SOME EXPERIENCES OF A PIONEER SCHOOL.
(DRIGHLINGTON).

BY MISS AMBLER.

I HAVE been requested to write an account of my experience in the adaptation of Miss Mason's Scheme of education in my Department of about 200 girls.

First of all, perhaps, I ought to tell you how I came to hear of the Scheme.

I was asked, by a friend, to try the effect of reading for about ten minutes at a time daily from a good book, to my youngest class; then to ask them to narrate what they had heard and note the result.

I watched the children to see what power of concentration they possessed and how this increased with continual practice.

The results were certainly surprising.

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I then heard of the P.U.S. and of Miss Mason, and was invited, together with other Head-teachers, to meet Miss Drury, of the House of Education, Ambleside, who would explain the Scheme, etc., to us; show us books and papers; and generally help us in any way she could, by answering our questions, etc.

After this meeting I procured some of Miss Mason's publications, notably her first one, "Home Education," and studied them all.

I found myself absolutely in agreement with her principles and also with her methods, *when dealing with very small classes*.

How these methods could be adapted to *large* classes I did not know, but determined to try a few experiments.

I argued, "I am extremely dissatisfied with the results obtained by our present methods, when I consider all the time and trouble taken; all the energy and thought expended on our work."

I thought, "There is too much work done by the teacher—too little by the child. The results are not commensurate with the labour and time expended. The children's memories are not good, and the reason they do not remember things seems to be because of a lack of *living* interest. Their power of expression is weak, and their vocabularies are poor. The children are getting their information too much in tabloid form, in spite of illustrations, pictures, etc., hence this mental indigestion and arrested mental development."

I said, "If Miss Mason's principles are the *true* ones, they *must* be the ones to adopt, and a way must be found *whatever* circumstances obtain."

And so, although I foresaw numberless difficulties in the way, with classes of large size and no precedent to guide, I applied to the authorities to try them in Standard I.

The Head-Inspector was most sympathetic, and encouraged me in the work.

I must also acknowledge the loyalty and whole-hearted co-operation accorded me by my staff, who have from the beginning taken the greatest interest, and made themselves familiar with all things incidental to the scheme; have read Miss Mason's works, and have often tried little experiments on their own initiative.

Often have we discussed the various difficulties, points of principle and of application as they arose, and have mutually decided upon what we would do. For to adopt the Scheme in the letter only and not in the spirit was the last thought of either Principal or Staff.
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We are now in the third year of working.

What *is* this wonderful Scheme?

Well, no "*fad*," I can assure you. I never yet adopted a fad, that I am aware of, neither do I believe in "specialising" in anything with children under 13 years of age. (My girls may attend school half-time at 12 and leave altogether at 13.)

The "Scheme" is only the intelligent application of very old and very simple ideas.

These ideas are best learned from Miss Mason herself. My information was largely gathered from the numerous books and articles she has published.

I can only say how *I* have interpreted them, and tell you what I *have* done and am doing.

Perhaps if Miss Mason herself could visit my school she would see many weaknesses and suggest many improvements.

I only wish it were possible for her to come.

Now as I understand Miss Mason, we are, at the very outset, taken back to a truth we learned in the days when our parents taught us the Catechism.

"A child is a *person*."

Each child has been given a name.

It may have seemed to us a strange way of beginning to teach the Catechism—by asking a child its name.

"What is your name?"

"Who gave you this name?"

Do we imagine that it begins by asking the child's name because it must begin somehow, or that it merely supposes that the teacher does not know the child's name and must ask it?

Then we should remember that it is intended to be taught by the parent who knows the child's name perfectly well already.

And yet they are to begin in this way.

Why?

It is not the Surname which belongs to a child at its birth which is asked for in the Catechism, it is the Christian name, the name given at its Baptism, at its *second* birth.

It is because a child is endowed with a spirit that we apply to it the name of *person*.

"A child is a person."

