

**PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SEVENTEENTH GENERAL MEETING OF
THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
HELD AT DENVER AND COLORADO
SPRINGS; AUGUST 13-16 AND 21, 1895**

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CONFERENCE OF LIBRARIANS.

DENVER AND COLORADO SPRINGS,

AUGUST 13-16, AND 21, 1895.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, H. M. UTLEY, LIBRARIAN OF THE
DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY.

WE are met for the seventeenth Conference of the American Library Association in the Capital city of the Centennial State. It is a pleasing co-incidence that the Association and the State celebrate the same natal year. Within the memory of some of us the whole region of which this city is now the metropolis was a wilderness. The century was fairly begun when Lieut. Pike led his little band to the sources of the Arkansas and made his futile attempt to scale the lofty peak which now bears his name. Forty years later came the explorations of Fremont, and then fifteen years elapsed before the tide of immigration set in. The desert of that day has been converted into prosperous farms. Thriving towns have sprung up in the mountain fastnesses, at the gateway to which sits this Queen City of the plains, displaying all the evidences of wealth, culture, and refinement to be found in the proud cities to the eastward.

This rapid and wonderful transformation has been the work of human hands guided by intelligent brains and an indomitable spirit of pluck and perseverance. We are accustomed to think of this combination as purely American. In many of its characteristics it certainly is so. And in no respect more distinctively so than in the cause in which we are most interested. Not all the older commonwealths, even on this side of the Atlantic, have yet accepted the theory that the education of the citizen is the concern of the state. But in all this newer portion of our country this doctrine has been incorporated into the fundamental law. The ordinance of 1787 for the govern-

ment of the territory northwest of the Ohio river declared that for obvious reasons schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged. The twenty states now organized within this and the subsequently acquired territory to the westward have all accepted to the fullest extent the doctrine of the ordinance. They have not only carried it into practical effect by general laws providing for free public schools for children, for universities and institutions of higher learning for the education of youth, but have also provided for the establishment and maintenance of free public libraries at the general expense and for the common use of all the people.

Let us consider very briefly the theory upon which the state assumes to levy tribute upon the property of individuals to provide means for maintaining libraries. By what right does the state tax the man of wealth to put miscellaneous books into the hands of the man who pays no tax?

So far as primary education is concerned, the basis seems clear. The free state which depends for its very existence upon the intelligence of the masses of its citizens must, as a measure of self-defense, provide the facilities by which all may become intelligent. Self-preservation is the supremest natural law. Whatever has a right to exist has a right to do that which is necessary to preserve its existence. The free state which rests on the suffrage of its citizens is bound in duty to itself to see to it that popular education, which is essential to its perpetuity, is universal. Ignorant men are not competent to take care of themselves and their households, still less to

direct the destinies of an empire. The state has, therefore, the right, not only to provide the means of education, but to compel education. Laws are in force which require certain attendance upon the schools. These rest on the theory that the interest of the state in the education of the individual surpasses that of the individual, and therefore, the state cannot, in justice to itself, treat education purely as a matter of individual concern.

It is a notorious fact that the average person does not perceive the importance of self-cultivation. As the vineyard left to itself is soon choked out with weeds and chapparall, so man if left to himself lapses naturally into his primitive condition. The state cannot leave him to himself, but must interpose to make it certain that he acquires the best degree of information which his natural abilities and the time not necessary to his self-support shall permit. Neither can the state leave the matter of providing facilities and inducements to education to private enterprise, nor to the church, which has been the foremost of all organizations to appreciate its importance. While the state recognizes these agencies and accepts them as satisfactory, so far as they go, it nevertheless fully equips schools of its own, in pursuance of its inherent right and duty, which cannot be relinquished to any other agency.

The extent to which the state shall go in the matter of educating its citizens has been the subject of much discussion. There are those who maintain that as the education of the individual proceeds his concern in his own development increases, until finally, if his education proceeds far enough, his concern in his own development surpasses that of the state, and he must thenceforth be left to equip himself entirely at his own expense. If that point is marked by the line between primary and secondary, or between secondary and higher education, there is where the state is in duty bound to stop. The extent of the interest of the community as compared with that of the individual is held to grow less and less and finally to disappear as he advances.

But the better judgment of our time repudiates this theory, and holds apparently that there is no limit to the concern of the state in the mental progress of the individual. Ian Maclaren in his touching story of "Domsie"

quotes John Knox as saying: "Ilka scholar is something added to the riches of the commonwealth." It can probably be demonstrated by the rules of accounts that as a business investment the state is wisely spending money in the education of the people. The cost is more than returned to it in the material development which an enlightened citizenship ensures. If we contrast our own country, where education is free, with some older countries where it is yet held to be a matter of minor concern, or if we contrast some of the states of this republic with others of corresponding age, we shall see at a glance a wide difference in material resources and prosperity. In one the industrial arts are far advanced, there is intellectual activity, the average citizen is well clothed, well housed, and enjoys many luxuries; in the other, the methods and life of a past century prevail and poverty and ill-living are the rule. This, if not the highest motive, is an incidental one of considerable importance for doing at the common expense that which is for the common good.

