

III. *Status of Literature in Rome at That Time*

The case of Archias' citizenship was easily proved, and for that reason the greater part of Cicero's defense of him is given over to the praises of literature. This very fact itself, that such a eulogy of literature could interest an audience at that time and could aid in the plea for Archias, shows the importance of literature in Roman life, as does also the fact that military and political leaders of Rome took time for "Roman Letters."

We know also that literature was held in high esteem at this time from the fact that the poet Archias, because of his literary ability, was especially admired by leaders of Roman public life. Furthermore, many states were desirous of Archias as a citizen because of his poetic gifts. Gradually the influence of Greek literature was spreading to Rome. But it was not until about 31 B. C., thirty years later, that literature in Roman life reached its height.

HELEN YATES

KEEPING UP THE WAR SPIRIT

IN a small community of a few hundred people a few miles from this city there is a modest town park. In the center is a flag staff, and at two of the corners are rather antiquated field pieces, trophies of the Spanish war. They are quite useless as a protection to the town, for no one could bring them into action in any circumstances. They were secured at the close of the war in Cuba by some citizens who thought it a patriotic thing to set up these harmless bits of artillery as reminders of a glorious event in the annals of the republic, and souvenirs of the fact that the village had had some little participation in the adventure.

On the recent flag-day there was a celebration, consisting of a parade of civic notables and a few veterans, as well as some

of the boy scouts of the place. The program, instead of calling to mind the real meaning of the flag for the nation and the world, was so manipulated as to afford an opportunity for a rehearsal of the war record of the past. The military men who had been imported for the occasion rehearsed one battle scene after another, dwelling upon the glorious part the flag had played in waving over fields of carnage and death. Not a word regarding the meaning of Old Glory to the yearning peoples of the earth to whom it is the symbol of liberty, opportunity, education, and democracy. Not a paragraph in interpretation of its significance to the new citizenship arriving from abroad or growing up in the land. Only the dismal recital of armies facing death, and of devastated fields and towns where the flag had been heroically displayed.

It was a little difficult to make the diminutive cannon play a very inspiring part in the celebration. But such inspiration as could be gotten out of them was invoked. If they could have been conscious of the comic rôle they acted in the celebration, they would have felt even smaller than they looked. As the closing feature of a program that had missed every item of stimulating national spirit, and had set the example of beating the war tom-toms, a little girl was introduced to recite a poem appropriate to the occasion. It proved to be that familiar tribute to the American flag, beginning, "When freedom from her mountain height." It was no fault of the demure little maiden that she was quite unmoved by the nobler lines of that picturesque but rather sentimental selection, and was far more conscious of the folds of her pretty pink sash than she was of those of the national banner. But she came presently to the lines,

Ere yet the life-blood warm and wet has dimmed
the glistening bayonet,
Each soldier's eye shall brightly turn to where the
sky-born beauties burn;
And as his springing steps advance catch war and
vengeance from the glance.

No one in that little audience who had the least sensitiveness to the finer meaning of the day could fail to revolt against the intrusion of that "life-blood, warm and wet" stuff on the lips of a little child, and the suggestion that the purpose of a look at the flag was to stimulate thoughts of "war and vengeance" in the soul of the beholder. There are noble poems and eloquent orations in which fitting reference is made to the tragic times when the nation has faced the emergency of fighting. But those were days when the paganism of war had not become so apparent as it has in our time, and men were not ashamed to take pride in the tinsel and millinery of soldiering. The toy cannon of our public parks are as useless and ridiculous as would be so many bows and arrows, or the painted and alarming masks once worn by Chinese soldiers into battle.

It would be interesting to inquire why we retain these absurd war trophies as decorations in public places. It is certainly not because it is the desire of the villages to exhibit the proofs of valor in war. There are times when in the first flush of victory a nation gives vent to its exultation, and cares nothing for the morals of shouting over a defeated foe. Perhaps there was some excuse for the limitless display of the "seventy-fives" all along the Champs Elysees from the Arch of Triumph to the Place de la Concorde after the armistice. But even that tremendous excuse did not long permit the useless and insulting display. And we have no such reason for the exhibit of captured weapons from enemies with whom we are no longer at war. There may be a place for such in museums, where students of history can explore the fashions of arms through the centuries. But there is no meaning in such unhappy reminders in the open spaces of modern cities.