And anyone having a name, a name of his or her own, signifies the possession of personality, of a character, a responsibility, a calling and a duty given that Person by Almighty God.

The child by its Baptism has become "a member of Christ," and therefore a person, because Christ is a person.
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"A child of God," and therefore a person, because a child's duty is to love and obey its Father and only a person can do that, not an animal or a thing.

And as “an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven” with a name, a Baptismal name, a Christian name, a personal name, denoting the responsibility into which it must grow, should be taught to cherish such thoughts and feelings, such love and obedience as only those endowed with a spirit, “persons,” not animals or things can feel.

Can we therefore wonder that Miss Mason should insist on the educationalist giving of the very best; on the “opening of many doors” but always the “doors of *good* houses” to each and every child, born and reared no matter in what circumstances?

To the child of the working man the same intellectual food is offered as to that of the more easily circumstanced parent.

In Miss Mason’s own words:—

“*Every* child has a right of entry into several fields of knowledge; every normal child has a *desire* for knowledge; this can be most fitly given him by means of *things* and *books*.”

“The value of education by *things* is receiving wide recognition, but *intellectual education*, to be derived from *books*, is still for the most part, to seek.”

“Every scholar of six years old and upwards should study with ‘delight’ *his own*, *living books* on each subject in a fairly wide curriculum.”

(Children who cannot yet read have their books read to them.)

Hence one of the principles of the scheme is:—“A wide curriculum and much use of books,” because it is contended that “all children have a capacity for and a latent love of, knowledge: and that knowledge concerning persons and peoples can best be derived from Books, and should be derived by children directly from the books they handle in their early school life.”

Again to quote Miss Mason:—

“What concerns us *directly* is the fact that we individually have relations with what there is in the present and with what there *has* been in the past; with what is above us and about us; and that *fulness of living* and *serviceableness* depend for each of us upon how *far* we apprehend these relationships and how many of them we lay hold of.

“Every child is heir to an enormous patrimony, and it
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is for us to make sure that he, in due time, enters into his heritage.

“Education, so understood, is no longer subjective, as regards the child, but objective. … We take the child as we find him—a *person*, with many healthy affinities and potential attachments, and we try to give him a chance to make the largest possible number of these attachments valid.

“Therefore, we do not feel it is lawful in the early days of a child’s life to select certain subjects for his education to the exclusion of others: … but we endeavour that he shall have relations of pleasure and intimacy established with the interests proper to him; not learning a slight or incomplete smattering about this or that subject, but plunging into *vital* knowldege [sic] with a field before him which in all his life he will not be able to explore.

“Our part is to *remove* obstructions, to give *stimulus* and *guidance* to the mind which is getting into touch with the universe of things and thoughts.

“Our error is to suppose that we must act as showman, and that there is no connection between child and universe except such as we choose to set up.”

“While we labour *strenuously* at education, we are in danger of *stultifying* knowledge.

The getting of knowledge and the getting of *delight* in knowledge are the ends of a child's education."

As *I* interpret the scheme it is that "Education should be by Things and Books."

To-day the worth of education by Things is recognised everywhere.

"The great educational failure we have still to deal with is in the matter of Books. We know that books store the knowledge and thought of the world: but the mass of knowledge, the multitude of books, overpower us, and we think we may select here and there, from this book and that, fragments and facts of knowledge, to be dealt out, whether by the little cram book or the oral lesson."

One great principle is that the children should use only the *best* books.

A question which troubled *me* was, who is to say which *are* the best books for children?

In her "Programmes" Miss Mason sets certain books to be studied, and this selection is the result of her long experience and observation and of those associated with her in her work. [p 840]

They are certainly books which *every child* should have an opportunity of studying, and I was surprised with how very few of them my girls were acquainted.

Many of them appeared very difficult for young children according to our first impressions. However, I felt I wanted to try them for myself.

We got the books and have used them.

We have found very little difficulty from the very first in interesting the children in them. We began by reading very little at a time and letting only three or four girls narrate.

