

**OPEN AIR CRUSADERS: A
STORY OF THE
ELIZABETH MCCORMICK
OPEN AIR SCHOOL**

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Open Air Crusaders: A Story of the Elizabeth McCormick Open Air School by Sherman C. Kingsley

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SHERMAN C. KINGSLEY

**OPEN AIR CRUSADERS: A
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ELIZABETH MCCORMICK
OPEN AIR SCHOOL**



A LESSON IN PATRIOTISM

OPEN AIR CRUSADERS

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE CHILD
VERSUS THE SYSTEM

TOGETHER WITH

A REPORT OF THE ELIZABETH McCORMICK
OPEN AIR SCHOOLS

BY

SHERMAN C. KINGSLEY

DIRECTOR THE ELIZABETH McCORMICK MEMORIAL FUND

ILLUSTRATED



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Dedication

TO THE MEMORY OF ELIZABETH, DAUGHTER OF Mr. AND Mrs. CYRUS HALL McCORMICK, A CHILD WHOSE RADIANT YOUNG LIFE WAS SO MARKED BY DEEDS OF KINDLINESS TO OTHERS THAT THESE MINISTRIES OF LOVE WERE NOT ALLOWED TO CEASE WHEN, AT THE AGE OF TWELVE, SHE WAS CALLED INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE GREAT FRIEND OF ALL THE CHILDREN.

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PREFACE

The open air school movement is one of the newer expressions of an awakening public interest in the children of the nation. It will be both natural and logical if conservation principles and sentiment lead us step by step from coal and iron, phosphates and oil, forests and water power, to the intrinsic conservation problem,—the consideration of the men, women and children who are to use these resources of nature.

The greatest possibilities lie with the children. Roundly, twenty millions of them are in the schools of the country. They are spending one hundred million hours a day through the school year under the direction of this definitely constituted public function, in the environment and under the conditions prescribed by the law. So far, the only efficiency tests applied to measure the success of this great undertaking have been those which gauge the ability of the children to pass from one grade to the next in the series leading to the college. We do not know whether the school experience has increased or diminished bodily vigor or whether the use of school time has done the most vital possible service in preparation for what lies ahead.

The attention of an increasing number of people is focusing on the large army of children, somewhere between 53 and 70 per cent of the total number the country over, who fall out of school at or before the completion of the grammar grades. Conspicuous in this group are those whose physical condition has stood in the way of school progress and has rendered them incapable of taking with profit the usual school régime.

OPEN AIR CRUSADERS

It is children of this class who have been gathered by friends of the movement into the open air schools.

The results obtained through a modified régime which has adapted the curriculum and the use of the school time to the individual needs of these little people have been such that the open air school idea has spread with great rapidity and stimulates interest and co-operation in the schools wherever it goes. The friends of the movement believe that it has a broad significance and that it throws a strong light on the question of retardation and the reasons why so many children at such an early age part company with the schools.

The children dealt with in these schools are physically sub-normal, but in most respects their problems are the same as those of the rank and file of the short term children. They come from the public schools and are, after all, mentally and morally just such pupils as are found bending over the desks of any school room in the land.

The open air school is a movement in behalf of all the children. Each child has a right to fresh air; has a right to his own individuality; a right to be understood by the school, as well as to be expected to understand the school system.

Two years ago a little book entitled "Open Air Crusaders" told the story of the first year-round open air school in Chicago. It set forth in simple form the results of a year's work with a small group of physically sub-normal pupils. The smiling faces of these little open air crusaders carried a message of health, encouragement and cheer the country over. Everywhere it met with an instant response. Teachers, physicians, nurses, tuberculosis societies, ministers, humble fathers and mothers, school children, wrote for information. It revealed a widespread, deep-seated interest in the public schools. The first edition of 5,000 was soon exhausted and a second edition of like number was published and distributed. The books have gone to every state in the union and to nine-