

3 June 1906 cont'd

He sang for men of low degree,
Yet noble pilgrims seek his door.
(Ask of the byways if it be
He sang for men of low degree.)
No scar more deeply taught than he
Of fieldway and of wayside lore,
He sang for men of low degree.
Yet noble pilgrims seek his door.
(Frank Walcott Hatt.)

Lynchburg News
10 June 1906
p 10 c 1

REPORTS FROM THE LIBRARIES

Virginia Communities Awakening to the Need of Easily Accessible Books for All—Success of Various Enter- prises With Modest Beginnings.

BY MRS. W. M. STROTHER

All that our Virginia towns need is to have their attention called to the things that need attention. The writer of these articles thinks that this is conclusively shown by the recent gratifying returns from libraries all over the State, of whose existence there is no sign in the published reports. It is said that knowledge begins in wonder, and it can as truly be said that wonder is the result of attention. Attention, and action through attention, work great results in individuals and in communities. To secure attention to good causes, to necessary improvements and to all that is fair and wholesome, and desirable in this dear old State of Virginia, is the business of every one of her sons and daughters.

In the matter of public libraries, our people are beginning to give attention, and if returns continue to come in to the writer at the present rate, it will not be long before it can be proven that we have a few books in Virginia. There is every reason to believe that even now, if all the books in the State were equally distributed among all the people in the State, there would be a book apiece for every man, woman and child.

As it appears in the published report, there is one book for every three persons. In the State of Maryland, to go no further North, the statistics show sixteen books for each person in the State.

The chief characteristic of the past century was the extension of the benefit of books to the masses of people. The chief lesson was that culture increases the wealth-producing power of a people in direct proportion to its distribution and thoroughness. The productivity of a people is everywhere proportional to their education, that is their intellectual, physical and moral training. It is no mere coincidence that the State which spends annually the largest amount of money on its schools and free public libraries, is the State where individual citizen has the greatest productive capacity. Dr. Charles Dabney, speaking of the South, says "If we desire to produce more wealth in the South we must begin by giving better education."

Since the story of the Orange public library was given in this column, a letter has been received, stating that the library board has decided to make that library a free library, that hereafter no fees will be charged. The members of a flourishing library in Bedford City have sent in an interesting story of their successful efforts, and will inspire other small communities to do and do likewise.

Since the year 1900, the subject of public libraries was discussed by two women who had seen something of the management of such institutions in other places, and they felt sure that what had been done by and for others could be done in their town. They secured the constitution of a similar institution in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and with that as a model, their plans were developed for a Library Association in Bedford City. This first step shows that Southern women do not lack the power to take the initiative, when their minds are made up to accomplish something for the community they love and live in. This step also shows that the women of

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