

GIVE THIS JOURNAL TO A FRIEND

Linwood Library Gazette

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

Vol. 3, No. 4.



January, 1938

THE LIBRARY'S PART IN GENERAL EDUCATION

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In attempting to discuss our library's part in general education I began to wonder just how we could define education and of what it should consist. Culture was one of the first terms which came to my mind, and it is a fine generality used extensively by sociologists who speak in an abstract manner. Yet any culture worthy of the name must draw its life from both the finest minds of the present and the greatest minds of the past. If it confines itself to either to the exclusion of the other, it becomes deformed. So I felt that possibly this word culture might be the quality I was seeking in defining the work of the library, for we try to keep on our shelves the finest works of the present and the greatest works of the past.

Reading habits are a direct result of schooling, for the teaching of reading is one of the primary functions of the school. Of the three "r's," the basic elements in education, reading is the one activity learned in school which most of us could best utilize in later life. In spite of the magnitude of publishers' lists, the national totals of book sales and even library circulation, we, as a nation, are newspaper readers. We read sensational news. With speed, action, and sensation as the motivating forces of the day, the schools have failed, in the main, to teach students to read either for enjoyment or profit. They have slighted their opportunities to create a reading habit.

During the first year of high school the student is usually required to read about eight books, and here he is introduced to three words—required, supplementary, and classic, worst of the three. He develops an antipathy for books in general based on these three words. His reading habits are formed at the corner drug store, or by patronage of the vendor of questionable literature always found within easy reach of the schools, through cheap literature, or not at all.

Encouragement rather than coercion leads to reading enjoyment. The personal enthusiasm of the librarian or teacher is the important factor in reading guidance. We still can do much, in cooperation with the schools, to see that reading is directed and inspired, not forced and warped.

On September 30, 1936, Hendrick Van Loon—who assisted in preparing the plan for a broadcast of episodes of world history for young people—assisted in the demonstration of specimen records of these broadcasts at the New York Public Library. This is the result of an endeavour to find a more practical method of arranging successful story hours for children over the radio. However, if the series finds a sponsor, it is planned to be a weekly feature programme of the National Broadcasting Company, with direct speech and real actors. It is further planned that records of the broadcasts may be made for library circulation to schools at a later date, or any other uses to which they can be put.

The radio, the newspapers, and the