

## THE STATE LIBRARY SOME ADDITIONAL PHASES OF ITS USEFULNESS.

Goes Far Toward Filling the Place of  
 a City Library of Richmond—The  
 Latter Needed, However, and Will  
 Be Secured in Due Time.

BY MRS. W. M. STROTHER.

There is a large and growing colony of wealthy tourists who pass through Richmond every year. They have begun to love our quaint Southern cities and each city hails the tourist in a different way. Atlanta is too busy playing the role of the South's Chicago, and thinking of its future, to remember that its past is not cobwebbed. New Orleans is too large. Charleston is too exclusive. Richmond seems to offer most to the stranger in the way of character study, and picturesque tradition. Resting on her seven hills, she sits, strong and serene, presenting a curious composite of culture and primitiveness, of progressiveness and colossal conservatism. One sometimes hears her citizens condemn the things Richmond does not possess. But in this year of grace Richmond has invited to her public platforms men from high places who have, in plain language, administered a few new ideas, in homeopathic doses, it is true, and sugar-coated. And Richmond has demonstrated her ability to receive a new idea without pain. Mowers, Sedgwick and Page are wise and kind physicians, whose diagnosis and remedies are taken with faith and confidence by the people.

Great ideas should be the prophecies of great deeds to be accomplished. It too often happens that great and suggestive ideas are taken into the mind, as the eye takes in a bit of vivid color, that kindles an ineffective emotion or gives a too gentle ally to a torpid patriotism, and are gone. But unless all signs fail, Richmond will act in a very decided way to secure for her people better phy-

sical and intellectual conditions than now exist. And what is done in Richmond will benefit the whole State, for Richmond is the pride and model of the State. She will get her Public Library, probably not from Mr. Carnegie, but it will come, just as surely as that the city's health is going to be brought up to the highest standard. "A sound and healthy mind in a sound and healthy body" will need the library more than it does now.

The State Library goes far toward filling the place of a city library for Richmond, but at its best, it can never fully take the place of a city library of the highest order. The circulating department is confined to State officers, and teachers in the public schools, members of the Legislature. The reading rooms and reference books of the library are free to all persons, conforming to the rules, and any reference book may be taken from the shelf at will. First-class reference books and encyclopedias of knowledge on every conceivable subject, lexicons in many languages, a fine genealogical library, nearly one hundred of the best magazines, the newspapers of every town in Virginia are to be found in the reading room.

Mr. E. S. Evans, assistant librarian, has general supervision of this department and is naturally thus brought into the closest touch with Richmond people. Mrs. E. C. Minor, who has been in the library for several years, is also prominently identified with the City Library movement. She has charge of the magazine department, and is much of the time at the desk in the reading room, where she is daily asked hundreds of questions, showing every degree of intelligence and ignorance. On every conceivable subject, from violet culture to earthquakes, from cheese making to the origin of Michaelmas day. She is expected to furnish the latest and most reliable information. A little boy came to the desk and asked for "a book what a little boy can read." He returned it after a while with the remark, "I don't like that, the girls is all too holy."

Some of the questions asked: Did Extra Billy Smith found the Smithsonian Institute? How many more women than men are there in Virginia? Mrs. Minor knows the library resources. She knows the Richmond people who crowd the reading room, and by her aid every reader is enabled to put his finger on the fact he wants just when he wants it. The books on Genealogy are the worst

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