

on the farm; it exerts a far-reaching influence for betterment that cannot be put into words.

In the future, every community will feel it as necessary to have its public library as to have its public schools.

Our community should have a public library.

JANET HOUCK.

THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ignorance is the menace of civilization. If America continues to grow, the minds of her people must grow. The schools alone cannot satisfy this need for continuing the intellectual growth of American citizens. In America today, 85 per cent of the boys and girls are in school until the age of 14 years. After that, but one in five continues school until the age of 18. Then what happens? A scanty few go on to college or university and the others do not. Is this the end of their education then? Must their mental growth cease when the school doors close behind them?

There must be some way out. Some way to continue the educational growth of American citizens. And there is a way. That way is the public library. It is America's continuation of school. It is the most democratic of American educational institutions. It is free to every person—color or race, nationality or creed make no difference. It is free to every person who wishes to read, and who is willing to read. If the schools will only teach the reading habit, the library will educate the world, for the public library of America is free to every new idea, free to every fresh point of view; nothing is barred because it is new or radical or different. The public library is free from party politics; it is free from religious intolerance and prejudice. The public library provides information on all sides of every important question—so far as its funds will allow.

The citizen has his duty toward the library. First of all he should encourage larger appropriations of funds. Too many people are being turned away because there are not enough copies of certain books to supply the demand, or not enough money to

buy all the books that should be on the shelves. More than half the people of the United States do not have library facilities of any kind. The educational facilities of the library have not been recognized as they should be; with that recognition will come greater service.

Democratic as the library is, its service should be greatly extended. The librarians should be prepared to give more service, more encouragement and sympathy to their patrons, whether to help the half literate foreigner or the scholar. The public should be made to see that the library is a continuation school. While the library is useful and helpful, it has still not reached its maximum of helpfulness or usefulness and it cannot do so until the people themselves realize what it has to give them.

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE.

FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY

DO WE need reforms in our elementary school course of study?

Probably the presentation of a few facts may point to the truth that reforms are needed.

First, the world has made rapid strides and civilization, in its progressive mastery of varied energies, includes education, and education includes the course of study.

Second, there exists an appalling amount of injustice, error, stupidity, and misery. The schools know this, and the machinery of education should constantly be directed against these insidious foes.

Practices which once may have proved adequate have become obsolete and ineffective. Even the founders of our Republic were influenced by the ideas of John Locke, among which was the *tabula rasa* theory, namely, that the mind is a tablet on which could be inscribed anything that one wished to write. Consequently all men are equal. No individual differences, here; none of the facts and principles of modern science; no biologists in these deliberations. And ever since then, because of our democratic notions of equality we have been trying to hitch some very ordinary wagons to stars of the first magnitude. One of the curses