The teacher read slowly and in a very interested voice—letting the children *see* how interested she was herself in the books.

Just at *first* she only asked those to narrate who were perfectly willing—even eager—to do so.

Some girls were very shy about narrating before the class (which contained 45 scholars), but the teacher watched them closely, and when she saw that these particular children were more than usually interested in something read, she would sit down by them and encourage them to talk to her, quietly, about the subject.

They have gradually gained confidence and now, in our third year, they are quite at home when narrating.

We have never worried the children to narrate, but have taken them in turn round the class and some have narrated very little at first, but with a smile of encouragement and pleasure from the teacher, have increased their efforts and ere long have been glad to relate a whole reading.

The amount read always depended upon the difficulty of the matter, and the portion selected was never read twice.

In the second year we began to introduce what is ordinarily known as "*written composition."*

Once a week the teacher read an extremely interesting and rather short story which was well within everyone's comprehension.

Most of them were very eager to retell it.

The teacher professed anxiety to hear them *all*, but pointed out the impossibility of doing so in the time at their disposal.

She suggested that they should each write down just *what they had intended to say*, then she could take them home, read them and enjoy them.

This they set about eagerly.

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Nothing was said about spelling.

If any girl asked how to spell a word, the teacher quietly wrote it on the blackboard, then any other girl could use that word without asking how to spell it and it might offer a suggestion to some girl who had forgotten something.

Now, in the third year, they are gradually being led to read a small portion *silently* and then to reproduce it either orally or in writing.

As the children are gaining confidence the teacher is letting them write short accounts of the *ordinary* lessons, such as Bible, History, Geography and Natural History.

This they are doing very well.

After silently reading the portion set, we allow them a few minutes to look it over for the purpose of observing how the words are *spelt*.

Even as far as *we* have gone, we can already see that many girls have got a real love for knowledge and a power of getting that knowledge for themselves from books.

They get their parents to buy them some of the books we use in school for birthday or Christmas presents.

They *must* look through any books they have at home, for if any which are mentioned in lessons are in their possession, they are sure to be brought for the teacher to see.

If I have apprehended the principles and their application correctly, the scheme simply means the *acquisition of knowledge* in a natural way, the *power of reproducing* either *orally* or in *writing* anything absorbed; an intense, *personal, living* interest in the subject matter dealt with in the various lessons, and the gradual bringing out of the *personal* characteristics of the child.

So far, I am pleased with the results and should like to go on with the scheme.

I should also like to keep in touch with a number of the girls after they leave school—to see how they turn out.

Nothing but time can show whether our work and the scheme together have borne good fruit.

We can only cast our bread upon the waters and hope that it will come back to us after many days.

. . . .

A few details on *practical* points may be of use to some.

First of all with regard to obtaining the necessary books.

In the youngest class, only one book—for use by the teacher

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—is necessary in most of the subjects, as the children, being unable to read for themselves, have the books read to them. These cost just over £1.

(Reading itself is taught in the ordinary way. As the children gain proficiency they are arranged in little groups of four or six, each with a good reader in charge, whilst the very backward ones are taught by the class teacher.)

The books for the next class cost a little more—perhaps 30s.—as some of the smaller nature books (about 4d. each) should be in the possession of *each* child.

The cost of books in the third class is greater, because the children are now beginning to study silently and *must* have a book each.

About £12 has been spent on books for this class (averaging about 40 children).

We have economised in this matter, however, by dividing the class into four sections, getting 10 instead of 40 books in English History, French History, Geography and Natural History and reading these subjects in sections.

Of course, this necessitates the making out of a Time-table for each section.

This is planned by the teacher at the beginning of the term, and each girl is told just when and which subject she is to study.

This she writes down, thus making a Time-table for herself, and then knows exactly what to do at any given time.

The teacher's work now consists of preparing some questions on the various subjects, which will tell her how the children have worked and *grasped* the matter. Sometimes the questions are answered orally, sometimes in writing.

