"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times—it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness—"1

IF DICKENS thus characterized 1775, what would he have said of 1944? Probably he would have found a stronger word than "foolishness." But his words as they stand are very apt for our times; apt, too, in their paradoxical import, in indicating why the problem of helping boys and girls to understand our times is so very difficult.

Understanding comes for most of us through action. This is particularly true in times of confusion; particularly true of the young. There are few among us who can successfully grapple with the underlying problems of the war in all their economic and psychological ramifications. But the more intelligent effort we put into the solution of the problems the war has brought into our own homes and our own communities, the more able becomes our citizenship in sharing in the solution of the larger problems. This is equally true of boys and girls. The first step in their understanding of our times is taken when they participate in the solution of some problem the times have brought to them.

There is plenty to do; there are plenty of problems to solve. In many schools the problem of shortage of kitchen and janitorial help is being solved by the children taking over the work. Similarly, the shortage of help in homes and communities is being solved by children helping in stores, running errands, caring for younger children. Handled wisely, with reference to the growth needs of the children, such participation in responsible service is not only the entering wedge into understanding of our times but gives, in addition, that identification with the times which is essential in self-realization.

The deeper understanding comes as the immediate activity leads boys and girls into contacts with others engaged in similar activities. A group of children running a clothing exchange using cash for purchases finds that another group manages on a point credit system. Groups of children in different schools exchange games and stories they use with younger children on the playground. Through meeting in Junior Defense and Red Cross activities acquaint-

1 Opening words of Charles Dickens' Tale of Two Cities.
ance is broadened, and there is expansion of ideas and increase of human understanding. Inevitably, dealing with practical problems whole-heartedly, there will come questioning of the "why" of all this—of the scarcity of things that had always been abundant, of the sources of supply, of what would happen if all the sugar or meat should be used up, of why we can't have peace, of why men must fight, of differences in people, of why people hate each other, of why some people are poor and some are rich, etc., etc.

When questioning of fundamentals begins then comes the opportunity for so helping boys and girls to seek answers that each experience will take them further along the road to understanding. It is then that they can be taught to collect facts, to examine them objectively, to reach conclusions, and, above all, to abide by these conclusions. Even the youngest boys and girls in the grades, within the limits of their experience, can be taught to approach the problems of living in the spirit and with the techniques of scientific inquiry. If they are to understand the present it is essential that no time be lost in helping them along that scientific road by which so much of truth has been found.

There are times when we would have boys and girls walk that other road by which men have reached understanding. It is the road of the artist, the prophet, the dreamer, the seeker after values—of all those who have concern over the meanings of things and events and would share their vision with others. All these have asked the questions boys and girls are asking today—of war and peace, of poverty and riches, of scarcity and abundance, of life and death—have asked and found answers.

"The best of times, the worst of times..."—1775 was but an episode, one of many episodes before and since in the persistent struggle between those who would have all men free and those who would enslave vast quantities of man to do their bidding. 1944—and the many episodes, mounting in scope and intensity—has reached a climax. It is the climax of the epic drama of the human race. The characters include all men; the stage, all earth. This is the ultimate understanding of our times into which all of us—boys and girls, men and women—must come if the forces of freedom shall triumph.

In March Alain Locke of Howard University will introduce "Helping Boys and Girls Understand World Cultures."

Eduational Leadership
Answering the current need for a sound, authoritative social studies program built on the child's relation to his world

Our Growing World
By Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Others

To give children a growing understanding of significant social concepts, and of the interrelation of culture and earth forces

OUR GROWING WORLD uses situations familiar to children to build a background for grasping social concepts. It uses examples from the child’s daily “here and now” world, and stories of living things to help guide him along the path of constantly widening social understandings.

Realistic stories, organization of the books around themes, varied language patterns, and vocabulary control make for ease and enjoyment in reading as children learn more about their expanding environment. Charming illustrations by well-known artists are closely related to the text and furnish visual aids to understanding.

