

## THE PARENTS' UNION SCHOOL.<sup>1</sup>

Letters from P.U.S. Members in the Dominions.

### A P.U.S. SCHOOL ROOM IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA.

I'm afraid it isn't a "school room" at all, but a wide verandah which runs round three sides of the house (the back verandah is consecrated to the store-room, the ironing, and other distracting irrelevancies!) "Around it daily moving with the sun, with unabated hope from nine to one," we pursue the fleeting and elusive vision of a breeze. It is surrounded by plumbago, bougainvillea, poinsettia, gorgeous scarlet and white hibiscus, and oleanders—with silver-oaks and orange trees beyond. Away beyond again, we look across the plain,—three hundred feet below us—to the wide-spread Skoveni, or Hill of the Owl. (Sintebela has a locative case, useful in cases of French or Latin grammar proving tiresome: "My dear, only think how much worse it might be!")

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All the materials for close correlation of lessons with daily life lie close to our hand, in such a life as this. Can we not easily find a parallel for the outrageous and unreasonably high-handed behaviour of Nebuchadnezzar, as well as for his dependence upon dreams and "wise men," in the ways of Lobengula, Moselikatze, and other native potentates? Has not the New Testament, as well as the Old, been written amid such scenery and in such a climate as ours? "The Shadow of a Great Rock in a Thirsty Land" is no mere figure of speech to us. "The Shepherd" (though he here herd cattle, and not sheep) is a familiar figure in our daily life. The green pastures and the still waters—as the image of delight—are very vivid to us. Geikie and "Arabella Buckley", with their tales of stream and rain, appeal to us particularly in the wet season—at which time also we sympathize with unhappy Sisera and his bogged chariots. For did not the car give us daily trouble, last wet season, in spite of Parsons' chains, over the passage of just such a brook as Deborah gleefully celebrates?

In our geography, the Balkans are more difficult to localize. But an ex-officer who fought in the Salonica campaign providentially lives near, and can sometimes be got to talk, and the pathetic tale of "Sure" in last August's "Cornhill" helps us to understand Balkan mentality a little. There are memories of Miss Newbigin's "Geographical Aspects of Balkan Problems," and we possess Miss MacMunn's new and invaluable "Europe." Mother, too, has a priceless extract in her scrap-book (from the Literary Supplement of 1918) about the age-long highway of the Vardax valley, and its archæology, which sets us dreaming, and Daddy can tell us about the old Roman mines of that part of the world, and how—with the cheapness of human life consequent upon the use of slave-labour—they were so wastefully worked, that few can now be reopened. (We are particularly interested in ancient mining, for we have evidences of it all around us here). We remember also the Serbians at Oxford in 1918, and how we used to hear there about their curious communal agricultural "zadrugas," and we can imagine it somewhat by the analogy of native African races.

But when we come to Russia, we are indeed excited.

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Snow is so pleasant to read about, so cooling and refreshing. We are reading "The Sowers" aloud, and trying to compare its prophecies—wonderfully correct ones—with what has actually

happened. Then, too, Russia means (one part of it at least) the Steppe. And Dr. Herbertson, of revered and beloved memory, has given us a wonderful picture in "Man and his Work" of Steppe Life, and of the characters of steppe dwellers. We realise with a thrill that we too live a steppe life, or at least a savannah life; our climate, our vegetation, our native race, are all typical of it: and the two latter, we feel at once, are but the outcome of our physical conditions. Rhodesia (a "little" country, for all its wide spaces) becomes linked up with the great world outside, no longer an isolated unit,—and we are "a part of all that we have met."

We are, of course, intensely interested in the world expansion of our Tudor period. We sympathise with the Portuguese, who tried so hard to gain an African gold-producing empire, as an off-set to that of the Spaniards in the Indies. We like to fancy that some of the old mines round us here are perhaps the very ones (though Daddy and common-sense tell us they were really of necessity further north) that poor Francisco Barreto and his weary band searched for, and that his successor Homem found. *We* should not be disgusted, like them, if we could see it all as it was that August day of 1578, "with the earth which they dug up they filled their basins, and went to wash it in the river, each one obtaining from it four or five grains of gold, it being altogether a poor and miserable business." We often fancy we can see those old workers still, coming up out of their "holes in the ground" and can hear them singing, when the slave-driver is in a good mood, and does not ply the whip too freely: they sing something no doubt like sailors' chanties, or the rhythmic monotones that natives croon at their work. Sometimes we find their old stone hammers, and other relics, and then we go to Mr. and Mrs. Quennell's "Every Day Life in the Old Stone Age," and try to fancy how they were made, and by whom. We had too once a favourite native maid who used to sing us the "Song of Losada, and of the White Men who wore Shirts of Iron." We think that was almost certainly a tradition of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

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We like also to think that we know the place in the Matoppos where the Jesuit Father Dom Goncala da Silveira was martyred by the Monomatapa on "the Saturday before the Sunday of Saint Susanna" in 1561. It helps us to understand Fray Gerundio in "Westward Ho!" and other saints of our period. In fact, the sixteenth century seems particularly to appeal to us, perhaps because, in this new country, where the pioneers still walk the earth, and where one of them is bound to us by the closest ties, we seem to catch a little of the Elizabethan spirit—imperial, adventurous, and loyal.

The next two terms we are going, as you know, and with your permission, to take the course in Colonial History and Geography prepared by the English Board of Education, in connection with the Empire Exhibition. Luckily the Librarian of the Bulawayo Library has been interested in this, and has kindly bought all the books that the Board recommend.