These third year girls (aged between eight and nine) are studying, this term, portions of the following books:—

Arnold-Foster's "History of England."
Mrs. Creighton's "History of France."
"The Sciences," by Holden.
Mrs. Buckley's "Life and Her Children."
"The Tempest."
"Macbeth."
"Woodstock."
"Robinson Crusoe."
Some of "Plutarch's Lives."
"The World's Story," by Eliz. O'Neill.
"Saints and Heroes," etc.

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Amongst other lessons each week we have a "Picture Talk." A set of pictures is studied each term. These are obtained at the P.N.E.U. Offices, London. Those in use this term are six reproductions of the works of Memlinc.

Others my girls have examined and studied during the last two years are six each of:—

Millet.	Watts.	Corot.
Durer.	Raphael.	Meissonier.

The girls have Drawing and Painting lessons and take a surprising interest in the pictures and life stories of the various artists.

All the hard study is done in the mornings. The afternoons are spent in Clay-Modelling, Paper-cutting, Drawing, Painting, Rafia-work, Needlework, Drill, Singing, Poetry, and Tales.

I shall be very glad if this recital of my experience of the adaptation of Miss Mason's Methods should prove to be of use to any other teacher.

MR. RAWNSLEY: My old friend, Sir Henry Taylor, the poet, once said to me that his friend Lecky, the author of one of the best books ever produced, always came into a room as if he was apologising for his existence. I do not want to go quite so low as that, but I must apologise to you here for speaking to so many people who know much better than I do the kind of thing that is needed. My only excuse is that Miss Mason asked me to visit the school of which you have heard and she talked to me about it with much interest. Yesterday, in the "Times Educational Supplement," I read this letter by H.R. James:—

> "A classical education as traditionally understood and practised, did give us something for which an equivalent has not yet been found, and perhaps never can be found. It may be described as the enlarging of spiritual perception, that strengthening of practical judgment which perfect literature can communicate. It is sometimes called humanistic culture."

That is where our subject comes in. Miss Mason said to me "I want you to go and see this School, which Mrs. Steinthal will show you, and then tell me what you think about it." She herself could not go, but she believed that in that school at Drighlington a new aspect of elementary school teaching had been discovered, and that we have found a key to the real method of
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teaching as teaching should be. She has called it teaching children through the humanities. The humanities schools at Oxford and Cambridge are the places in which learning is instilled by means of Greek, Latin and Philosophy, or great literature in Greek or Latin. But English should be the means of instilling all that is fine and grand and noble, and it can be instilled into the minds of children of every class. That was Miss Mason's point.

Well, I went to see the School. Mrs. Steinthal met me and we had some talk with the children and with the teachers. Then I heard each class, beginning at the lower class, go through some work. When I came to the upper class I did not hear them, because they came to me and asked me to speak to them. I had been reading Shakespeare and lecturing on Tennyson to the students of Miss Mason's House of Education, and they had commented on the fact apparently, and thought they had got someone to read Shakespeare to them. It happened that they were then studying *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, and asked me to read something from Macbeth. So we had some passages. I can only say that I have never had a better audience, not only an audience who sat still, but an audience who had its whole attention riveted on the words of the speaker. They appeared to be as pleased as I was, and that is something, for I was very much pleased with the way in which they took that piece of literature.

I then went to the other classes, and the books they were using there were books by Andrew Lang. I did not catch the names in the list read out to us just now. One was about the heroes of mythology and it was not very easy, for there were some long names in it. I heard a passage read by a teacher, and I must tell you that the teachers themselves read extremely well. I do not think it would be much good if they did not read well in that particular method of instruction. When they had read a couple of pages of a book, the question was, who should come forward and repeat what the class had just heard once, word for word as they had heard it. In the smaller class a little child came forward, a bright-eyed little thing. I was told she had

missed three weeks of school through being ill, but she had just come back again and was as keen as possible on making up for lost ground. With the most serious look she gave us her rendering of what she had just heard. It was not word for word, but she had the story all connected in the words of the author, and she spoke in a good clear voice and with a certain amount of
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varied intonation, showing that she entered into the characters whom she had heard described.