Book I. FARM AND CITY
By Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Margaret Wise Brown
Educational Consultant • Blanche Kent Verbeck
Illustrated by Anne Fleur

Book II. ANIMALS, PLANTS, AND MACHINES
By Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Margaret Wise Brown
Educational Consultant • Blanche Kent Verbeck
Illustrated by Clare Bice

Book III. OUR COUNTRY (In press)
By Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Dorothy Stall
Educational Consultant • Agnes Snyder
Illustrated by Kurt Wiese

Other Books and Teachers Guides for the Series in Preparation

Distinguished for the superior literary quality, the consideration of children's preferences, the balance of factual and imaginative elements, and the sequential development from book to book.

D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY
Boston New York Chicago Atlanta San Francisco Dallas London
Learning activities for making good citizens now

HANNA
SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM
GRADES ONE-SEVEN

PETER'S FAMILY, REVISED
HELLO, DAVID
SUSAN'S NEIGHBORS AT WORK
CENTERVILLE
WITHOUT MACHINERY
PIONEERING IN TEN COMMUNITIES
THIS USEFUL WORLD
MAKING THE GOODS WE NEED
MARKETING THE THINGS WE USE

"A thumping successful series"...
TIME magazine, Nov. 15, 1943

SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY
Chicago 5 Atlanta 3 Dallas 1 New York 10

WINGS for AMERICA
By Marshall Dunn & Lloyd N. Morrissett

An overview of American aviation, treating its development and the work of those who build, service, and fly airplanes in peace and in war, with a discussion of the global concept of geography. Packed with inspiration and just the information air-minded boys and girls are seeking. For junior high school grades. $1.00, subject to discount.

Also in AMERICA at WORK Series are:

MACHINES for AMERICA
Deals with the work and value of machines, with their manufacture and their use in production, and with their place in our lives and in the life of our country. 80¢, subject to discount.

POWER for AMERICA
A simple yet full treatment of power makers, their historical development, principles of operation, sources of energy, and contributions to better living. 80¢, subject to discount.

World Book Company
Yonkers-on-Hudson 5, New York
2126 Prairie Avenue, Chicago 16
Do you understand the questions of Our Times?

Our Times are bringing to American youth gigantic events, wartime living, global ideas—questions not always within easy grasp of young minds. How can you fit them into the complete picture of our American heritage?

For educational leaders the big questions of Our Times are brought into sharp focus for classroom interpretation by

**BUILDING AMERICA**

**ILLUSTRATED STUDIES ON MODERN PROBLEMS**

Give yourself this quick test—

Check the following subjects—all of them from this year's issues of BUILDING AMERICA. They are typical of the material presented for your understanding and teaching of Our Times. Do you know all you want to know about them?

- [ ] Our Neighbors in North Africa
- [ ] American Democracy In Wartime
- [ ] Italian-Born Americans
- [ ] The Challenge to American Youth
- [ ] Cattle Raising & Dairying
- [ ] Electronics

These are subject materials which meet the curriculum needs of a complete Americanization program. In BUILDING AMERICA they are presented as Photo-Stories with synchronized text to dramatize Our Times for both teacher and pupil.

BUILDING AMERICA is edited by a board selected by the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development of the N. E. A.

Educational leaders are subscribing daily

This coupon will enroll you

BUILDING AMERICA, Circulation Dept.
2 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

Please enter my subscription for One Year (8 issues) of BUILDING AMERICA at $2.25, commencing with the October, 1943 issue.

Please check One box

- [ ] Please send bill
- [ ] Payment is enclosed

Name ..................................................................................................................
Address .............................................................................................................
City ........................................ State ..............................................................
School ..............................................................................................................

EL-2-44
You bring one or more of these Noted Authorities* to your Classroom each time you use an ERPI FILM.

*ERPI COLLABORATORS—new names being added each year.