

OUR HOME AND PERSONAL DUTY

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Our home and personal duty by Jane Eayre Fryer

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JANE EAYRE FRYER

**OUR HOME AND
PERSONAL DUTY**

YOUNG AMERICAN READERS

OUR HOME AND PERSONAL DUTY

BY

JANE EAYRE FRYER

AUTHOR OF "THE MARY FRANCES STORY-INSTRUCTION BOOKS"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDNA A. COOKE AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



In these vital tasks of acquiring a broader view of human possibilities the common school must have a large part. I urge that teachers and other school officers increase materially the time and attention devoted to instruction bearing directly on the problems of community and national life.—WOODROW WILSON.

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EDUCATION DEPT.

CIVICS FOR AMERICAN CHILDREN

The notion of what constitutes adequate civics teaching in our schools is rapidly changing. The older idea was based on the theory that children were not citizens—that only adults were citizens. Therefore, civics teaching was usually deferred to the eighth grade, or last year of the grammar school, and then was mostly confined to a memorizing of the federal constitution, with brief comments on each clause. Today we recognize that even young children are citizens, just as much as adults are, and that what is wanted is not training *for* citizenship but training *in* citizenship. Moreover, we believe that the "good citizen" is one who is good for something in all the relationships of life.

HABIT FORMATION

Accordingly, a beginning is being made with the early school years, where an indispensable foundation is laid through a training in "morals and manners." This sounds rather old-fashioned, but nothing has been discovered to take its place. Obedience, cleanliness, orderliness, courtesy, helpfulness, punctuality, truthfulness, care of property, fair play, thoroughness, honesty, respect, courage, self-control, perseverance, thrift, kindness to animals, "safety first"—these are the fundamental civic virtues which make for good citizenship in the years to come. Of course, the object is to establish right habits of thought and action, and this takes time and patience and sympathy; but the end in view justifies the effort. The boy or girl who has become habitually orderly and courteous and helpful and punctual and truthful, and who has acquired

a fair degree of courageous self-control, is likely to become a citizen of whom any community may well be proud.

DRAMATIZATION

The best results are found to be secured through stories, poems, songs, games, and the dramatization of the stories found in books or told by the teacher. This last is of great value, for it sets up a sort of brief life-experience for the child that leaves a more lasting impression than would the story by itself. Most of the stories told in this reader, emphasizing certain of the civic virtues enumerated above, will be found to lend themselves admirably to simple dramatization by the pupils, the children's imagination supplying all deficiencies in costumes, scenery, and stage settings. Moreover, the questions following the text will help the teacher to "point the moral" without detracting in the slightest degree from the interest of the story.

COMMUNITY SERVANTS

The basis for good citizenship having been laid through habit-formation in the civic virtues, the next step is for the children to learn how these virtues are being embodied in the people round about them who are serving them and their families. The baker, the milkman, the grocer, the dressmaker, the shoemaker, the carpenter, the plumber, the painter, the physician, the druggist, the nurse—these are the community servants who come closest to the life-experience of the children.

How dependent each member of a community—especially an urban community—is on all the rest, and how important it is that each shall contribute what he can to the community's welfare, are illustrated by the stories of the Duwell family. Here a typical though somewhat ideal American

family is shown in its everyday relations, as a constant recipient of the services rendered by those community agents who supply the fundamental need of food, clothing, shelter, and medical attendance. The children in the class will learn, with the Duwell children, both the actual services that are rendered and the family's complete dependence on those services. Moreover, they will acquire the splendid working ideals of interdependence and co-operation. And, finally, they will discover that the adult citizens who are rendering them these services are embodying the very civic virtues in which they themselves have been so carefully trained.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

The pupils are now ready to follow the services rendered by public servants such as the policeman, the fireman, the street cleaner, the ashes and garbage collector, the mail carrier; and by those who furnish water, gas, electricity, the telephone, the trolley, etc.; and these are presented in civics readers that follow this one. The civic virtues previously considered are again found exemplified to a marked degree; and the threefold idea of dependence, interdependence, and co-operation through community agencies finds ample illustration.

TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

But it is not enough for the pupils to stop with finding out what the community is doing for them. The essential thing in this citizenship-training is for the young citizens to find out what they can do to help things along. Civic activities are suggested both in the stories, poems, etc., in these books, and in the suggestive questions at the close of each chapter.

Like all texts or other helps in education, these civics readers cannot teach themselves or take the place of a live teacher. But it is believed that they can be of great assistance to sympathetic, civically minded instructors of youth who feel that the training of our children in the ideals and practices of good citizenship is the most imperative duty and at the same time the highest privilege that can come to any teacher.

J. LYNN BARNARD.

Philadelphia School of Pedagogy.

April 1, 1918.

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