After this child had finished, there were plenty of others only too anxious to come forward, and they were all very keen on hearing how this first child rendered the passage, and if anything was wrong they at once spotted it. Every one of them listened intently to hear how the thing would go. That showed great keenness on the part of the children, I thought, and I not only noticed this keenness, but all along they were very intent on what they did. Everybody seemed eager to know, and eager to speak, and eager to be correct and accurate.

I then went to another class. Another reader read a couple of pages out of another and more difficult book, with long names. The children, however, got the names quite rightly, which surprised me. In this class Mrs. Steinthal drew my attention to a girl sitting in the fifth row and looking as though she were entirely absorbed in the story which a little girl was repeating, after hearing it read once by the teacher. Mrs. Steinthal said—

"Observe that little girl. Nine months ago she was looked upon as a half idiot. She went about with her mouth open and a glassy look in her eyes, and it was not supposed that she would ever be fit to be taught." Yet such is the extraordinary influence which Miss Ambler has—for I think the personal element is the thing that counts here—both upon her teachers and her children, that that little girl had her mouth shut and her brains open, and she was as keen as mustard to learn. It was supposed that she could learn nothing, but, if not as quick as some were, she was quite capable of taking her place in the class. In my opinion that really was a triumph.

There were other noteworthy things about this school. I asked how they managed about spelling. The answer was that every day sentences were written upon the blackboard, which the children read. Then they had to reproduce the sentences in writing, word for word, with every stop in the right place and every word spelt rightly. If one single mistake were made it had to be written again until it was correct, and I was told that it does not take long for the girls to see that it is best to pay great attention at first, so as to get the words right the first time. It is the same with spelling as with other things. When you once get the children keen and pleased—and every child had a happy look in school, as if pleased to be there and learning—learning goes forward undoubtedly.
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For all that, however, I must say that this method of teaching children from good literature, which has my cordial approval, would not have the same success everywhere. In the first place I must remark that these children are only the ordinary children of an ordinary Yorkshire village with a mining population. The children, however, of Yorkshire are sharper, quicker, and more alert than those in Surrey, where I live now. I noticed when a march was played (they have to march out of school) it was played quicker than we should play it in Surrey. I have had it altered since at the school where I am manager. Of course when the tune plays quicker the children move quicker, and one wants to encourage that alertness. That quality

seemed to me to run through everything in the Drighlington School. Whether it is due to teaching them good literature I cannot say. Many people will tell you that while it is very fine it is merely parrot work, and the children do not understand what it means, and are consequently none the better for it; they are no wiser. I am not sure about that. I think they *are* wiser. But one must listen to the objections.

One must not grasp a new idea and think it will prove a solution for everything. I have been to a school at Milan, the school of Madame Montessori, but I do not endorse the opinions I read so often about the extraordinary excellence of that system. Here, however, I do think that we have in Drighlington School a great effect from teaching children through good literature, and of course English literature is grand enough and broad enough and imaginative enough, both in prose and poetry, to attain the very best results. I have nothing against other languages, but English literature appears to me to be fit to take the place among elementary children that Greek and Latin literature take with children of other classes.

I ought not to detain you any longer, I am not an elementary teacher myself, but I have spent 40 years in teaching, one way and another. I do think that Miss Ambler and Mrs. Steinthal have a way of getting hold of the children and being their friend. They have such sympathy, skill, patience and quietness, and Miss Ambler's teachers have been taught to work under her in the same way, so that that school is bound to be a success under any system. I shall be glad to go again and examine the system further, but commend to your notice the fact that good English literature can be made the vehicle which can command the respect and pleasure of children of six years
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old and upwards, in all classes. There, I think, we have a real key, which will open the intelligence of the classes who come to the elementary schools.