We are, of course, awfully keen on the Exhibition, although I fear that so far we rather look on it from the parochial standpoint. Still, as soon as the *Times* begins its promised weekly accounts and pictures, and as soon as we can start on the course of reading, we shall become more catholic in our interest. By the way, the *Times* weekly edition is a great help, and the "Home and Class Room Section" too. You would laugh to see the eagerness with which the English mail is greeted. The *Times*, the *Children's Newspaper*, *My Magazine* (you did see the article on Lord Bacon in January, didn't you?—it was splendid for our period) and *United Empire* are all specially welcome. "Tutank," as viewed from the *Times'* photographs, has furnished us

with a name for one of our native maids, who by some queer freak has thrown back to the purest Nilotic type, and has the long oval face and almond eyes of the guardian goddesses.

I am afraid you will be getting tired of this long letter, and I have no time to tell you of the mental arithmetic which calculates how much meal a compound of natives will eat in a month, and at what cost, how much wire gauze was required to mosquito-proof all our doors and windows, and the number of bags of mealies an acre will

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yield. I cannot, alas, enlarge on the pleasure of the article on Indian Botany in the PARENTS' REVIEW, or the greater joy of Miss Stopes' *Plant Life*; "Specialisation against Loss of Water" was surely "set" for our benefit? But when it comes to ferns, and still more to mosses, we feel rather hardly used in this dry country. We did however get some fungus spawn on to our gummy paper, in the pattern of the gills, as she recommended. Our geometry makes us take a less unintelligent interest in machinery, and if we've not yet found algebra strictly practical, that is because we've not yet done enough.

But what I do want to make sure of telling you is that we feel, as part of the P.U.S., that we do not work alone,—we are a cog in a great wheel. Thousands of other children, all over the world, are thinking the same thoughts, and reading the same books as we, day by day. It does away with any feeling of loneliness, and gives an impulse and a zest to our work that would otherwise be unattainable. We mothers can never be grateful enough to the P.N.E.U. for gathering us—solitary and scattered links—into the far-flung chain of Empire, and making us realise that we are not mere individuals struggling with circumstances, but are really helping to build, in our small way, that Imperial "city never made with hands, which Love of England prompted and made good."

CONSTANCE E. FRIPP.

Essexvale,  
Southern Rhodesia.

#### A HOLIDAY AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

As you ask me for a letter I am writing about how we went away for the summer holidays last year. About the middle of July, when the children had finished their term's work, it became very hot here in Malta—a blazing sun all day and a very damp heat. At night we went to bed wondering why we did not melt, and knowing that in the morning, we should wake up—if we were lucky enough to sleep—feeling even hotter than we had been the night before. Even the Maltese, and the goats which are such a feature of Malta, seemed prostrated with the heat and the only creatures

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left with any energy were the mosquitoes and flies. At this time I heard from my husband, who was with his light cruisers off Constantinople, that it was very cool and pleasant up there, and that there was a nice house on the Bosphorus that might suit us. The result of this was that my two girls of twelve and eleven and my boy of seven, their Nannie and I embarked on a steamer for Constantinople. We sailed round the South of Greece past Cape Matapan where there lives a hermit who comes out and waves to ships who blow their syrens. His retreat looked very delightful with vines growing round his cave—and the children thought they would like to have visited him—an attention, I am afraid, he would hardly have appreciated. We arrived at the

Dardanelles three days after leaving Malta in the late afternoon and the children had their first view of Asia. In the distance they could see Mt. Olympus and along the banks of the Dardanelles were little mosques with their minarets, one on each side, looking, as a little boy said, "like an animal with very prick ears." That night we crossed the Sea of Marmora, and in the morning when we came on deck, Constantinople in all its glory lay before us. It was like a very perfect English summer morning and the children were entranced with the scene. Mosques we had already seen on the Dardanelles, but not exquisite fairylike buildings like those about us now. And beyond lay the Bosphorus, the hills on each side all green and wooded and at the foot of the hills on its banks lonely white palaces and little houses with red roofs all reflected again in the deep blue surface. And on the surface was the greatest variety of ships you can imagine. Big solemn looking battleships and cruisers, English, French and Italian. For the Allies were occupying Constantinople then. Sailing round about these were caiques (the Turkish word for boat) of every description; some with graceful masts and sails set, piled high with cargoes and crews wearing fez and baggy trousers and brightly coloured scarves round their waists; others, like barges, filled with melons, steamed slowly along, and some little caiques were being rowed by people we thought might just have walked out of the Arabian Nights. We felt we had arrived in fairyland and nothing more that happened would be ordinary or every day. Malta [p 388]

was parched and brown when we left and there are hardly any trees here at any time. And the green hills and trees on each side of the Bosphorus were wonderful to the children and, like ponies who are turned into a field after trudging many a weary mile along the road, they felt they wanted to roll. We had not very long to look about before a picket boat came alongside our steamer and we disembarked with our luggage and proceeded to our house. This lay about half way up the Bosphorus between the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea on the European side. On the way up the children scrambled backwards and forwards over the luggage with which the boat was filled in their efforts to miss none of the attractive sights. First the Caliph's great white palace drew cries of delight, then his yacht moored not far off. Then we came to the two castles which stand one on either side, Roumeli Hissar and Anatoli Hissar. From the moment we arrived we fell in love with the Bosphorus and we never for one moment ceased to feel the charm of it or of the ever flowing stream of life which passes up and down it. When at last we reached our house and were deposited with our belongings on our little landing place we were still spellbound by the sights of the Bosphorus. But necessity forced us to withdraw indoors and make arrangements about unpacking and sleeping and bathing, the latter being a very complicated arrangement in a Turkish house! It must have been an hour later that I was free to go back to the balcony and look at the Bosphorus. The lights had been turned on in doors and outside magical transformation had been effected and quite another Bosphorus was there. Black were the hills which had delighted us a few hours earlier and behind them had risen the moon—not an ordinary moon, but a large generous yellow goddess who wrapped everything in her mysterious light. I had to call the children who were getting into bed in their room on the other side of the house and a little awed they looked on the beautiful scene. Suddenly below us a black caique shot into the moonlight and a blood-curdling yell rent the air. The children drew close to me in alarm. The Turk in the caique waved his arms and repeated the awful cry. In dismay I turned to our Greek housemaid who had come up behind us. "What is it, Androniche?" "But milady,

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it is only the ice cream seller wishing you to have some. Are the little ones afraid?" And so, reassured the children went off to bed.

