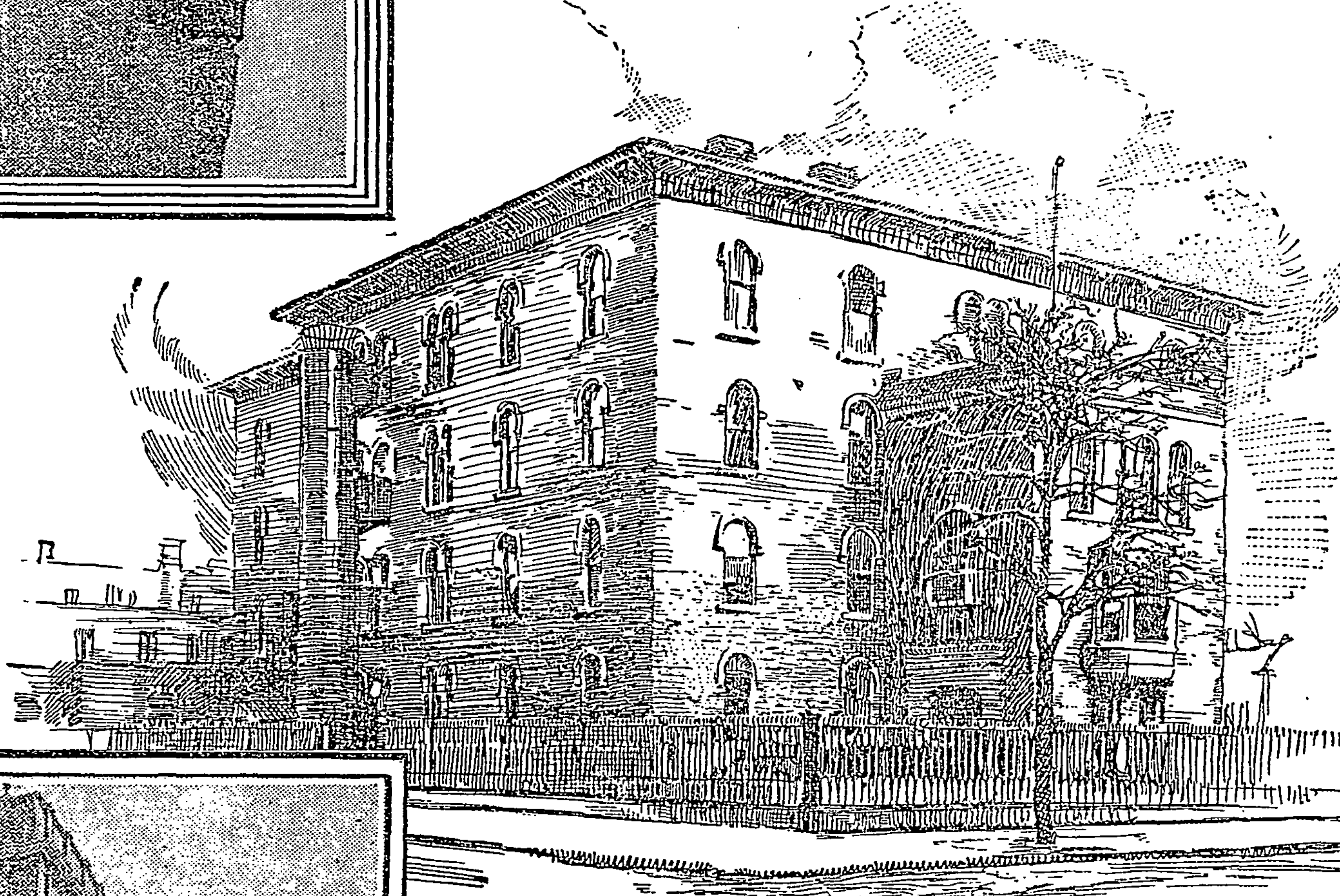
Another point on which Mrs. Young has laid great stress since she has been Superintendent is that of making the teachers feel perfectly at ease.

"I never let a teacher feel that I am on her trail, and it is well to conduct all discussions and instructions in quite a friendly and informal manner," she says.

The choice of Mrs. Young for Superintendent of the Chicago Schools came unanimously at the end of a three-hour session, which brought to a close nearly three weeks of caucuses and informal meetings. There were five other candidates in the field, and all were summoned in alphabetical order to appear before the board giving their ideas as to the management of the Chicago public schools.

Mrs. Young was the last one called, and the committee listened to her for more than thirty minutes.

Half an hour later she was formally notified that her election was unanimous and without debate. Mrs. Young outlined her policy in a few words: "There is to be but one head and I am it," she said. "The responsibility and consequences of action will rest on my own shoulders. I am a dyed-in-the-wool Republican, but I believe in the Democratic principles of co-operation and the interchange of ideas. I am convinced the time has come when we should find our ground and stick to it."



Skinner School Where Mrs. Young Taught in 1875.

earnest. It was a real lesson and I have profited by it."

