

1614 N St., N.W.

August 15, 1917.

Miss Alta Jane Emerson,  
Box 591,  
Chautauque, N. Y.

My dear Miss Emerson:-

You will forgive the delay in replying to your letter. It is not dated but I know it has been among my correspondence for some little time.

You are asking me a hard question - to find a place where you can be one hundred per cent efficient. I do not believe any person outside can tell you that. You say that you want to use the training that you have had in Home Economics ( and in my judgment there is no more useful training ) with Social Science in such a way as to be useful to the largest number of people. There is no way, my dear Miss Emerson, to tell you where you can reach the largest number of people except by beginning wherever you can get a foot-hold and working up and out; taking every opportunity that comes to you; using all your tools, by which I mean your ability as a teacher and your ability as a writer and speaker; and developing yourself as you go on by the work that you do. Do not stop to consider the number of people you are influencing. Nobody knows how many people he is influencing because no one can follow the waves of influence that are set in motion. It is not by any means the person who seems to be exercising the largest influence that may be really doing so. On the contrary, some quiet little person of whom you or I have never heard may in the long run be the most influential one in the community. Do not despise any position that you accept. If you improve all the opportunities there are in any position it is certain to lead to larger things.

I know this must sound very indefinite to you, but it is the only way I know. That is, this matter of being of use is up to us individually - a second person can be of very little real use. With the training that you have given yourself and your evident desire to seize every opportunity for more training, you cannot but be of real use.

Of course you know I shall be glad to hear from you at any time.

Very sincerely yours,