As I went to bed that night sleepy misgivings filled my mind. Was it alright being here with the children in this strange country where ice creams came to us out of the darkness heralded with strange yells? And our house, did it not look as if with one kick from a British boot it would fall to the ground? But in the morning I awoke to the friendly lapping of the Bosphorus against our house and when I looked out of my window fairy caiques were sailing down to the Marmora. And in happiness and complete security we lived until the summer was over and it was time for us to return to Malta.

(LADY) LILLIAN CHATFIELD.

Malta.

A TRAVELLING P.U.S. SCHOOL ROOM IN INDIA.

I should much like to try and tell you what a great help I have found the P.U.S. in teaching my small boy out here, this last year.

Education is such a problem, and provided we are in a healthy part of India we long to keep our children with us till 9 or 10 years old, if possible.

A good governess is ideal, of course—but they are not easy to get—and the expense of a really qualified woman might be beyond one. So it remains for the mother to try and begin "first lessons."

Just at first, from 5 to 6 years, teaching the reading of easy words, and doing printing and "pot hooks," and adding 2 and 2, and so forth is easy enough. But I for one felt anxious about the right way to go on—consulted different friends, one mother would suggest a reading book, another a geography and so it went on.

I did not know which were the best books to take or how much work to set; work was apt to get a bit irregular, a holiday one day when one was extra busy housekeeping, or packing (for India is a country of "moves!") and no real weeks of holiday at other times.

Then a friend told me of the P.N.E.U. and lent me some

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rules, programmes, etc., to look at. I was *very* much interested, but also, I must confess, a little alarmed at what seemed to me then such extensive [sic], elaborate, and *advanced* programmes of work!

However, the more I read, the more interested I became and finally I wrote off for some more details and at last thought I could but *try*, and see if *I* was capable of the teaching required (I must confess to many qualms on this point!) and it Alan, who was only just 6 years, could make an attempt too.

We filled in, with much enjoyment, the sort of preliminary examination paper and sent for the delightful books necessary and started off. Just at first I found difficulty in getting him to "narrate," but after about a month he improved vastly, and began to be able to tell me the story, Bible lesson, Tommy Smith's Animals, and history being the favourites. At the end of term came the great excitement of the "exam.," which we both thoroughly enjoyed—Alan dictating his answers, my pencil could not fly fast enough to take down all the eager outpouring.

French and music we did not attempt as he was still so young and I felt I did not want to give him too much work the first year.

I am truly amazed at how he *has* got on and how he could even take the exams.: quite [sic] well at the end of the first term. The books are lovely and all the work so interesting that I think it would be a dull child indeed who would not be interested, and I suppose that is half the battle.

Of course there *are* days when A. *is* dull and inattentive and is disinclined to do his “narrating” properly and days when “sums” bore him; surely every child is the same! But on the whole I think he loves lessons, history and animal stories particularly, and misses them when holidays come.

It has been a bit of an effort never to miss a day this last term as my husband’s job takes him touring a great deal all over the Punjab and in the winter it is delightful to go with him, and the change down from the hills to the plains is good for all of us. We generally go in the car ourselves, servants and luggage following in a bullock cart or train, if we are near trains.

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We often stay at Canal Rest Houses, which are generally delightful (in lonely places) and at other times we pass through big “stations” like Lahore, Amritsar, Jhelum, Rawal Pindi; we even went up to Hassan Abdal and saw Lalla Rookh’s tomb there, and then back to Taxila, which was of course immensely interesting and was reminiscent of Pompeii. On a tour like this one must take servants, stores, table linen, medicines, warm clothes, thin clothes (December to February may be *very* cold, March distinctly *hot*!) to say nothing of a few toys, and last but not least, the P.N.E.U. books. I adored “Our Island Story,” but I did wish it was not so big to pack!

Sometimes we moved on every day, sometimes we had two or three, or even *ten* days (great joy to *me*!) in a place, and on the days we journeyed lessons often had to be split up. A little perhaps done before breakfast, a little after, books taken along in the car, and perhaps lessons continued in a rest on the roadside before a picnic lunch—great fun, really, and it’s wonderful how it all *can* be fitted in when it comes to the point, even when staying with friends!

We covered about 3,500 miles in the car in three months. There were great opportunities for Nature Study with regard to birds, as we went along, for Alan is lucky in having a “daddy” who is knowledgeable in these things, and we were continually having Tawny, Imperial, Spotted and other Eagles, Peregrines, Kestrels, Cranes, Kingfishers, Crow-pheasants, Peacocks, and so forth, pointed out to us.

We did not see much in the way of flowers as it was a bad time in the plains for that, but we occasionally brought back a flower, or a leaf, and Alan made what he calls a picture for his Nature note book, dreadful attempts really, poor mite! for I fear “art” is not in him so far, and yet sometimes he has done quite good pictures of birds—(that must be because he loves them so, I think—but then he loves dogs too, and he can’t draw them!)

We got back to our house here again, last week, and now are excitedly looking forward to “exams.” next week. After that, I, for one, shall enjoy the holidays, for I have still my house to set in order after our absence and also Alan’s 7th birthday will be coming, which means a “party” and such-like thrills.

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It is very beautiful up here now, lots of snow still on the high hills round, and in Dharmsala itself big trees of wild rhododendron, crimson and pink, out everywhere, with white pear blossom too, and pink "bird cherry" showing against the green of the Indian oak and deodars. There is glorious sunshine, and it is quite warm by day, a bit cold at nights. This is a wonderful place for sunsets too, which words quite fail me to describe.

