

Partial Portraits: No. 19

par'-tial . . . (a): 1. Involving a part only;
2. Regarding one or some with special favor.—*Standard Dictionary.*

“ANY reasonable man can make a living,” was the opinion of Samantha Converse Hanna, mother of Mark, who looked on poverty as a disgrace, and not as an unfortunate condition. Herbert Hoover holds that poverty can be abolished, and William Elgin Wickenden, president of Case School of Applied Science, thinks it is the business of engineers to develop a society in which there will be general distribution of the rich abundance even now available for all. Such a development is really a problem of business, involving mastery of the technique of distribution, and the use of capital.

The new president of Case was born at Toledo and his coming to Cleveland marks his return to his native state after an absence dating from 1904, when at twenty-one, he was graduated from Denison University. He made his living while he was earning his degree as bachelor of science. In summer he engineered and during school time he worked on a newspaper, and as a student assistant indulged his craving for experiments in physics.

THE first year away from Denison young Wickenden spent as a teacher at Mechanics Institute, Rochester, New York. Four years at the University of Wisconsin led to nine as a faculty member of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It was as chairman of the curriculum there that Wickenden worked out ideas about what engineers should study. There, too, he shared in the work of creating the co-operative course existing between M. I. T. and the General Electric Company.

Through a series of events involving world affairs, Wickenden, in 1922, was an officer in the business organization of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, which has the largest staff of college trained workers in this country. He was in charge of the Bell system's recruiting and of its relations with educational institutions of all types. These associations led him away from business, back to education, where he is sure he belongs.

For nearly six years just before he came to Case he directed a comprehensive investigation of engineering education. This undertaking was advanced through a common understanding between the Carnegie Corporation, Engineering Foundation, the national engineering societies, and employers of en-

gineers. He spent these years in travel, visiting nearly all the leading technical schools in America and Western Europe. Coming to Case was a logical step in Wickenden's professional odyssey.

Certainly no program could have been more ideally projected, leading to Wickenden's work in Cleveland, than his experiences of these last years. He studied the work of engineering colleges in this country and Canada, he made a comparison of higher technical education in America and Europe, he looked into technical education in secondary schools, and he glimpsed the development of summer schools to train engineering teachers in the art and science of teaching.

OUT of this six years' observation Wickenden has come to certain conclusions about men and things. He has tasted the savor of life in older and riper civilizations than ours and he thinks the transplanted cultures of other lands have flourished and died in America without leaving any permanent impress.

Now he thinks the time has come for us to begin to form a civilization all our own, one suited to our era, our climate, our national needs, and calculated to benefit our descendants; and engineers can help us to begin.

We began life as the poorest of western nations. Now we are the richest people in the world. Wickenden's engineering friends figure that the half has not been told about our industrial possibilities. They say that we are certain through research and invention to be twice as rich as we now are. It is here that engineers of the future should shine in organizing the business of distribution and in the administration of capital.

“Democracy and science have advanced in step in the last three centuries, each growing out of an experimental attitude toward life. A successful democracy depends on the production of enough to go around. Schoolmen are seeking to advance democracy by bringing scientific methods into education, through genuine experiences involving student initiative and management. Character is conceived in terms of social attitudes. A good student in addition to having an exceptional mind must be able to get along well as a human being. It is for this reason that

the way to the good life grows out of deftly directed experience, rather than out of solitary pursuit of individual perfection.

“In just such beginnings school life aims to sow the seed of a new civilization, based on verified knowledge of material nature and correct observation of society. As Huxley puts it, ‘Not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways.’ This new civilization must be fabricated through the co-operative spirit of science, the use of new leisure, the development of the conscious relationship of members of society one to another, and through man's as yet neglected capacity to deal with undistorted realities.”

Dr. Wickenden appreciates the time he can spend out of doors. He likes to take long walking trips when they are possible and he does not insist, as enthusiasts of the natural world have been known to do, on being alone on these walks. His enjoyments are so varied that he has never settled on any special divertimento. He puts down his ideas in the neatest and lightest of round and regular characters—symbols that carry out his air of being precisely adjusted to his mechanical surroundings. Sensitive to the welfare of other people's welfare, he takes pains even in such small matters as what he concludes will be an agreeable placement of a visitor's chair.

IN the opinion of Luckiesh, of light fame, it is not the degrees that a man gets by direct effort that please him most. The really thrilling scholastic honors are the ones that are accumulated as by-products, and come because of widening experiences and contributions to the work of the world. Of these honorary degrees Dr. Wickenden has a cheering list: Doctor of Engineering, Lafayette, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Case School of Applied Science; and the degree of doctor of science from Denison University to go with his bachelor's degree in science from that university with which he started his professional life in 1904.

Case's new president thrives on having more work to do than he can crowd into his days. Alive to fresh viewpoints, he deserted physics because men interest him more than formulas. He is a schoolman with a democratic manner springing from a real democratic mind, and he is brisk and instantly friendly.

E. A.