

Americanizing the Home

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(Special for The United American)

EVERY FORM of adult education has as its ultimate aim the correcting and strengthening of home influences. When public interest began to be directed to the needs of the foreign-born, it was natural that attention should be centered upon the man, the wage-earner, the economic factor of the home as the social unit. A realization of the importance of reaching the woman, the spiritual factor, is now coming, but oh! so slowly.



Miss Anderson

School authorities have been prevailed upon to organize day classes for women, provided an enrollment of fifteen in each can be attained; some six women start work; no more can be brought out; after a few weeks the work in such a class is discontinued.

Net result: the women will feel that it is useless to try again; the school authorities that they have done everything that can be expected of them.

This is an old, old story, of course. And just as the worker in the field knows the inevitable result of an effort of this kind, so she knows the contributing causes; first, on the part of the foreign-born themselves, a lack of interest based on realization of the vital importance of channels of communication with individuals and institutions among which she is rearing her family; second, on the part of school officials, a misconception of what constitutes adequate facilities for language instruction to adults.

The vexing problem is who is to make the first move, in the "vicious circle" of everybody waiting for somebody else to do so and so. School authorities maintain that they cannot act until there is an articulate demand; trained workers know that such a demand must be created; to make active a latent demand in this field, just as in that of economics, requires a large expenditure of money and the work can be successfully accomplished only by experts. Who will pay the bill? And here we are back again to the public school. Should it undertake a never-ending publicity campaign to reach and hold the adult who needs training for citizenship? Can we give assurance that the results will justify such an extension of the function of our public schools?

Before the publicity expert can outline his campaign, he must determine the probable quality and quantity of the latent demand. What kind of training does the foreign-born woman need to fulfill, according to American standards, her mission as custodian of the spiritual contributions her family has to make to the community? How many women can be reached and how long can the contact be maintained?

I. What is the matter with our young people?

Youth—whose true beauty is promise, not fulfillment of life's meaning—youth, restless, reckless, bored, insisting that life give! give! give! immediately and abundantly,

encompassing all the joys, all the "thrills" of three score and ten only a generation ago.

II. Why is the number of broken homes and broken lives on the increase?

"Middle age, the harvest time of life, and what is the harvest? Bitter disillusion, broken spirit, broken law.

III. Why do so many old people, with children able to care for them, live lonely, discontented lives in institutions for the aged?

Old age—nature's time for leisurely contemplation and meditation, a "review" of life's lessons, the deep joy of quiet achievement—now how utterly futile, a misfit anywhere in the scheme of things.

Such is the picture of twentieth century civilization as it is painted to us by everything that we see and hear from our morning paper to the jazzy end of our day. Of course we do not accept this picture. We can touch it up as our understanding of relationship between underlying causes and surface manifestations gives an insight into the real significance of current thought and action. However bright we can thus make the outlook, the shadows remain very deep here and there. And all who have given any thought to the matter know that whatever condition is menacing to the

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Adult Immigrant Education ITS SCOPE, CONTENTS, and METHODS

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With an Introduction By

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This is the first authoritative, comprehensive, and systematic exposition of the pedagogy of adult immigrant instruction. It is of particular value because of the present unfortunate lack of standardization or community of aims in Americanization work throughout the country.

The text is designed specifically for two purposes: first, definitely to prepare new teachers for the work; second, to further the training of teachers now in service. The book is a comprehensive, practical manual. It outlines the subjects usually taught in the courses, the qualifications for teachers, the purposes of the work, and contains an abundant appendix which gives among other things, sample lesson plans and a stenographic record of actual lessons.

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