To-day it has been raining, and it is grey and cold, however we may have the sun again to-morrow!

We feels [sic] we want a lot of it now, till the "Rains" (monsoon) come, for they may begin at the end of June, and we may live in a perpetual deluge and mist, till the middle or end of September. Boots, and books, and most things (and indeed one feels even *oneself*) get mildewed!

M. DONALD.

Dharmsala Cantt.

Punjab.

#### A P.U.S. SCHOOLROOM ON A FRUIT FARM IN SOUTH AFRICA.

When we returned to South Africa in 1921, after five years in England and in Egypt, to make our home among the mountains, we joined the P.U.S.; first, because I did not want to send Rose and Diana (then aged eight and ten) to a boarding school; secondly, my previous experience of home lessons had taught me how easy it is, without a standard to aim at and a definite syllabus, to drift into *laissez-faire* ways; thirdly, in such an ideal environment of mountains, rivers, trees, flowers, and orchards, vineyards and orange groves, there was everything to help us; and fourthly, I had read Miss Mason's books and believed in her aims and methods. My faith and enthusiasm has grown, and the children share my enthusiasm and interest. The examination papers are looked forward to and I have shown their work to a schoolmaster of standing who says it is well up to the school standard, and one who in his day was Head of Westminster School and a double first at Oxford said he could not have done the same work at the same age. He was particularly struck by the number of subjects.

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The advantages of my girls' lives under the P.U.S. are, I consider:

First, they do most of their work out of doors in the shade of the old oak trees planted by the early Dutch and Huguenot settlers; or, in cold weather if not raining, in the sun. Secondly, having no home preparation they have their afternoons free for music (lessons and practice), painting, nature work, gardening, handicrafts, games and swimming; and, in winter, a dancing class once a week, and every week a girl guide meeting in Stellenbosch (8 miles away). Thirdly, in no school would the children ever have the opportunity of reading so much literature as they now do. Every evening I read aloud for an hour one of the books set for the term's reading, while they knit or sew or do leather work. In addition, however, they each read, on an average, one book a week which is not in the syllabus, although they often re-read a book they have had in a previous term's work. Diana, for instance, has just re-read "The Black Arrow." Their spirits are literally being soaked in good literature and I know they will always desire the best.

In a review in the "Spectator" of Sidney Dark's "Child's Book of Scotland," the writer says: "The story of the Reformation reads like a novel and may well fire young readers to open and enjoy Scott—and this takes some firing now-a-days!" Is the writer doing children an injustice? Certainly the children of the P.U.S. do not require any "firing." We started with "Redgauntlet" (not one of the easiest) and straightway Rose started reading every novel of Scott's she could lay her hands on. The only one that was given up in the middle was "Kenilworth," because Amy Robsart's murder was more than could be borne. Shakespeare, too, we count as recreation, and so are Century Books, Nature Books, and History Charts. Van Loon is particularly popular and so are Mr. Household's books.

What strikes me particularly is the development in the children's powers of expression through the reading followed by narration, and the extent of the children's vocabulary.

The only thing my girls lack is the companionship of girls of their own age, but we frequently have girls to stay,  
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and Rose and Diana also occasionally visit friends of their own age, and, in the holidays, there are boys with whom they play cricket or tennis, and swim or picnic. Once a week there is the girl guide meeting and once a year a girl guide camp.

Another advantage of the home education is that Rose and Diana, during the fruit season, work in the packing-shed, thus taking a part in the economy of the home. They love packing the fruit and thinning the grapes, and, during the January holiday spend several hours a week in this work. In February they go to the sea, as we do not start work until March on account of the heat.

MADELINE ALSTON.

Seven Rivers,  
Stellenbosch, C.P.,

#### A P.U.S. HOME SCHOOLROOM IN CANADA.

I have been asked to say (a) what help the P.U.S. is in the Dominions; (b) if the work brings happiness to the children, or (c) any other subject.

This last, will, I hope, provide the excuse for writing simply a version of life in Canada as it has struck me in my four years' residence.

I wish I could say I had come across anyone working P.U.S. methods in Canada, mother-teachers, comparing our difficulties we should have a great bond in common; and, yet I know that Mrs. Franklin spoke to many women interested in the movement.

I adopted the P.U.S., because, following the course posted to us and sending in our examination papers, we feel that our efforts are judged by our peers and that their testimony is true.

Living on the edge of a town in a small house, with few servants, sharing even a garden space with one's neighbours, we Canadians cannot entertain governesses, and the public school with its free education is thankfully accepted as good enough by the majority.

I started by sending a boy of 8 and a girl of 6 to these public schools, but came to the conclusion that if I wanted the children to grow up with a love of the beautiful and  
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tastes that I approved I must undertake to provide the environment which would cultivate them and that I should have, in default of a better, to be their teacher.

The public schools are such fine modern edifices that when being whizzed by a motor car round a town, the schools and collegiates are invariably pointed out with pride, as proof of how up to date the place is, and how much money has been spent on education. Class rooms are large and teachers are really quite as good, or better, than one might expect, but, of necessity, with one teacher for forty or fifty small children, there is a lot of waiting to know how to go on, because the little one either lacks resourcefulness or else tries to do things its own way which usually results in time wasted and material spoiled; as, for instance, in paper folding, unless it is done right at the start the paper gets too tired to stand the strain, and in writing words or figures, a child probably toils right down the column wrong before the error is corrected when submitted to the teacher at the end of the time.

Undoubtedly the education at home of two or three prevents such mistakes, muddled thinking and slow work. More pains are taken over careful speech and reading and the children learn to speak like the adults with whom they associate, instead of using the common distressing language that children adopt when left to themselves.