MRS. WILSON said, "I paid a visit to the Drighlington Council School a few weeks ago, and was delighted with what I saw there. Miss Ambler was good enough to alter the time-table a little for our benefit, so that though hand-work is usually taken in the afternoon, we were able to hear the children narrate after having passages read to them. We saw the three classes that are now working in the P.U.S. In all the interest of the children in their work was manifest, and there seemed to be a most happy spirit throughout. The accent and intonation of the children were delightful, and really wonderful considering that they were miners' children from the neighbourhood of Bradford, where there is naturally a very strong West Riding dialect spoken as a rule by the people.

"The experiment is a most interesting one, and members of the Parents' Union should be most grateful to Miss Ambler for undertaking it. It is early yet to judge of the results, but even a casual visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that these children are laying up stores of interest and happiness for themselves in after life which cannot but enrich and broaden their whole future careers."

MISS PARISH: I am sure you have listened to the account of this experiment with wide open minds and a deep sympathy, even though at many points you must be saying to yourself, "Where is the difference? How do they do it?" I cannot answer that question all at once, because it is a long business, and the difference is one of those deep-lying differences which are

very difficult to put into words. Last September, on a rather grey morning, I had the great privilege to be invited to visit the Drighlington school with Mrs. Steinthal, one of the original members of the P.N.E.U. Mrs. Steinthal, who has brought up her own children on these lines, is a great thinker and artist, and she has won the love and confidence of the teachers who are working in the elementary schools in Bradford; therefore when she began to talk to them about Miss Mason, the founder of this method and of the Parents' National Educational Union, they were willing to listen to her because they already loved and trusted her, and when she told them that she believed she had a
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good thing to offer them, they were willing to receive it if possible.

It was, as I say, my good fortune to be asked by Miss Mason to go, one September morning, into Bradford to visit the school of Drighlington, where this experiment is being carried on. This was my first experience of Bradford, the morning was grey and the streets were sad, there was that dark and ominous silence over the place which is the result of one of those strikes which have broken all our hearts during the war.

We entered the school, a long, low building, which was also grey and dark; the district in which the school is placed is a very poor one, distinctly a mining district, with the dwellings of the miners all round, more or less neglected and sad. On entering, we were greeted by Miss Ambler, who was delighted to see us, but much more intent on shewing us the work which was going on than on thinking of us or of herself. In the schoolroom I found the most utter peace I have ever found in all my life. It was a realisation of the hopes we have been cherishing of supplying the children of the less privileged classes with mental food which they can digest.

I realised that mind is the same thing in every human being, and that the mind of a little child who is born to the most ignorant man is open to the great things of the spirit, just as much as the mind of the child born in a castle.

What did these children do? They did the wonderful things you have heard of from Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Rawnsley. They spoke with perfect accent and enunciation, and one felt that if the children in London schools could speak like that their voices would be a joy to them, and they would be incapable of using the words they use so freely now, because the sound of them would be abhorrent to them. I am certain this could be done, though I admit that I feel that the Yorkshire accent is an easier thing to combat than Cockney.

There the children were, looking at us as persons. It has been my lot over and over again to go into the schools of the privileged and wealthy classes, and to watch the children doing this very same work. They listened and gave back the lessons they received, and I marvelled at their intelligence and their power not only of narration but of thinking and stringing their thoughts together. Narrating is not the work of a parrot, but of absorbing into oneself the beautiful thought from the book, making it one's own, and then giving it forth again with just that little touch that comes from one's own mind.
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Let us ask ourselves, is it a miracle which has been performed in this little school, and at others? I think it is a miracle. I think it is that greatest miracle which can be watched by us day by day if we are willing to open our minds to receive it. It is the conquest of mind over matter, which is the result of the work which these children are doing, and while I looked at them, having come out of those dark surroundings and into that great light, I thought of Canto IV. of

the “Inferno,” and of that glorious haven which the minds of the elect had made for themselves in the darkest place, a noble castle, with green fields and safe pastures in which they could walk serene. That is what mind can do for the great thinkers, and that is what mind can do for our own children if we give them the thought of these great thinkers to be their own, and to become part of themselves.