Mrs. Young has had a long experience of school life. For forty-eight years she has taught in Chicago. Born in Buffalo Jan. 15, 1845, she received most of her undergraduate education there. Strangely enough, this woman, who has spent the greater part of her life in the school room, has spent but little time there as a student.

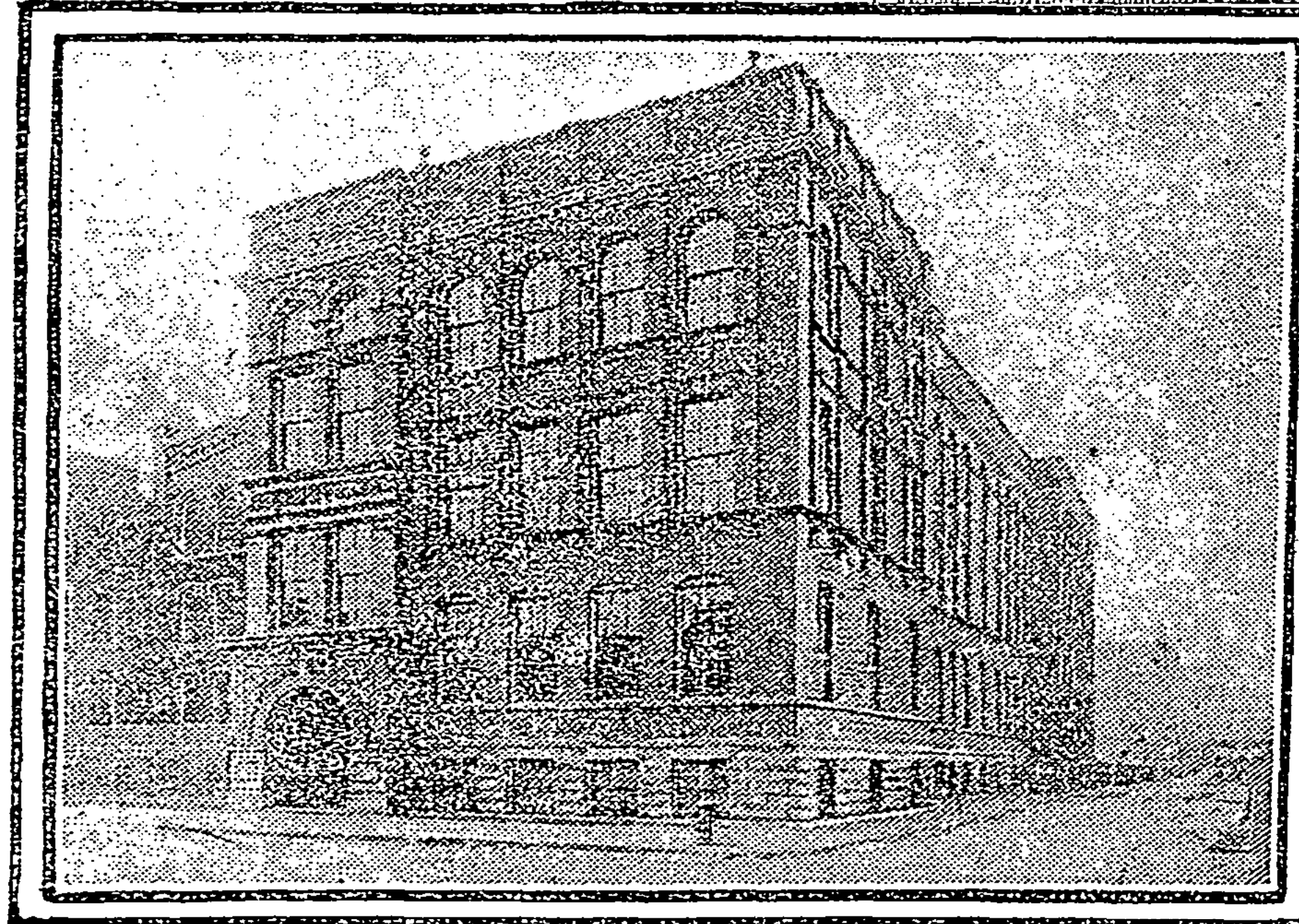
Her father, Theodore Flagg, was a distinguished mathematician, and from him his daughter got her excellent grounding on this subject. When a very young girl her family moved to Chicago, where she finished her education in 1861. The following year she

Young has scarcely ceased to hold important positions as teacher in the Chicago public schools.

She taught in the University of Chicago some ten years ago and instituted among other innovations, the serving of tea and cake during class, thus giving a social touch to the student's work which won immediate approval.

She also conducted a special class at her own residence on Tuesday afternoons, at which she also served refreshments.

"It was an odd class," said Mrs. Young reminiscently, "made up of school superintendents and other officials, and we discussed important problems as we sat at the dining table,



Old Foster School Where Mrs. Young Taught in 1862.