It demands a real sacrifice of mothers' time to undertake education at home, but you get into the habit and there is a definite satisfaction in what is achieved and the spur of knowing that there are other mothers wrestling with the same problem.

The P.U.S. outline of work is a stand-by. It acts as a discipline for our own erratic tendencies and we feel some confidence that if our child can work to this standard she must be about level with other English pupils.

I do not find that children can be left to do their work alone and take pride in how well and rapidly it can be done in quite the perfectly ideal manner that reading Miss Mason's "Home Education" leads us to expect. No doubt I am raw at teaching, but I should say that the concentration of the teacher and her interest in the lesson seems an absolute necessity. Even so, little restless minds are only too

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delighted to find an excuse to pick flowers from the roadside, and stray, and although recapitulation of matter read is constantly insisted on, the child often does it grudgingly and against its inclination.

My small boy of six listens to the History and Geography portion and can often give a far more satisfactory account than the sister of 8 1/2, who is less nimble witted and more discursive. Her handcraft is remarkably painstaking and it is hard to judge if one is expecting too much or too little. Doubtless, class work rectifies slothful thinking, and a trained teacher would know better how to cope with this than a mother having no experience of other small brains of the same age, herself burning with desire to impart what she knows in excess of her powers of compelling the child's mind to work for itself.

Nature noting is admirable. I find children do enter into the spirit of vieing [sic] with one another as to who has the most or the best records entered. Winter in Canada making a dead world of vegetation, bird and insect life for four months out of the twelve, we look forward with intense eagerness to seeing the first sprout or the first robin. Every bird, save sparrows and rooks, seems to desert Ontario and go south. The snowdrop is, I fancy, the first sign of life creeping through the snow in England—out here our flower books tell us to watch for skunk

cabbage, a coarse kind of Jack in the Pulpit, with a most offensive odour, by means of which flies are attracted to carry away the pollen. The hood of this curious plant will appear through holes in the snow and it can generate sufficient heat, not only to keep off the attacks of Jack Frost, but to melt out a breathing hole for itself through the ice and snow of March. Its hardiness and resourcefulness might well typify Canadian pluck and endurance.

Most children learn to help these days. "Six and a half" does very respectable work shining his knives on a polishing board, and "eight and a half" lays the breakfast table with automatic precision, besides which, smaller brothers and sisters have to be looked after with a grown-up common sense because mother and maid are far too busy to take them out walking, or to be around to keep them out of mischief, as I remember doing with our little ones in Eng-  
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land. They early learn to run to a shop and do any needed purchases. I suppose in time they will can fruit and mend the house linen because they see mother doing it, instead of these things appearing as a matter of course in perfect condition from the trained hands of cook or housemaid.

Life is simpler here. If, for instance, the red currants that the children picked over before cooking won't "jell" we all share the anxiety: we all work together to achieve, because failure means a gap on the preserve shelf, or disgrace on some future occasion.

I especially welcome P.U.S. because it stimulates me not to be satisfied with the dead level of commonplace that is often accepted so unquestioningly. Fathers come home from a hard day's business, needing rest and recuperation. If mother does not read or burn with heavenly discontent, and so forge ideas as to what young energy is to do next, almost inevitably the children learn to look outside the house to movies and matches to fill up the empty hours. The result is plain. Parents shift the responsibility of their children on to the shoulders of their teachers. Home is on a street with several other school mates also at a loose end. They offer companionship and the child can fritter time away aimlessly with other occupationless empty-minded souls without the elders even thinking they are to be pitied. Parents' occupations and amusements are usually not such as the children can share, and once a boy has got into the habit of drifting in company, it is almost impossible to expect him to apply himself to handcraft unless he gets practical help, and encouragement.

Mothers do not realise how little they interest their children unless they work and play with them, and I am sure the reason of the great aloofness of the young generation from the older, so noticeable in Canada to-day, is because we have allowed the daily round to absorb our minds to staleness, and the variety, the beauty and the richness of Eternal Life is lost sight of, or condemned unheard as "High Brow" or "Hot Air."

Here, then, are my answers to a, b, and c.

(a) P.U.S. would be a boon in the Dominions if only parents would do their part and not think of education as spelt with a capital E, but as an atmosphere, a discipline and a life.

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(b) The happiness of the parents in sharing childish enthusiasms is even sweeter than that of the children.

- (c) That which my letter has tried to show—how intensely we are living and how joyous it is to feel in contact with others who will share with us their experience in the field of action as well as inspire us with their broad and sane ideals.

SELINA SHUTTLEWORTH KING.  
Ontario, Canada.

#### A P.U.S. SCHOOLROOM IN NORTH INDIA.

My gratitude to the P.U.S. is undying, and I am very grateful for this opportunity of mentioning a few of the advantages which I have found so beneficial.

Ever since the British woman lived in India, the time in every mother's life is reached when her heart must be wrung with the pain of separation from her dear ones. The children must go Home to be educated. Someone can be found to fill a mother's place, no one to fill a wife's, and her place is by her husband's side, stern though it may sound, and hard to some. The children are at Home in good hands, with good doctors and nurses available in case of sickness, and they are in their natural element. The husband is perhaps in an unhealthy station, badly provided with white doctors (more scarce out here every year); he goes down with fever. Who is to nurse him? In a man's heart home life takes deeper root than in a woman's; is it fair to condemn him to a bachelor's life with none of the amenities of a bachelor's income? So to return to my subject the P.N.E.U. given a healthy climate defers the moment of separation; the education offered by the P.U.S. is of so high a standard, that it rules out the difficulty of education, it is only the "atmosphere of India" that becomes unhealthy for a child after the age of 10 years. There are few if any companions of its own age, it is therefore thrown upon grown up people for its society and becomes precocious, or, thrown upon itself, becomes morbid, supersensitive and too imaginative.

