

JESSE LOWE SMITH
1869-1934

Jesse Lowe Smith, superintendent of schools in District 107, Highland Park, Illinois, died in the Presbyterian Hospital, Chicago, April 21, 1934. The school year that was nearing its close at the time of his death was the thirty-second year of his services as an educator and leader in the life of the community.

He was born in Macon, Illinois, November 23, 1869. After graduation from De Pauw University, he taught in the public schools of Macon, Lexington, and Park Ridge, Illinois. In 1902 he commenced his administrative work in the school system of Highland Park.

In this community his sympathetic interest in worthy enterprises, and his ardor in progressive and creative movements led to multiplied calls for his services. He served for many years on the library board of the city, and took active part, also, in the work of the Highland Park Tree and Parkway commission. He was for some time a director of the North Shore Art League, and served in an advisory capacity in civic and educational enterprises in other North Shore communities. At the time of his death he was engaged in plans and activities in alleviating the problems of unemployment, and in C. W. A. enterprises.

Living in the profound conviction that man's usefulness, and to a large measure even his happiness are commensurate with his intellectual growth, Jesse Smith gave most unreservedly to any movement that promised intellectual upbuilding in his fellow man. He had the utmost sympathy for the forgotten man in the educational sense. In the round of activities engendered by this passion he was called upon to be one of the past presidents of the Chicago Geographic Society, a president of the Audubon Society, and for a long time a director of the Friends of our Native Landscape Society.

It is, however, through his radiant personality and his kindly sympathies that his influence will live the longest in the minds of his fellows and in his community. His extremely active and intense life was motivated by his friendship for people. He loved to take parties of friends and students into the woods and fields for observations, first-hand, and for fellowship. His teaching was effective and most successful, for he had the capacity to open the eyes of the unobserving, and to inspire and enthuse the minds of his auditors with an appreciation for the ways of Nature. His exuberance over the successful outcome of some quest for

new knowledge to be gained in outings of that kind was a thing most contagious. Even those physically weary with the tramping found themselves rejoicing that they were in at the finish.

And then, with characteristic self-effacement and humility, he was equally ready to go as a student where the role of an instructor was given to another. But on occasions of this kind, one found himself listening with interest to the appreciative questions and the apt comments of Jesse Smith, the student. And the range of interests and the depth of insight, unconsciously revealed, became items of inspiration to teacher and fellow students. His willingness to receive of the things he prized most highly made his capacity to give all the greater.

The highest tribute to the man, perhaps, can be utterly conveyed in the conviction retained by those who knew him. And that is, that time spent in the presence of Jesse Smith was time well spent, because one retains memories of a gentle spirit, a kindly and generous disposition, a loyal and understanding sympathy. And with those recollections in mind, the whole genius and inspiration of his life are best epitomized, no doubt, in a comment on that life made by a member of his own family—"Every day meant so much to him."

JOHN R. BALL.