

# THE GREAT PURPOSE OF THE NEWSPAPER

**Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart of Morehead Tells What the Mountain Editors Are Doing and Appeals To State Press To Make Crusade Against Ignorance.**

## SAYS EVERY PAPER MUST HAVE A MISSION

"The Mission of the Newspaper to the Community," was the subject discussed at the Press Association meeting Monday by Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, editor of the Mountaineer, at Morehead. Mrs. Stewart's address was thoughtful and earnest and pleaded for the united support of the State editors in the promotion of Education. She had a very pleasing manner and a fund of humor and those who heard the address found it most interesting. Mrs. Stewart said:

"Every newspaper worthy of the name has some clearly defined policy, some things for which it stands, and which it advocates vigorously and consistently, some aim higher than the mere purveying of news for financial gain. The newspaper without a policy has no right to existence.

"It is important to remember, first, that the newspaper is the representative of the people of the community in which it exists and by whom it is supported. It is supposed to represent their views, to reflect their ideals, to chronicle their activities and to be the measure of their standard of morality, intelligence and pride, an index to their condition of thrift and progress.

"Some communities would doubtless resent this statement as a sort of slander, and would declare that their standard of intelligence was much higher than the cheap, gossipy sheet which emanates from them would indicate. Then, I hope that I may escape the charge of treason by the craft, and of insolence by the people of such communities, if I say that those who permit a cheap and undesirable sheet to be published in their community, without making any effort to correct the evil, either by the process of improvement or elimination, are justly punished when the estimate placed upon them is equal only to such an inferior publication.

"Since the Mountaineer came under the present management a few months ago, we are not parading news of murders, robberies and gossip when the space may be filled with reports of progress, honors, achievements and creditable efforts. If it requires the emblems of the former class of events to make a newspaper, we are not in the newspaper business and have never been in it, and never shall be.

"Permit me to say that in no section of the State is there a more consistent or concerted effort on the part of journalists to emphasize the things of real value and to ignore the unimportant and undesirable things than there is among the editors of the mountain newspapers in this present age. All that we may hope for ourselves in this effort is that we mountaineers may prove ourselves as valiant and as powerful with the pen as the world has given us credit for being with the sword, and all that we can ask of the public is that it will be as impressionable to every stroke of the mountaineer's pen as it has ever been to every thrust of his sword.

"Realizing that the policy which we have outlined for our publication may not be acceptable or adaptable to all, it seems necessary to outline a general policy, which we believe to be more or less adaptable to any newspaper. Every newspaper, which fulfills its mission, is an educator, a reformer and a missionary. If its policies be wise and its purposes be right, it will supplement the work of the schools and the colleges, and will complete the work which they have begun; if its influence is weak or pernicious, it will undo, in a large measure, the work which they have undertaken, through years of training, to establish.

"Since all schools are but the preparatory departments to this great university, the newspaper, it would seem most injudicious for the newspaper to ignore anything in the line of educational effort or educational progress, and but the part of wisdom for them to foster the school and to promote everything which will advance the interests of the school, and that newspaper which blindly ignores educational affairs and closes its columns to school occurrences is foolishly cutting off its own source of strength and sustenance.

"I believe, in fact, that, first of all, it is the mission of the newspaper to strengthen and supplement the work of the school. Newspaper men and women are coming to realize this more and more and the best newspapers in the State and nation are giving due prominence to educational affairs. The result may be primarily to the schools and school organizations, but ultimately they must be highly profitable to the newspaper.

"An instance of the advancement of education by the press is the great aid and assistance which a few of the newspapers in the State have given to the work of establishing moonlight schools for the teaching of adult illiterates.

### Newspapers as School Text.

"These schools were started in a mountain county, and a newspaper

was very properly used as a reading text, and it has been largely through newspaper exploitation and advocacy that this system has spread to various parts of the State and to other States. If every newspaper in Kentucky would sound the death-knell of Kentucky's illiteracy, and would earnestly advocate the teaching of all adults so afflicted, the census of 1920 would show our State as occupying an entirely different position in the scale of literacy to that which it at present occupies, and most of that great army of 208,084 untutored Kentuckians would become patrons and readers of our papers.

"The relief of illiterates may be a sort of philanthropy for some, but to those who are engaged in producing a paper for a reading public, to assist this cause is but a matter of good business. Education is strictly within our province to advocate and to advance. I am glad that President Frost, of Berea College, has learned that the newspaper is the greatest of all educators, and that he has become the editor of the Citizen, a weekly newspaper.

"The mission of the newspaper, in fine, is not to purvey mere news, or to pander to idle curiosity, or to be a mere medium of barter and exchange, but, as we see it, its mission is to educate, to elevate, to develop and to exploit the community, and, there is no higher calling, no more noble or beneficial or righteous work than editing a newspaper, if it be edited with these ideals and purposes in mind."