The P.U.S. programme gives children a right sense of  
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proportion, it gives them a glimpse of the limitless horizon of knowledge, directs their reading into right channels, awakens their sense of the beautiful in nature and art, develops their initiative, quickens their intelligence, and teaches them to concentrate; a gift which they will never fail to be thankful for, either in school or after life. It frees them from self-consciousness or shyness, another great advantage in this advanced age in which the shy and demure 'miss' plays no part.

I must not close without a word about the books; the average station club library contains several thousand books by obsolete authors, mostly fiction, a handful of good books by modern authors, and perhaps half a dozen really good works. Our old friends Dickens, Thackeray, Sir W. Scott, Jane Austen and George Eliot have no place upon the shelves; "no one wants to read those now, we all read them at school" is the reply if any comment is made, "We want light fiction," and fiction of the worst it is as a rule! If this is the supply for the "grown ups" it may be imagined that the supply for the young is no better, and yet the average child in India reads more than the average child at Home, the long hot days when they are shut up in the house from 8 till 6, naturally make them resort to their books. The parcels from 26, Victoria Street, are looked forward to with pleasure, opened with glee, and never prove a disappointment. Instead of plodding through dry as dust histories containing strings of names and dates, dull geographies, and endless rows of meaningless sums, there are some new books

to be looked forward to every term, the realisation that the term's work must be got through in a certain time urges on the dawdler, and the consolation that if a task is not congenial it will not have to be repeated.

I could continue my song of praise for many a page, but I encroach upon valuable space; let me end on a note of gratitude and thanksgiving to Miss Mason and her noble work. She has gone to her reward, and if the blessed in heaven know what is passing on earth, no small part of that reward will be the realisation of the happiness her great work brings daily to thousands of homes throughout the vastest Empire in the World.

CORALIE LE CARDEW.

Landowne, Garhwal. U.P.

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A P.U.S. SCHOOLROOM IN CEYLON.

You give me a choice of two subjects and an alternative on which to write. Well I think I shall combine the two subjects and so take the alternative! Naturally one can only speak personally, but the P.U.S. has been the greatest possible help to me. Before I joined I found the education of my daughter without a governess amazingly difficult. As I told you at the time I had nothing to help me, but vague recollections of my own very superficial education, and a certain amount of common sense. I worked vaguely trying to collect hints from other mothers working under the same difficulties, buying books only to find they were unsuitable, and discarding them in favour of others equally useless, forcing the child in some directions, and not encouraging her sufficiently in others; it was a real case of the blind leading the blind. I need hardly tell you the enormous difference a set of programmes and time-table,—not to mention the delightful books—made to our work. It would not be fair on the child to say she did not like her lessons before, because I think she has always liked them, but naturally she is much happier in her work now; the books interest and amuse her, and the idea that numbers of other children are doing the same work, at the same time, has taken away much of the loneliness of working alone and the tediousness of not quite knowing “what it's all for.” She now knows what work has to be done during the term, and the exams. are [sic] an enthralling interest. I find that it is impossible to keep strictly to the Time Table as our hours out here are so different to home hours, and also I have found it necessary to make her do a certain amount of work alone, as naturally I have other matters to attend to, but with these exceptions our work goes on on the P.U.S. lines, and I don't know which of us most blesses the hour when first we heard of the P.N.E.U.

DOROTHY WYNNE-ROBERTS

Ambawela, Ceylon.

A P.U.S. SCHOOLROOM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

It would be impossible for me to tell you what a boon the P.U.S. is and has been to us personally. This island,

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“South Pender,” is one of the smallest of “the Gulf Islands,” which lie between Victoria and Vancouver. We are not so cut off from the outside world as people might imagine, having steamers twice a week which go to Vancouver or Victoria and thus keep us in close touch with the outside world. However, South Pender is divided from North Pender by a canal, and

although there are schools in North Pender we have no school of any kind upon our side of the island. I think that I can safely say that had it not been for the P.U.S. my husband and I would never have thought of settling here and that the P.U.S. has solved all our problems in the educational line for some years to come. We have four children aged from 8 to 4 years old and I do not think in the world a more ideal spot could be found for the upbringing of children; the one and only drawback to this island has been solved by the P.U.S. It has been such a boon and help to us that I can assure you we tell all our friends about it. We find our children love their lessons and are getting on with their work almost better than we could have believed with such amateur teachers as my husband and myself! I am sorry this will reach you too late, but in any case I would like you to know how much we appreciate Miss Mason's work.

DORA J. C. CRANE.  
South Pender Island,  
British Columbia.

#### ANOTHER P.U.S. SCHOOLROOM IN CEYLON.

As I have been asked to write a few words about the help of the P.N.E.U. in the Dominions I shall be only too glad to do so and to let others know what a help it has been to me personally. Before I joined I found it very difficult to have a regular system of work for my children, and always felt that probably I was leaving out some of the most important subjects or had not books that were up to date. Now, with a set time-table of work and all the interesting books one can get from the P.U.S., and also the book on "Home Education" as a guide for oneself, it has made all the difference. We live 4,000 feet above sea level in a lovely climate, so that it is not necessary for the children to

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go to England nearly so young as if they were living in the low country, the only drawback being the education, and it has made such a difference having a system of education like this for them, with such a varied and delightfully interesting and good lot of books. They are always happy doing their lessons and so interested in all the books. I found they very soon got into the way of narrating without any effort and also of writing fluently. I always recommend the P.N.E.U. to all my friends who have children, and I believe there are quite a number working in Ceylon now, especially the very young children whose parents have lately come from England and have heard all about the P.N.E.U.