One of our speakers said yesterday that the most learned know little, but they know the way to books. Why should we not put the children in touch with books in such a way that they may be independent of us? Much as I have appreciated, and grateful as I feel for, all that we have heard from Mr. Rawnsley, and the beautiful description he has given us of the work at Drighlington, I must say one word about the personality of the teacher.

I belong to a large group of students trained by Miss Mason to teach on her lines, and she has always taught us to believe that the personality of the teacher must not be taken too much into account. It is the personality of the children, it is the material we are using that counts, and not ourselves, and if any of you have been able to go into a number of schools worked on these lines you will find abundant evidence of this. My work as Organizing Secretary of the Society takes me over many parts of England. I constantly see classes and lessons going on, and I find the same thing. Whether it be a student of the House of Education, or a mother teaching her own children, or a lady who lives in the village who is imbued with the enthusiasm of the work which Miss Mason plans, the result is practically the same. The most skilled produce the best effects, but the general result is so far satisfactory that the children who are working conscientiously on these lines are well educated before they have finished. We have had nearly two years of sad woe and despondency, and are wondering how we are coming out of it, and we waste our
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health, and we waste the best part of our mind in hating our enemies, we fail to see that the greatest enemy at our gates is the enemy of ignorance. Surely for generations we have been scorning knowledge, and even parents want a great deal of educating. Now from the way children are taught, they go home full of joy and enthusiasm, and parents learn much from them, for they are readier to listen to what the children tell them than one is always inclined to believe. The cure for ignorance is knowledge, and the only way to acquire knowledge is to let one’s mind feed on it. It cannot be memory work, or cramming, or knowing, but taking it in, and letting it become a part of oneself. Just as food becomes the source of our activity, so intellectual food must be the source of our intellectual activity. Without it we cannot live intellectually, just as bodies cannot live without physical food. If that is so, the only form of education which can get this result must be self-education, the children teaching themselves. Up to the present we have spent our time, and our opportunities, and our strength and years, in teaching too much and letting the children learn too little. We do not quite believe in the children, and certainly do not believe in ourselves. We underrate their power of understanding, and our power of giving them sympathy, of leading, directing, and being their most cherished companions. If we can supply the children with the food they supply all the rest. Their character will take care of itself. We can only behave as our thoughts are. We only act as we think, we only express what we know, we only are what we know. That does not mean all those sources of intuition, it means a mind which knows how to deal with an idea when it receives it. To me that is the ultimate test of good education. How often you can mention grown-up people who

seem to have no conception of what you mean when you speak to them of anything high, or deal with thoughts instead of things. Children are not like that; they are ready to understand if we will accept it, and believe it.

I think Miss Ambler's report has explained a good deal of the working that goes on in the Drighlington School. It is impossible at this late hour to go into this matter extensively, but I would like all of you who feel really interested and willing to probe deeper into this question to let me have your names, and we will try to form, if you like, a study circle. Do not let us allow this gathering of earnest-minded

men and women, who are seeking what is best for the children, to disperse, and let the question go off into smoke. Do not run away with the idea that I want you to adopt the curriculum of the Parent's Union in all your schools to-morrow. I do not, but I want you to look into the matter with the feeling that possibly later on it may be desirable to make use of it. If you want to use a very modified part of it here and there you will find a staunch antagonist in Miss Mason, because she wants a castle, not a shanty, and the only way to give the experiment a good chance is to do it thoroughly.