But the maintenance of the public library is not based on the communistic idea. A former president of this association, speaking at the Lake George Conference, said: "The socialists and communists are all friends of the library, for we give them the books they want, and they hold that it is not only the duty of the government to educate the people, but to furnish them with reading. If the library ever shall have enemies they will be the rich, who do not enjoy being taxed for the benefit of the public, and have libraries of their own. Its defenders will be men of broad views, scholarly people, and behind them, with votes, the middle and poorer classes."

While it may be true, in a certain sense, that socialists and communists approve the public library because it appears to give them something which they desire at the public cost, that scheme, on its true ground, is as far removed as possible from any such theory of maintenance by the state. The essential principle of communism is that the members of the community shall hold their property in common for the common use and benefit. This principle flourished in the village community in which each individual was

allotted his certain proportion of the lands owned in common. There are at this day a sporadic few who advocate government ownership of railroads, and some would even include all the great instrumentalities of commerce and production. But the rational majority hold that the state of society is best which makes the individual a free and independent member of the community. His ambitions and energies are best stimulated by his opportunities to prosper for himself. Civilization and enlightenment are advanced by the efforts of the master spirits of the race. The only demand which the individual can justly make of the community, with its government as the common agent of all, is that it shall not merely protect him in his rights as a free and independent citizen, but that it shall assure him the opportunities for the fullest exercise of his talents, and shall also, as a measure of common interest, provide the facilities for his very highest mental equipment. In this latter service of the state there is nothing whatever of the communalistic idea.

The public library is not a public charity. There may be some who regard it as in the nature of a free soup-house which caters to the appetite for mental pabulum more or less wholesome. Most communities make some provision for those who are mentally or physically unfitted to care for themselves and who have no estate nor natural relations upon whom they can rely for support. So the state builds and maintains hospitals and almshouses. This it does simply as a duty of humanity. The instincts of the race and the teachings of an enlightened civilization assure us that a universal brotherhood makes all human creatures kin. As individuals we owe a certain duty to all other individuals, and as organized society we must see to it that the welfare of all is conserved. But there is no duty of kindness or good-will which requires the furnishing of reading matter for the use of the whole community.

The public library is not provided for the mere intellectual enjoyment of the citizens. The municipal corporation uses public funds to buy and beautify parks and boulevards. The purpose of these is to promote the public health and comfort, and incidentally to cultivate the aesthetic sense. The state has a direct interest in the health of its citizens. It must rely on their

physical strength for defense in time of peril or invasion. Therefore it must have a care that their physical welfare is promoted. Wholesome food, gentle exercise, a cheerful and contented mind, have much to do with soundness of body, and so food-inspection and open-air recreation are justified at the common expense.

Art-museums and public concerts are sometimes maintained out of the general treasury. The only basis on which this expense can be justified is that their purpose is educational. The welfare of the state depends not alone on the ability of its citizens to merely read and write and solve problems in simple arithmetic. Our nature is many-sided and its full and perfect development must be sought in many directions. The aesthetic is not less real than the practical. The finer qualities of the mind have weighty influence upon national progress and destiny. The state has a right to do for its citizens the things which will best serve its ultimate interests.

Universities and higher institutions of learning maintained at public cost now train those who have the means and opportunities to take advantage of their curricula for the most advanced degrees, and through their post-graduate courses offer facilities for spending the good part of a lifetime in the immediate pursuit of knowledge. But in the nature of things the number of those who can give time to these higher courses is limited. The argument has sometimes been employed against high schools and universities that they are maintained at great cost for the use of a comparatively trifling portion of the community. Statistics are quoted to show that of the whole number of children in the primary grades less than 25 per cent. go through the grammar grades, and that of the small number who enter the high school grades hardly one in ten finishes them, while of these but an infinitesimal number go on to and through the university.

It is not due to lack of capacity wholly, or lack of interest, that so many students fall by the wayside, but mainly to the fact that their services are necessary in the productive channels of business. Yet, in spite of the comparatively few who are able to take advantage of them, the state considers it a duty to foster, and the community cheerfully bears the burden

of maintaining, the higher institutions of learning, because the benefits which they confer are easily recognized. To compensate in some degree those who are not able to pursue in organized institutions studies untimely stopped by the necessities of active life, the community provides the free library. This is the people's university, close to the door of every citizen, in which all who have the inclination and energy to do so may pursue through their whole lives the studies which most interest them.