M. E. MASSY.  
Bogawantalawa, Ceylon.

#### A P.U.S. SCHOOLROOM IN SOUTH INDIA.

I have very little time for outside things after attending to all my household duties and keeping up with all the subjects in order to teach Joan. I teach and look after her myself—and not being a trained teacher I have to take time to think things out myself too! But I cannot say enough in favour of the P.N.E.U. and feel even most grateful to Miss Mason for her wonderful system. If only more mothers in India would take it up, what a blessing it would be for the children, for I am sure many children are handicapped all through their school life by not having a fair start. I know from my own experience that this is so. The child of ten goes home knowing practically nothing, and after about a year no one takes into consideration that it lost four years

of training which the other children with whom it has to compete have had. Indian children, and especially isolated ones, have so much of other things to grasp at first, that it is really most unfair to send them into schools knowing nothing. Yet of course parents are mostly hopelessly at sea themselves. They do not know where to begin or what to teach and it makes it all such a worry, that in nine cases out of ten they leave it alone. Now it is just here that the P.N.E.U. is so splendid. All these worries are solved. And it is all so wonderfully worked out and so intensely interesting to oneself, that it adds much pleasure

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to the life out here. The children enjoy it, it fills their lives with interest and helps them to seek interest and pleasure in all around them, without in any way taxing them.

My little Joan is so interested in everything around her—always on the look out for “new things to learn about,” as she puts it. What a splendid thing it would be if a P.N.E.U. School could be started in one of the Hill Stations. For really the education given out here in so called “better class” “private schools” is very poor, and in these days sending children home with the increased school fees is a great tax on many people.

Joan is getting on very nicely, and is evidently very musical. She is always at the piano and picks out any tune she hears by ear. She finds no difficulty in sol-fa. She is most backward in handicrafts, but seems now to have made a start, and is getting to like sewing. She would have liked to have answered your letter, and was so pleased at hearing direct from you, but we are just starting off on our holidays and I have not been able to get her settled to it. She is handicapped in her nature study by my not being able to help her at all, as I really cannot draw or paint a bit. So that has just to be left, meantime we collect specimens and make notes, and occasionally she makes little brush drawings. Mrs. Tasker is now near, and we meet sometimes and she very kindly helps Joan to paint. Her eldest little boy and Joan are the same age and do the same work, so this has brought it all home to Joan—and she feels it is a “real” school now. She is always asking about the “P.U.S.” school, as she calls it.

AMY BRACKEN.

Coorg,  
India.

FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

I taught my daughter in the P.U.S. from the time she was 8 till she was 15 and I found the system of incalculable help to me.

You have asked me to write you some account of the Falkland Islands.<sup>2</sup>

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There is much that could be said of the Islands them selves, though most people say they are bleak and wind swept. My experience after 16 years does not entirely corroborate this. We have more sunshine than England, less cold and less heat, a more or less universal temperature all the year round. With cultivation and protection most of the common flowers and vegetables do well.

The main industry is sheep-farming. The Settlements are scattered many miles apart, each one consisting of the manager’s house, cookhouse, or men’s dwelling-house, where a man-cook cooks for the men; wool sheds, where the sheep are driven in to be sheared; and two or three shanties or small wooden houses for married shepherds. All the main work of the

Islands is concentrated into the summer months, shearing, pressing and baling the wool, and in the autumn dipping the sheep.

The only means of getting about is on horseback, from one station or farm to another. We thought little of a four to seven hours ride to visit friends for a day or two. There are no roads and the riding is rough. In the first years of my life there the only communication between the two Islands, east and west, was by schooner, now there is a small steamer, which carries the mail and lifts cargo, etc. Telephones have been erected all over the Islands and a wireless plant at Port Stanley on the east and a smaller plant at Fox Bay on the west. This has brought the Islands into touch with the outside world. After the famous Battle of the Falklands, we on the West Island did not know anything about it till three weeks later, when our next monthly mail was brought out. When the Armistice was declared we knew by wireless five hours after it was proclaimed in London. This will give you some idea of our isolation in former years. Travelling once in a schooner from Port Stanley, the capital of the East Island, to Fox Bay, my home on the West Island, I was a fortnight doing 120 miles. Head winds and gales kept us in harbours most of the time. Now the journey can be done in 14 hours. It would take too long to relate all the vicissitudes I went through in the early years. It is wonderful to look back and see how the progress of a few years has improved the life and condition of even those out of the way islands.

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There are many interesting birds on the Islands, principally sea birds.

“In spite of the big numbers, the species are limited, for there are not more than 50 which are common in the Islands, with between 30 or 40 more or less accidental or stray species on account of migration or circumstances of weather. Not more than ten known common birds of the Falklands can be described as being known to undergo a regular migration. The visitor to the shores is greeted by swarms of shags, *P. alacocorax magellanica*, and King shags, *P. albiventer*, whilst inland there are large flocks of upland geese, *Chloephaga magellanica*. Birds that are endemic to the Islands include the brent goose, *C. rubricep*; the robin, which is in reality the meadow starling, *Trupialis falklandica*, the tussac bird, *Cinclodes antarctica*; the sparrow, *Phrygilus melano derna*; the thrush, *Turdus falklandica*; turkey vulture, *Oenops falklandica*, two species; the flycatcher or blue bird, *Muscisaxicola macloviana*; the wren, *Troglodytes cobbi*; the sand plover, *Aeglytes falklandica*; the logger duck, *Tachyeres cinereus*; the dolphin gull, *Larus scoresepii*; the kelp goose, *C. hybrida*; and the siskin, which is also peculiar. It should be noted that the above names are entirely local, and the birds are absolutely different to those of the same name in England. When travelling in the Camp, birds that abound, apart from the above, include snipe, *Gallinago paraguay*; dotterel, *Zonibyx modesta*, together with large numbers of waterfowl, including grebe, ducks and sundry species of Polyboridae.