About the last relic of the ancient pride in captured war material was exhibited by a governor of Ohio, who, when President Roosevelt gave orders that the standards of

Confederate regiments should be returned to them, sent the flamboyant and mock-heroic telegram, "No rebel flags shall be returned while I am governor." That was amusing and harmless, for the standards have gone back to the men who loved them, in spite of the fiery fulmination of the pompous politician. The world has left behind the era of war relics put on display for patriotic purposes. They are as useless and repulsive as the scalps once carried about by Indians, for the same purpose. Great peoples do not boast of their prowess in war. Too many have played at that game during the ages, and all have gone the same way.

If it is the purpose of such military trophies to make clear the ability of the nation to protect itself, in time of danger, the result is merely amusing. For no one imagines any artillery set in menacing form in public places would be of the slightest value in time of need. Military science soon leaves behind as unusable all but the latest patterns of arms. Moreover, the real defenses of ports and cities are carefully concealed, and any attempt to photograph or describe them is treated as a criminal act. When a community puts cannon on parade, it is usually willing to brand them as out of date. Visitors are freely taken through the abandoned portions of fortresses, but little that is of actual use in war is ever displayed. If the exhibit is to assert the capacity of the community for self protection, why not set up a symbol that will have some practical meaning? No town or village is in the least danger from war. It loses no sleep over the terrors of invasion or conquest. But fire and crime are an ever present menace. If trophies are the signs of protection, why not a fireman's insignia, set up as a standard, consisting of hook and ladder, crossed by a hose nozzle and surmounted by a fire helmet? Or patrolmen's clubs, bound together by a policeman's belt, set off with the familiar watchman's hat! Such symbols would at least have the air of reality, and would stand for the honorable service of men necessary

to the public safety. They would be recognized at once as the tokens of protection, and would have none of the sinister symbolism of a period and a traffic of which the nation is increasingly ashamed.

And if the military trophies displayed in public places are for warning to enemies, then by all means let us give attention by such display to the only foes we have to fear, the criminals who prey upon the public and evade the just penalties of their crimes. Much is said in these days of the desirability of restoring capital punishment in those states where it has been discarded as inconsistent with advancing civilization. Without waiting to determine that controversy, why not have those communities in which the death penalty is still preserved vary the device of public warning by substituting the gallows, the electric chair, and small models of the lethal chamber in the places where now the useless and obsolete guns are set? Or if the love of the antique prevail over the sentiment for contemporary methods, we might have the addition of the block and the axe, or add a touch of internationalism by the use of the guillotine. In any event, we should thus at least employ for purposes of civic art objects that have some contact with public interests, and are less gruesome and more practical than the outworn survivals of the age of war.—*The Christian Century*.

LIBRARIES AND THE PER CAPITA INTELLIGENCE

FOR our youth of America there exists today an investment of nearly \$6,000,000,000 in facilities for formal education, in textbooks, in buildings, in machinery and equipment. What is the return upon this huge investment, as an index of the national culture of the American people?

A study of the available statistics shows that although the American system of formal education offers an opportunity to all, it

actually produces the following results among an average group of 100 children of school age:

Thirty-six are not attending school at all.

Fifty-four are attending public elementary school.

Seven are attending public high school.

Three are in public night school, vocational school, etc.

Only two enter college or university.

Yet public school education represents the maximum organized education open to the people. It reaches but 64 per cent of the youth of America. Even this 64 per cent does not, on the average, receive a complete public school education; their average is seven and one-half years. College and university education reaches but 2 per cent.

In a democracy educated intelligence seems scarcely less necessary in the followers than in the leaders. Upon education largely depends the future of our civilization, the trend of our institutions, the kind of society, and the measure of its opportunities under which our sons and daughters and their children shall work and live.

What other means are at hand which will give to our present and future citizens an understanding of life, prepare them to function as proficient individuals, constructive producers and intelligent citizens, a task which formal education today only partly succeeds in doing?

Aside from the influences of the home, the church, business, societies, and clubs, the principal channels of education open to the American people are books, magazines, newspapers, moving pictures, and the radio.

Of these, the moving picture and the radio are largely recreational rather than educational. And although magazines and newspapers are one of our most important sources of education, they are of value chiefly to those who are already well begun on the path of education; they pre-suppose the groundwork of knowledge.