The function of the public library is purely and wholly educational. In this case the term is to be construed in its most comprehensive sense. It does not merely include development of the intellect; it involves all the varied human relations. We owe duties to our maker, to ourselves, to those who are dependent upon us, to our neighbors, to society, and to the state. In all these delicate and intricate relations we must be taught, and as the world advances, our civilization becomes more complex and our relations more involved, the character and quality of our education becomes the more important. The school and the college have merely laid the foundation. If they have done their full duty they have done little more than set the student on the high road. The sequel rests with himself. The public library puts into his hands books, which contain the combined wisdom and experience of all who have gone before, and wherein are preserved the best thoughts of the best men and women of all time. They who pass judgment upon what shall and what shall not be admitted to the shelves of a public library must bear in mind that, strictly construing the function of the library to be educational, there is yet very wide latitude in respect to the things which people may safely and wisely learn.

In this aspect of the case, those who are charged with the management and control of libraries have imposed upon them a very grave responsibility. They are not merely the custodians of the books which the public purse has bought; they are commissioned to guide in the path of highest progress. In this light, the function of the librarian assumes the halo of a holy office. He who discharges it earnestly and faithfully may do much to help forward the enlightenment of his generation.

The sum of the whole statement, briefly, is this: There is no limit to the concern of the free state in the education of its citizens. It is as much bound to provide libraries in which the adult may continue his studies as it is to maintain schools in which as a child he may begin them. The day is not distant when this duty will be universally recognized in this country. In most of the states compulsory education laws prevail. In at least one, every town is required by law to establish and maintain a free public library. In this respect, New Hampshire is only leading the way in which others will shortly follow.

Then organized society can truthfully say to the individual, in the language of Professor Hoffman in his "Sphere of the State:" "We have done what we could to develop and strengthen all your powers. We have taught you to the best of our ability to know yourself and to understand your relations to your fellows. Now, so long as you conduct yourself as a child of the day and not of the night, all the rights and privileges of the brotherhood are yours. But if you choose to walk in the darkness rather than in the light, if you trample under feet our laws, if you raise your hand against every man, let the curse of your wrong doing fall upon your own head, not on ours."

LIBRARIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

BY KATHARINE L. SHARP, LIBRARIAN AND DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SCIENCE, ARMOUR
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, CHICAGO.

IT is not the purpose of this paper to treat of reading for the young, nor of the relation of public libraries to the public schools, nor will it consider that class of school libraries which are really public city libraries, controlled by the board of education, as illustrated by the Public Library of Denver. These will only be touched as they bear upon the subject in hand.

In August, 1890, the *Library Journal* contained an urgent appeal for the consideration of "School Libraries, particularly of the higher, the secondary schools." It has remained for the present program to accept the suggestion, and the sources of information are few. The term "secondary schools" is here used to include high schools, academies, and such other institutions as give instruction between the graded schools and the colleges.

In 1876, the United States Bureau of Education devoted twenty pages to "School libraries," but dismissed the separate subject of "Libraries of schools for secondary instruction" with less than one page. The *Library Journal* has no one article devoted to school libraries, although it contains several accounts of district libraries in articles on library legislation and library history, and it does not specifically treat of libraries in secondary schools.

To clearly understand the question and to realize how little the secondary schools have been considered, it is necessary to briefly review existing conditions in relation to school libraries as a whole, as shown by facts kindly contributed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in each state.

No information has been received from Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Oregon, and Tennessee. The state superintendents report no legislation for school libraries in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South

Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming; in some cases because of financial depression and in others because of a strong movement for public libraries. Twenty-two of the states report more or less favorably with variations as to authority, money, and books, as shown in the following summary:

AUTHORITY.

CALIFORNIA.—The state Board of Education shall recommend a list of books for district school libraries. The power of the state board is simply recommendatory, and only such books as have been adopted by the county or city boards of education can be bought.

The board of trustees and city board of education must expend the library fund for school apparatus and books.

COLORADO.—The qualified electors of any district of the third class may order a sufficient levy on all the taxable property of the district to procure libraries for the schools.

CONNECTICUT.—The treasurer of the state, upon the order of the secretary of the state Board of Education shall pay money to every school district, and to every town maintaining a high school which shall raise an equal amount for the same purpose, to establish and maintain a school library within such district. The joint board of selectmen and school visitors in each town shall have power to appropriate money for the purchase of books to be used in the public schools of the town.

FLORIDA.—The trustees of a district may spend money for libraries if they see fit.

ILLINOIS.—Every school district board is authorized to purchase a library or to increase its library.

INDIANA.—Township libraries are provided for by law, but they are gradually dying out. Their place is being taken by the Young People's Reading Circle, and three fourths of the districts in the state now have 5 to 250 books suitable for young people. The board of the Circle selects the books, and in many places the township trustees buy the books, and the county commissioners allow their bills, so that practically the state enjoys the advantages of the district library law.

IOWA.—Electors may vote a tax for procuring district libraries.