Along the coast line one may see three species of gulls, skuas, terns, mollymawks, *Diameda melanopheries*; giant petrels, a very interesting diving petrel, *Pelecanoides urinatrix*; several species of blue petrels, Wilson's stormy petrels, cape pigeons, and the wandering albatross. There are four kinds of penguin, the King penguin, *Aptenodytes patagonicus* (which is not common); the Gentoo, *P. papua*;

Jackass, *S. magellanica*, and Rockhopper penguin, *C. chrysocomae*; the last three species are to be found during the summer in countless millions throughout the Colony.”

The large penguin rookeries are a great feature there. The birds are most quaint with their white fronts and black backs looking like a lot of men in evening clothes. They cannot fly but waddle along with their small flippers out to balance themselves. It is very amusing to watch them.

There are various kinds of albatross and shags, sea hens, Johnny rooks, turkey buzzards, gulls, and all kinds of ducks. Small birds are not so numerous and they do not sing like English birds. There is a lark which warbles and a wren that sings a little, also the siskins twitter a bit, but it all sounds half hearted and stops as one thinks they are going off into the long delightful trills of English birds.

“In lagoons, one comes across fair numbers of the pretty black necked swan, *C. melanocoryphus*; the beautiful white American egret,  
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the giant heron, and the Chilean flamingo have been seen. Along the shores one also sees many night herons, *nycticorax*, commonly called quarks; close at hand may also be seen the interesting wattled sheath bill, and Kelp pigeon, together with flocks of oyster catcher, *H. ater* and *H. leucopos* (locally named curlew). A notable occurrence during the summer of 1916—17 (when a big drought took place in the Argentine), was a large influx of essentially Chilean birds, especially among the duck family.”

The seals are plentiful and an old sea lion with his female or ‘Clapmatch,’ as she is called, will often come up on the beaches. At one time my daughter rescued a baby seal, which had been deserted by its parents and left to die on the beach. It was very savage at first and we had to feed it by putting its head into a bag with a hole, just allowing its mouth to come through. In the end it got so tame it would follow my daughter about like a dog and bleat like a lamb if she left it. It did not live long, unfortunately they are very difficult to rear. Occasionally a sea-elephant and sea leopard come on shore, but they are more frequently found nearer south, and usually only come up when they have been fighting and are injured.

“In this locality the oceanic life is remarkable and enormous both in species and abundance of both animal and vegetable life—considering the scarcity of land life. Recent researches have proved that the surrounding seas are extremely rich both in mollusca and crustacea.”

The flora and conchology of the country is varied and interesting, we used to collect specimens of each on our walks in the Camp and round the beaches.

“There are two forms of plant in the Falklands that prove of more than usual interest, the first being the Balsam Bog, (or *Bolax glebana*). In a popular paper these have been described as trees growing upside down. In reality, they are mounds covered with innumerable hexagonal markings, which are the leaf buds, or the extremities of the



branches, which ever since the plant started as a single root have gone on branching out dichotomously. So slow has this process been that the branches have widened out more than they have lengthened; the result is a solid mass of plant life, each branch of which continues to divide, and each division growing in width to fill up the intervening space. The transverse growth being greater than the vertical, the branches begin to press against each other: the more the plant grows, the greater becomes the pressure, and the branches become hard, in fact so hard that it is almost impossible to cut. The bog exudes a pale yellow gum, which is reputed to be useful for wounds. Balsam bogs are practically unknown in any other part. The Tussock plant also forms a feature, for with the exception

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of a few small islands in Terra del Fuego, the grass is almost unknown. It is a species of the *Carex* (*dactylis caespitosa*), and belongs to the natural order of *Cyperaceae*. The bogs grow from 12—20 feet high, and are invaluable for fodder. There is a total absence of trees in the Colony, with the exception of a small cluster at Hill Cove, and one or two odd ones here and there, all of which have been planted, and are well fenced in, to protect them from the winds, these attain no height whatever. The largest bush is the fachine, (*senecio candicans*), but a low resinous shrub, (*empetrum rubrum*), locally called diddly-dee, is very prevalent all over the Colony, and is used for making the necessary smoke signals for intercommunication between the islands. There is also a low creeping myrtle (*myrtus nummularia*) bearing sweet berries, and is known as the Tea berry.”

They are not classified in book form, except in a private publication by Mrs. Vallentin, who painted and drew sections under the microscope. The “Scurvy Grass” or Oxalis is getting common on English rock gardens. There is a low growing shrub, called “Diddle Dee” with a small white flower and red berry which is edible and often made into jam or jelly. It grows like heather over the hills. There is also another bushy shrub called “Fashine” which grows higher than the “Diddle” Dee and has bunches of white flowers rather like a Michaelmas Daisy. There are many other varieties of flowers mostly white or yellow. The “Malvina” plant has also an edible berry.

“One of the most extraordinary local phenomena is the presence of the Rivers of Stone that abound in many parts of the Colony. The width of these deposits vary from 300 feet to a mile, and often slope at an angle of ten degrees. The blocks of quartz rock vary in size from about three feet in diameter to often twenty times as large. They show no sign whatever of being waterworn, but are only a little blunted through concussion one with another. The Stone Rivers generally extend in a level sheet or great stream. Nobody has ever ascertained their depth, but nearly every one has a river of water rushing along several feet below the surface.”

E. C. BUCKWORTH.

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<sup>1</sup> Ambleside,

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21st February, 1924.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The P.N.E.U. Committee are arranging a Children's Gathering at the British Empire Exhibition next term, and we hope to have a special number of the "Parents' Review" to which we are asking all the P.U.S. members in the Dominions and their children to contribute.

Would you like to send a letter, to reach me by the first week in May, on one of the following subjects:—

- (a) The help of the P.U.S. in the Dominions.
- (b) The children's happiness in their work.
- (c) Any other subject.

Yours, etc.,

E. KITCHING.

<sup>2</sup> Extracts quoted are from a pamphlet on "The Falkland Islands," by the Rev. C. McDonald Hobley.