

Miss Tarbell

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~~Y. M. C. A.
Gary, Indiana.
December 28, 1919.~~

~~Miss Peters, Librarian,
Gary Public Library,
Gary, Indiana.~~

Dear Miss Peters:

~~In attempting to point out the value received by the use of the library books, I want to state beforehand that I'm 23 years old and an Austrian by birth. I came to this country in 1907 at the age of eleven, and did not know a word of the English language. As I did not go to school my only source of information was the daily contact with the English speaking people and the use of the library. I cannot say to which of the two I'm mostly indebted as both in conjunction enabled me to acquire sufficient knowledge of English, so that now I'm hardly ever taken for a foreigner.~~

As a means to general education the library stands high in my esteem. One particular instance will illustrate the value of reading library books. Last year I entered high school and to my surprise found that I have at some time or other studied practically all the subjects offered with the exception of mathematics and music. I did not use the same books nor follow the same plan but I used the various books I picked from the book shelves dealing with those subjects and studied them in my own way.

In fiction I found that I have already read most of the standard books required for outside reading. With this previously acquired knowledge I was allowed to get ahead of the other students, and the result is that I am now a senior in a little over one year at school. This only shows that an education may be had not only at school through the help of teachers, but also by being a diligent reader of library books. In this undertaking, wisdom in the selection of books is required, but then we have books dealing with this subject, and the library once more takes the credit.

One of my latest benefits, which I partly credit to the library, is my position as an electrician in the Gary steel mill, with an income of about three thousand dollars a year. I'm able to hold this job because I resorted to books on that subject at the library in addition to actual experience I got in the mill.

Yours very truly,

Peter J. Curtis.

*American literature. I spent a little on
them - they were for me who happened to
fall into a very good group of writers as well
as the uneducated many of our -
the same way*

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