You will say that the expense of books is an insuperable difficulty. In another Council School, where the Parents' Union School curriculum is being followed, the boys were reading "Our Island Story," a book which cost 7/6, and contains 528 pages. This book was not approved of on account of its costliness, so the schoolmaster had a happy idea and asked if it might be put into the general library. It was then borrowed by the school and used as a school book. It was then recalled. The boys nearly wept, because no one could raise 7/6 to buy the book. Nobody else asked for it, however, and after a certain period had gone by the book was borrowed again and again recalled. I said there were 528 pages in the book, but when it went back again the second time the boys between them had copied out every word of it. That is the sort of difficulty that you must be prepared to overcome. But when some time ago I put before Dr. Kimmins the extreme difficulty of the book question, I need not tell you that he was sympathetic, and assured me that no reasonable demand for books will ever be refused. So you see we may go forward with perfect conviction that if morally, intellectually, and sympathetically, we see our way towards working in such a manner, we shall be able to accomplish it because we shall have facilities given us to carry it out. Miss Ambler has shown how the expenses have been minimized to a certain extent, and when there is a great demand for these books they will no longer be so dear.

With regard to the kind of reading the children are doing, many of you will be inclined to say there are always school libraries. First of all let me say it is not quite the same thing, and also in the school libraries there are not always exactly those books which we so covet for the children's minds. Even if there were, they want to be collected together in a delight-

ful whole such as the programme Miss Mason works out for us. We are now on the seventy-fifth programme, and in it, as always, the work is so carefully welded together that there is no wasteful, desultory, or profitless reading, it is all thoroughly educational. One has to bear that in mind or else one feels that we might just choose our own books, or put our children into the library to choose their own. That would be a great deal, but not enough.

In conclusion let me offer you a few aphorisms from Jean Paul Richter:

To form a brave man, educate boldly.
He who mistrusts humanity is quite as often deceived as he who trusts men.
Tutor! have at heart no work of your pupil so much as his love of work.

Dear Madam,— July 10th, 1916

As one who was present at the interesting meeting arranged by the P.N.E.U. on Wednesday evening, I feel I should like to put one or two impressions before you and the Committee. As I am not myself a teacher, I did not feel able to take part in the debate, particularly as, if I may be allowed a criticism, there was too little time left for discussion.

I was immensely impressed by Miss Ambler's very quiet and thoughtful paper; her absence was the more regrettable as the young lady who read it could not be heard at the back of the hall. It seemed to me that this paper came as an answer to Miss Evelyn Underhill's question of the night before—"Are we educating the spirit of the child, and if not, why not?" It seemed to me also a pity that nobody answered Mr. Rawnsley's curious suggestion, that Miss Ambler herself was so wonderful that under any system she would have had success. I have often had the pleasure of being present at Parents' Union Conferences when demonstration lessons have been given by one or other ex-student, and afterwards people have said, "Of course it is Miss So-and-So who is so wonderful." But this criticism is more than usually weak, for if Miss Ambler had been able to obtain equally satisfactory results when working on her old lines, she would not have adopted another method or taken all the trouble to rearrange the school work and to train her staff. It is her words, "I was dissatisfied with my former results" that embolden me to write this letter. My work brings me in
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contact with the outcome of the schools, both with the "flapper," as met by Women's Patrols, and also with our soldiers of various classes. Travelling up and down the country as I have to do, I am enabled to find out how little power of expression, how few interests the men have. I have never seen them with a book, and when one thinks of the hundreds who will have before them, alas, many hours of idleness and leisure, one longs that school should have given them such a joy in books, nature, art, and music, as is described by Miss Ambler and by Miss Mason in her various works. The same applies to our girls. The Women's Patrol Movement emphasizes the need of wider interests, counter attractions, etc. If one of the tests of education is a power of using leisure, are we certain that our education is already so good that we need not even look into what is now no longer an experiment, but what has been for the last quarter of a century a quiet, powerful movement for good in our midst?

Like Dr. Kimmins I hope to visit Miss Ambler's school when I am next in the north.

For various reasons I am obliged to ask you to allow me to sign myself

A Sympathetic Onlooker.

The Secretary,
Parents' National Educational Union.